

**Discovering Complexity:
Teachers' Collective Responses to Change**

**Submitted by
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This thesis is dedicated to my beloved
father and mother
who taught and gave me so much.
This is for you

**Discovering Complexity:
Teachers' Collective Responses to change**

Abstract

This thesis explores a small number of TEFL teachers' collective responses to an extended change process in their Mexican university context from 1989-2003. The nature of the emergent knowledge arising from this inquiry hinges on the analysis and interpretation by the researcher who is also a complete participant in this educational context of her informants' perceptions from their retrospection, and a reconstruction of the past, in present time.

The methodology I adopted broadly follows interpretative qualitative research principles, including aspects of life history inquiry. The data generation process employed to explore our perceptions of ourselves, as well as our working context, before and during the 1990s, as *we ourselves narrate them*, comprised of: 'conversations with a purpose', critical incident and repertory grid interviews, as well as the concurrent analysis of the data, based on aspects of Grounded Theory. As a result, numerous categories and concepts emerged. These not only helped me to discover the issues that were both instrumental and influential regarding our positive receptivity to change, but also how being involved in a change process changed us, not only as individuals, but also as a culture.

Based on these findings that have led to my deeper understanding of the nature of educational change, I conclude this thesis by positing that instead of adopting a mechanistic paradigm for viewing change, it is necessary, and more useful, to view it through the lens of complexity theory. Finally, this thesis ends by examining the implications that this position and the findings have for change policy makers, managers and change leaders, as well as suggestions for future research.

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List of Acronyms

(The majority of the acronyms are their initials in Spanish.)

ANUIES	Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior	The National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education
CONPES	Coordinación Nacional para la Planeación de la Educación Superior	National Commission for Higher Education Planning
CELE - UNAM	Centro de Lenguas – Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México	Language Centre – National Autonomous University of Mexico
FEULE	Foro De Especialistas Universitarios En Lenguas Extranjeras	Forum of University Specialists in Foreign Languages
MEXTESOL		The Mexican Association of Teachers of English
MEIF	Modelo Educativo Integral Flexible	Integral Flexible Educational Model
PEMEX	Petróleos Mexicanos	The National Mexican Oil Company
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional	Institutional Revolutionary Party
PROMEP	Programa de Mejoramiento del Profesorado	Programme for the improvement of higher education teachers
SEP	Secretaría de Educación Pública	The Ministry of Public Education
SESIC	Subsecretaría de Educación Superior e Investigación Científica	Department of Higher Education and Scientific Research
SHCP	Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público	The Finance and Public Credit Ministry
TEFL		Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL		Teachers of English to Speakers of other Languages
UAM	Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana	Autonomous Metropolitan University
UNAM	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México	National Autonomous University of Mexico
USBI	Unidad de Servicios Bibliotecarios e Informática	Library and Computing Centre
UV	Universidad Veracruzana	Veracruz University

Introduction

During recent decades, ‘change’ and ‘innovation’ have become buzz words at all levels of professional life, all over the world. Nevertheless, these words defy any simple definition due to the fact that they depend on people’s individual, and group perceptions, as well as their consequent responses to change. In broad terms these perceptions and responses would seem to be influenced by a complex combination of cultural, economic and political factors, as well as, perhaps even more persuasively, cognitive, emotional, psychological and social characteristics. These factors and characteristics, in addition to how they interrelate and possibly reinforce or weaken change processes, need to be understood and taken into account if change is to be accepted as good and successfully implemented, facilitated and sustained. Consequently, research has begun to focus on the various actors that take part in change, as well as the different levels, and kinds of change and innovation, in diverse contexts in the world. However, a considerable amount of research, especially in different educational contexts, is needed in order to understand more fully the issues involved, before the conditions and strategies required for successful change can be defined more coherently. This is especially the case in Mexico, where changes in higher educational contexts are being implemented in quick succession, and where research in this area is still very much in its infancy.

Regarding research, the role of applied quantitative research, in general, has been gaining more importance in Mexico in the last twenty years. This has led to more serious funding by government organizations such as CONACYT, (Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología) (National Council of Science and Technology) as research is used to investigate empirical problems, especially with regard to industry, science and technology, in order to help Mexico become part of the ‘modern’ world. More specifically, with regard to higher education itself, research has continued along similar lines. Studies employing quantitative methodology have been carried out in relation to changes in curriculum, leadership, management models and organizational structure in the university institutions. However, there is still a lack of research concerning the main actors, the teachers, who are involved in, and affected by, the changes especially regarding their responses to these changes which would, as I intend to argue in this inquiry, be better served by a qualitative approach.

Qualitative research is, in fact, relatively new in Mexico. Although since the 1980s, some qualitative research has been carried out in the areas of health, social identity and computer assisted analysis (Cisneros, 2000) based on the recognition of the need to acquire knowledge about “everyday people in the real world” (Cisneros, 2000:2), reports on qualitative research into teaching and learning, and teachers and students are hard to find. This was made apparent in a seminar on qualitative research, the first of its kind, offered by the British Council (Mexico City) at the end of 2003 that brought together TEFL teachers interested in this area. It was recognised there that, although certain individuals have been engaged in some research in local contexts, few if any papers have yet been published. However, this now appears to be changing, especially as there are currently a number of teachers, including myself, who have been involved in doctoral research in the field of education, based on qualitative inquiry. Hopefully, therefore, our combined efforts will help to generate knowledge and develop methodology in this area, especially here in Mexico.

Research Context

In this inquiry in particular, I am focusing on a small number of teachers at the School of Languages at Veracruz University, who since the beginning of the 1990s have been involved in a series of changes including innovation in curriculum design and, perhaps even more importantly, teacher development and professionalisation. These changes in teachers’ work contrast strongly to the situation in former years, when teachers commonly lacked any training at all, even of first degree status, and the principal change in the institution itself was the inclusion of English language teaching in the university, first as a subject and then as a School of Languages, which took a full 30 years to accomplish.

Allow Me to Introduce Myself

Given that I am not only the researcher of this inquiry, but also one of these teachers who embraced change, I think I should introduce myself at this point. I am a British national who has lived in Mexico for over 30 years, and so I am well acculturated into the Mexican way of life. For most of this time I have worked as a teacher in the English department of the School of Languages in the University of Veracruz, Mexico. The course of my working life at the School of Languages began officially in September, 1979, when after weeks of continual persistence on my part, and the need to fill the full-time position left by another non-Mexican teacher, the Dean was finally persuaded to give me an opportunity.

Apart from English literature, my original main area of interest, I was also set the task of teaching the English language. I had a BA degree in Humanities from a British Polytechnic, but no teaching qualifications; however, this was, and is still not, required to teach at university level in Mexico. Owing to my first degree status, I was one of only a select few of teachers at the School of Languages who had full-time status, even though many often taught the same number of hours, or even more, for a lot less money. However, my voice at this time was usually silent, as I had little confidence in either my teaching abilities or language ability in Spanish, and I also felt I had insufficient understanding of my working context to be able to participate productively.

At the beginning of my working career in Mexico, because I had already been an undergraduate student myself within the British Education system, I naturally had a preconceived notion of what I considered university life and work entailed. Consequently, as I had had very little experience in teaching, I innocently and, perhaps erroneously, but also consciously, fell back on my own experience as a BA student at a polytechnic in London from 1974-8. However, “doing to my students what my teachers had done to me” proved to be a largely unsuccessful strategy, especially as few students here are accustomed to doing any kind of intensive or extended reading. I next decided to set about the task of designing back-up material, modelling the content on the study guides for students, widely on sale in England. Among other activities, I also watched the popular soaps that my students liked to find helpful examples that would enable them to understand literary concepts such as symbols, foreshadowing and flashbacks etc.

My life at the School of Languages continued without change or interruption for about ten years, until a new Dean came to office in 1989. This was the critical moment when the change process in the School began. It was during this time that my own participation at the School began to develop as I dived in, and embraced the change process without really stopping to think about it in any depth. As a result, I began enjoying the new work dynamics of getting together with other teachers who were now developing into my friends, and creating, as well as designing new courses, while at the same time studying for further degrees.

Aims of Inquiry

My research interest in this particular context, therefore, is both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. The incentive for this inquiry was initially triggered by my personal interest in understanding my *own* personal and professional context as one of a small number of teachers who engaged in a simultaneous professional, and personal, change process. The specific question which was, in fact, my starting point, was why these particular teachers, including myself, were the ones who always, in contrast to others, immediately accepted and became engaged in the changes. This question seemed to be simple enough. However, since the answer has to do with human beings and especially, therefore, with emotions, it is rather complicated and complex. Thus, I have discovered that the information I gleaned has provided me not only with an answer to my original question, but it has also afforded me with a much more comprehensive and inclusive view of the complex nature of change.

My extrinsic motivation is, broadly speaking, driven by several factors. In educational contexts in general there is a growing amount of research and literature examining change processes, their effects, and why people often respond negatively to these, yet little seems to have been written about why, on the other hand, people do embrace and become involved in change, particularly in higher education. Thus far, the majority of research seems to have been carried out principally in secondary schools, in English speaking contexts: Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States. Therefore, as my inquiry is focused on a context in a Latin American context, I am aiming to contribute something new to the generation of knowledge in this area which, hopefully, may also resonate with the experience of people in other contexts.

Significance of the Study

In this context in particular, the university authorities and the British Council who play an active role in the promotion of TEFL in Mexico may find my work of interest as it may enhance their understanding of the factors which motivate teachers to participate in educational development projects. It is important to note that this inquiry consists of an empirical study, in a specific context, based on collective, not just individual, response. Therefore, my exploration of a number of teachers' recollections and observations in retrospect to a series of changes a sort of reflection on action which was in the main not

monitored or consciously recorded, but simply remembered may add to the understanding of what can happen in teachers' cultures as a consequence of change processes. Perhaps more importantly, this inquiry may help to create awareness about what change policy makers, managers and change leaders should consider, in order to provide the necessary conditions to facilitate, support and nurture the emergence of teachers' collaborative cultures, not just intellectually, but also emotionally. Finally, apart from generating knowledge about how teachers perceive and respond to change, this inquiry, although ideographical, might trigger others' interest to explore this issue in other contexts.

Research Question

In order to focus my inquiry, I constructed the following main research question, and sub-questions:

Main Research Question:

How did a particular group of teachers within my higher education context (the School of Languages at Veracruz University) respond to change?

Sub-questions:

- 1) What was the nature of their professional lives prior to their engagement in the change process?
- 2) What were the issues involved in triggering, and sustaining, their response to change?
- 3) How did the change process affect them as individuals?
- 4) What was the nature of their relationship with each other during the change process?

Map of the Thesis

In **Chapter One**, I introduce the reader to my research context. In order to present as complete a picture as possible of the overlapping cultures involved in my particular research context, I first describe the macrocosm. That is, the organisational culture of the national context that includes the history of, and transformation in, higher education that Mexico has been experiencing in its effort to modernise. This also includes an account of the growing importance of the teachers' changing roles within this culture. I then show how the

educational changes in the macro-context of my inquiry triggered a change process in my local context, that is, the microcosm - the organizational culture in which the particular teachers of interest who embraced change were working. This consists of a brief description of the local organisational culture before the 1990s and the change process it experienced that resulted in changes in the School's organisational structure, as well as the actual changes that took place in its operations, during the 1990s.

In **Chapter Two**, in an effort to shed light on the possible issues that our collective response to change encompassed, I examine the research literature and studies regarding the issues that may influence how teachers cope with, and manage change, in educational settings. In addition, I discuss the issues involved in the nature and behaviour of teachers' communities and cultures in educational institutions. This examination of the literature served as a springboard, alerting me to possible concepts and categories which previously have emerged from research, though in the event, my own data suggested some rather different ones. In addition, this examination helped me to identify the gaps in the literature where my inquiry would make a contribution to knowledge. These included major issues such as: teachers' receptivity to change; teachers' professional identity; the emotional dimension of teachers' lives, as well as the different kinds of teachers' communities and/or cultures.

In **Chapter Three**, I explain my research stance and the rationale that grounded the research approach I adopted. I employed an interpretative qualitative approach that included aspects of narrative inquiry (Kelchtermans, 2000; Roberts, 2002). I also give a detailed view of my analysis process initially based on aspects of Grounded Theory, then later based on Complexity Theory. I decided this was the most appropriate combination of approaches given that my inquiry was focused on exploring my own personal, and professional context, as well as a number of teachers' responses during a change process within our particular context (Goodson, 1992a, b) based on our joint retrospection (Watson & Watson-Franke, 1985, Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995), and our subsequent 'reconstruction', of our 'individual feelings and interpretations' (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995: 189).

In **Chapter Four**, the first of my two data analysis chapters, I present the findings that emerged in response to my first two research sub-questions: *What was the nature of our professional lives prior to our engagement in the change process?* and *What were the*

issues involved in triggering and sustaining our response to change? I begin by exploring and analysing the data that revealed the combined issues that resulted in our '*professional slumber*' regarding our professional practices before the 1990s. This is then followed by an exploration and analysis of the issues that triggered our '*professional awakening*', that is, the issues that were instrumental and influential in arousing us to become engaged in both the changes at the school, and in our own professional development.

In **Chapter Five**, I present my findings that emerged in response to my other two research sub-questions: *How did the change process affect us as individuals?* and *What was the nature of our relationship with each other during the change process?* In the first section I discuss the data that revealed the observable and describable changes in ourselves as individuals, and as a group, as a result of engaging in change: Firstly, the shifts in our beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. Secondly, the nature of our growing relationship which transformed us from being a number of isolated teachers to emerge as a small collaborative culture with shared concerns.

In **Chapter Six**, I revisit my research questions and discuss my findings that emerged from the data in the previous two chapters. I suggest that although four main themes had emerged during this inquiry: teachers' receptivity to change, teachers' professional identity, as well as emotional understanding and the emergence of a small collaborative culture, these themes cannot be fully comprehended by viewing them separately, but only by understanding the dynamic interaction and influence each had on the other, which, in turn, reflects a final overarching theme of the overall complexity of educational change. In order to explain this premise, I demonstrate how the results of my inquiry are an illustration of the sort of process Hoban (2002) suggested regarding the complexity of educational change, though my representation includes some other dimensions he did not describe.

Finally, in **Chapter Seven**, based on my findings that have led to my deeper understanding of the nature of educational change, I first present a summary of the main theoretical contributions of this inquiry. Then I discuss the possible implications of my findings and my suggestions for practice, before proposing several potential areas for future research.

Chapter One

The Modernisation of Higher Education in Mexico (1989-2003)

The context of this inquiry is the English Language Department in the School of Languages at Veracruz University (Xalapa, Mexico). From 1989–2003, this educational institution underwent a change process that resulted in both the transformation of the organizational culture of the School, as well as in the nature of the work, and professional development, of its teachers. The main impulse for the changes and innovations involved in this change process either originated from the ‘university authorities’ influenced by national educational policies, or from a small number of the English language teachers, all of whom were teaching a variety of different subjects on the English Language BA. In the initiation period, and at different points during the change process, all the teachers in the English language department were asked to collaborate. However, the point of interest around which this research is centred, is that only a small number of teachers actually embraced, and became continually engaged in, the changes.

As a starting point, given that this English language department does not stand alone, but is one of a number of overlapping cultures, such as the professional culture of Veracruz University, as well as the higher educational culture of Mexico, it is important to describe the context of this inquiry both before 1989, and during the years that followed. By this means, it may be possible to understand some of the many elements that played a role in triggering this change process, in both this institution and in these particular teachers. Thus, this chapter is divided into two sections:

- The first section, ‘The Macrocosm’, briefly describes the organizational culture of the national context. This includes an overview of the main elements in the history of, and transformation in, higher education that Mexico, in general, has been experiencing, in its effort to modernize.
- The second section describes, in greater detail, ‘The Microcosm’, that is, the organizational culture in which these teachers who embraced change were working, both before and during the change process.

One of the key issues that emerges from this description is that for the change process to evolve in this institution, it was necessary for these teachers to participate in professional development at the same time as they were implementing the institutional changes.

1. The Macrocism

1.1 The Current Organizational Culture of Higher Education in Mexico

At the present time, what might be denominated as the organisational culture of higher education in Mexico involves the interrelationship of three main groups of actors: a) international, b) national and, c), university institutions (Ibarra-Colado, 2001).

a) International Institutions

Amongst others, these include the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank (WB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). During the last two decades in particular, analysts and experts from these institutions have supported Mexican government educational reforms as well as provided funding for modernization. For example, the OECD has helped in the funding for the professional development of teachers.

b) National Institutions

The Ministry of Public Education (SEP) initiates and validates educational curricula in Mexico at all levels. The Finance and Public Credit Ministry (SHCP) is in charge of university funding, and the Department of Higher Education and Scientific Research (SESIC) acts as a kind of intermediary between the two. The SESIC participates in the administration of evaluation programmes as well as the funding of special programmes.

c) University Institutions

The third main group of actors is the universities themselves. They are influenced by the events that take place in the two largest universities in the country's capital (UNAM and UAM), as well as by associations such as the National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education (ANUIES). This association plays an important role in the planning and implementation of new strategies and

programmes. It also promotes and obtains funding for teacher development and professionalisation.

In brief, any change in the system depends on the interrelationship between the actors mentioned above, in particular, the funding that is achieved at different levels. Nowadays, universities in Mexico appear to be more like businesses than seats of knowledge and learning, given that funding is based on the marketable products and the accountability of performance of both the university and its teachers. According to Ibarra-Colado (2001), echoing Readings (1996), this is characteristic of the educational modernization process not only in Mexico, but also globally.

Modernization presupposes a radical break of the institution with its past. It begins to displace the university as a basic cultural reference point of society in favour of reconstituting it as a 'modern bureaucratic corporation' dedicated to the production of professionals and knowledge required by the new modes of operation of the economy and society.

(Ibarra-Colado, 2001 para. 15)]

Thus, universities are now evaluated and funded according to the following criteria:

- terminal efficiency,
- the level of employment achieved by their graduates,
- the links they maintain with industry and society,
- the adaptation of their functioning and normative structure as circumstances require.

(Adapted from Ibarra-Colado, 2001: para. 18)

1.2 An Overview of the History of Higher Education in Mexico

In order to set the scene in which the change process in the local context took place, I will begin by briefly outlining the history of higher education in Mexico, before, during and after the 1990s that instead of possibly hindering actually encouraged and supported the change process in this local context. This will include the transformations it went through during its process of modernisation in order to compete in a globalised world. Figure 1 summarises the main factors in the national context and the corresponding events in the English department at the School of Languages.

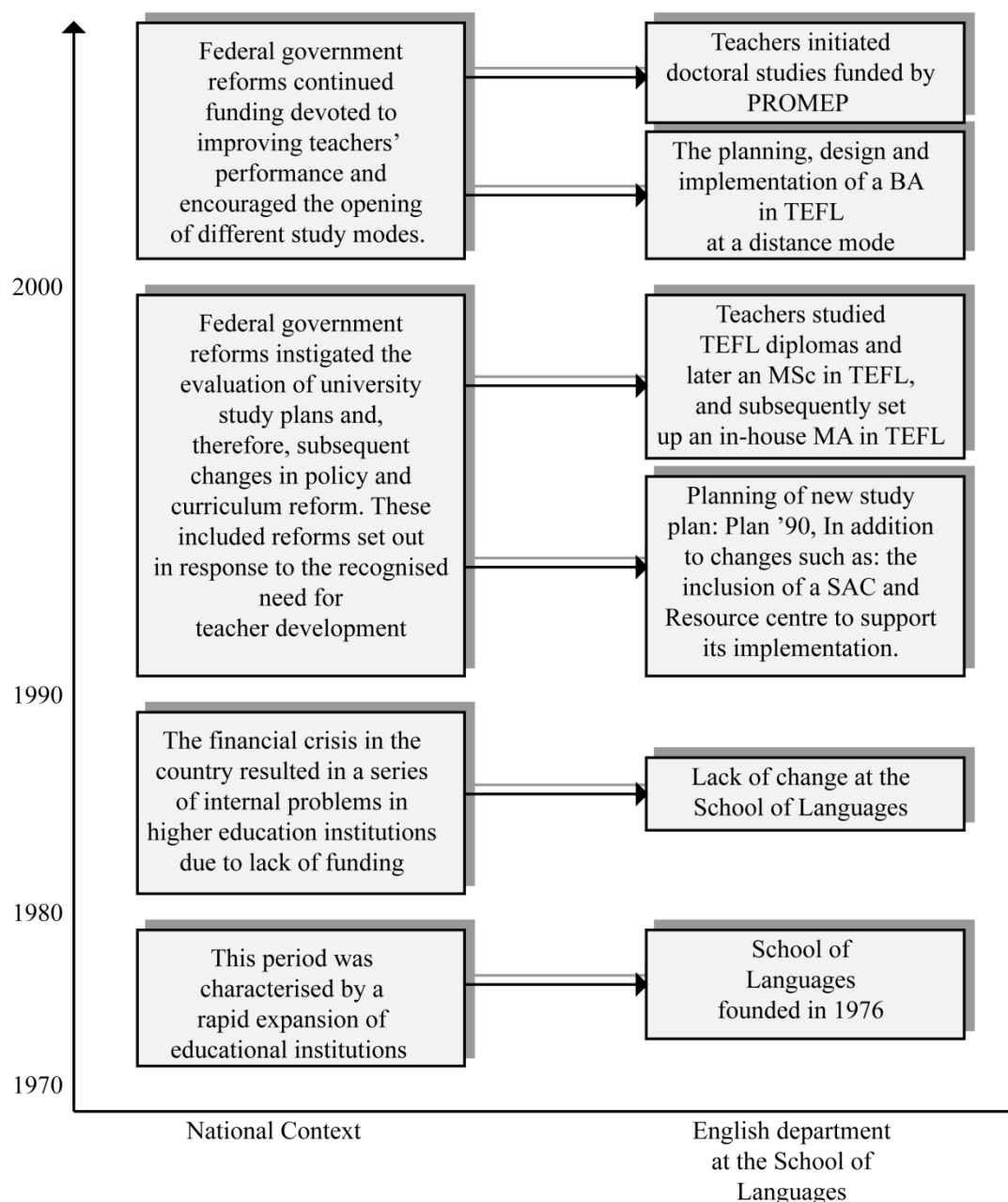


Fig. 1: Main factors in the national context and the corresponding events in the English department at the School of Languages

1.2.1 Higher Education in Mexico before the 1990s

The 1950s to the beginning of the 1980s was a period of expansion and modernisation in Mexican higher education. Three of the Presidents (1946–64): Miguel Alemán (1946–52), Ruiz Cortines (1952–58) and López Mateos (1958–64), as part of their plans to improve economic development and modernise Mexico, invested funding in order to develop the educational and intellectual infrastructure (Rodríguez-Gómez & Sosteric, 1999) in higher

education. As a result, the original number of public universities that included Veracruz University, rose from 12 to 25 by 1960 and student enrolment increased from 30,000 to 80,000 students during this period. At the same time, as well as providing the conditions for more advanced scientific research, the “role of ‘professional academic worker’ (researchers and professors) was defined” (Rodríguez Gómez & Sosteric, 1999 para. 3). That is, full-time positions were created for a number of university professors and researchers previously employed as part-time, paid by the hour, ‘academic workers’. Not only were these the first steps towards a more coherent staffing infrastructure in higher education institutions, but it was also the first time that the importance of the teachers’ role in higher education organisations was acknowledged.

During the 1960s, another four universities were founded and more importantly, the Mexican Education system began a process of internationalisation (Rodríguez-Gómez & Sosteric, 1999). The largest university, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), that already housed more than half of the Mexican undergraduate student population (over 83,000 students), received a large number of students from all over Latin America who subsequently returned to their countries to propagate the educational standards they had observed in the UNAM (Rodríguez Gómez & Sosteric, 1999). In addition, those involved with the Mexican higher educational system became more aware of, and influenced by, international trends, including those of development and industrialisation (Rodríguez-Gómez & Sosteric, 1999). Possibly triggered by all these changes, both the 1960s and the beginnings of the 1970s were characterised by a positive disposition, on the part of both academics and students, towards innovation (Rodríguez-Gómez & Sosteric, 1999). However, at this time, this interest in change was mainly centralised in the UNAM which was one of the few universities that had a number of highly qualified teachers and investigators, as well as adequate funding.

The rapid expansion that continued in the 1970s through to the 1980s, however, resulted in a boom in the number of student enrolments (e.g. the student population in the UNAM grew to over 731,000 by 1985) and, therefore, the number of teachers and University Schools that were needed to accommodate them. Thus, the 1970s and early 1980s, were characterised by an unparalleled expansion of educational institutions, (Rodríguez-Gómez & Sosteric, 1999). Apart from more and more students being squeezed into already

overcrowded classrooms, young, inadequately trained teachers were widely employed and new graduate programmes were created, concentrating, in the main, on disciplines that would be more economically profitable (Rodríguez-Gómez & Sosteric, 1999).

Nevertheless, during the 1980s, the higher education institutions led a complex, problematic existence that was greatly influenced by both political and economic issues within the country. In brief, after the student protest movements of 1968 and 1971, the Mexican government appeared to regard universities as centres of political unrest. Not only were they considered as capable of inciting political opposition to the governing PRI-State, but also of housing possible political candidates who could, and sometimes did, lead left-wing movements. Thus, necessary funding was more than often redirected to primary education rather than to higher education under the pretext of creating more educational opportunities for the Mexican people. The crisis in funding was later further exacerbated in the 1980s by rapid inflation as a result of the fall in oil revenues and the consequent serial devaluations of the peso (Didou Aupetit, 2003). This resulted in a series of internal problems in higher education institutions, such as Veracruz University, as summarised succinctly by Castaños Lomnitz (1995) below:

At mid 80s, salaries for university professors were very low. It was a period of “they make believe they pay me, and I make believe I work”. Absenteeism was a common practice among teachers. Laboratories and libraries became depleted and outdated. Student desertion went as high as 67%. New university professional and master’s degrees were created on impulse and there were few doctoral degrees issued. Research was a disaster zone and the brain drain was becoming increasingly disturbing.

(Castaños Lomnitz in Didou Aupetit, 2003:10)

Owing to this situation, near the end of the 1980s, it was realised that in order for the country to become involved in modernisation it needed more highly trained people (Didou Aupetit, 2003). As a result, educational institutions had to seriously reconsider both their policies and practices.

Previously, the image of higher level institutions had been characterised as ‘public universities’ in which:

...student access was non-competitive, fees were nominal, unconditional public subsidies constituted the only source of income, the institution was autonomous in setting its own rules in all respects, the curriculum was geared to specialise professional training within the *facultad* [University School] structure...and management was non professional and political.

(Kent, 1998: 3 [italics in the original] [my translation])

In contrast, at this time, universities began to exchange their long term plans for short term ones that were easier to manage. This led to the development of standardised formulae that were imposed nationally on all Mexican institutions (Rodríguez-Gómez & Sosteric, 1999). For example, fees were increased and the search for funding became a prominent activity. In sum, financially-driven concerns overtook politically-driven concerns in order to address the growing issues of how to make the universities more efficient (Ordorika, 1996).

1.2.2 Higher Education in Mexico from 1989 Onwards

In comparison to the beginning of the 1980s, when universities were characterised by a lack of development, funding and prestige (Kent, 1999), from 1989 onwards, higher education in Mexico, in general, has been going through an on-going series of changes, including curriculum reform and teacher development. Initially, changes were prompted, in an attempt to solve the existing problems at the time, for example, those of insufficiently prepared teachers and “unprofessional administrative cultures” (Kent, 1998: 4). In the main, these problems had been caused by the “unregulated expansion” of the universities, several of which had grown “to unmanageable proportions” (Kent, 1998: 4), due to the unforeseen growth in enrolment during the 1970s, exacerbated by restricted government funding, in addition to, high inflation during the 1980s. At the same time, however, it was hoped that these changes would enable Mexico to modernise and improve the quality of higher education so that it would become able to play a more effective role in the economic development of the country, as well as meet international demands for accessibility, efficiency and quality of education created by globalisation. This became even more of a priority when Mexico signed the NAFTA agreement with Canada and the U.S.A. in 1993 (Rodríguez-Gómez & Casanova-Cardiel, 2005) as in order to fully benefit from the agreement Mexico needed to invest more in education.

Thus, at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, federal government reforms instigated the nationwide evaluation of university curricula and, therefore, subsequent

changes in policy and curriculum reform. In general, the changes that have ensued at the macro-level of Mexican higher education have been directed mainly towards institutional diversification and autonomy, as well as technical and curriculum reform. All of these changes have been aimed at both creating an increase in, and satisfying a demand for, student access to higher education in the race for acquiring government and international funding (Didou Aupetit, 2003). This explains the interest in the design of on-line courses and the development of disciplines such as applied sciences and technology, in addition to computer science. At the micro-level, changes in the teaching profession have consisted of encouraging teachers to acquire higher qualifications and thus “professionalize”, and to earn “productivity bonuses...based on evaluation scores from students and peers” focused on the “visible products” (Kent, 1998:5) of their work. This is in sharp contrast with the 1970s and 1980s, when people with inadequate qualifications and training were frequently employed as university instructors.

Change, however, in general, has not been easy or without serious complications. Kent (1998) in his analysis of institutional reform in three public Mexican universities: Guadalajara, Puebla and Sonora, cites Arechavala (1995) who provides a very powerful and resonating image of this.

Transforming the University of Guadalajara is like rebuilding an aircraft in mid-flight. You must reconvert the engines from internal combustion to jets. You have to make it fly at a greater speed without increasing fuel consumption. Everything must be done without touching down, with limited amounts of fuel, without upsetting the passengers and with terrorists on board.

(Arechavala, 1995:12)

1.2.3 Reforms in Higher Education: 1989-1999

It was President Salinas de Gortari (1988-94) who was perhaps the most influential catalyst of the change process, especially in Veracruz University. In his National Development Plan (1989-94) and also in the Educational Modernization Programme (1989-94), he highlighted the position that in order to improve the quality of higher education, which would then lead to positive change throughout the educational system as a whole, there had to be more effective educational planning. To this end, during his administration, a series of proposals for reform were set out mainly by two agencies: the National Association of Universities

and Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES) and the National Commission for Higher Education Planning (CONPES) (Rodríguez-Gómez & Casanova-Cardiel, 2005). In 1990, ANUIES produced a document (ANUIES' strategy for improving the higher education system) that signalled that improvement was needed in

...academic excellence, improvement in research, postgraduate studies, continuing education, cultural extension, administration and support for senior high school studies.

(Rodríguez-Gómez & Casanova-Cardiel, 2005: 57)

CONPES echoed these aspects in their report: 'Priorities and commitments for higher education in Mexico 1991–1994'. Both these organisations listed the following as needing improvement:

- updating curricula and improvement in the quality of the training of professionals,
- teacher training,
- training of researchers,
- review and re-adaptation of educational supply,
- defining institutional identity in research and postgraduate studies,
- updating academic infrastructure,
- re-ordering of administration and normativity,
- an institutional information system,
- diversifying finance,
- promoting the participation of social and economic interests in the higher education area.

(Rodríguez-Gómez & Casanova-Cardiel, 2005: 57)

It is important to note here that apart from programme evaluation and renewal, both identified the need for, and gave importance to, the professionalization of academic staff in order to improve higher education. These are the ideas that filtered down almost immediately to Veracruz University, and they are visible features in the change context at the School of Languages, from the beginning of the 1990s onwards.

It was the following President, Zedillo Ponce de Leon (1994 - 2000), who was especially interested in helping Mexican universities to achieve international standards. He went a step further than Salinas de Gortari in encouraging higher education teachers to professionalize by actually providing the appropriate conditions for them to do so.

However, this was somewhat limited by the budget that was available at that time, given the serious devaluation of the peso at the beginning of his term of office in 1994. Notwithstanding, in 1996, he announced the funding for several programmes in order to strengthen higher education, amongst which figured the 'Programme for the improvement of higher education teachers' (PROMEP). The main goal of this programme was to strengthen professional development by providing teachers with the necessary funding to study higher degrees. Furthermore, it attempted to not only improve teachers' working conditions, but also to improve the balance of hours allocated to teaching and research. An example of the results of this programme up to the present time can be seen at the School of Languages in Veracruz University, where several full-time positions have been created, and grants, such as my own, have been awarded to teachers so that they can follow doctoral programmes abroad.

Owing to the rapid growth of colleges and universities in both the private and public sectors, at this time, the number of teachers also grew commensurately and there was an increase of 78% in the public sector in 1997, and 92% in the private sector. The number of full-time teachers grew by 81% within the same time frame, which meant that more teachers had tenure, that is security, and were vigorously professionalizing. Although the majority of teachers (69%) still only have a first degree or are 'pasantes' (people who have yet to write a final paper in order to achieve first degree status), the number of teachers studying a Masters grew by 80%, and the number of teachers doing doctoral studies doubled (Kent, 1999). Given the growth in the number of teachers professionalizing, and in many cases receiving funding in order to do so, evaluation programmes were also developed. Teachers from this time onwards, have been evaluated by their institutions based on the number of hours they work with different groups, and their participation on committees and commissions, in addition to their 'production' of teaching materials, conference papers and publications (Kent, 1999). However, although this evaluation system includes a possible monetary bonus, on the whole, it is extremely unpopular with teachers, who not only feel that they are in constant competition with their colleagues (Ibarra-Colado, 2001), but who also feel that the rewards, rather than being awarded to teachers for their academic work, only go to people who can successfully follow the paper trail (Kent, 1999).

In sum, in response to globalisation, national economic concerns and social progress, Mexican universities had to become more flexible regarding both the kind and mode of programmes they offered to the public. Thus, in turn, the academic became no longer merely a conveyor and a seeker of knowledge, but also a manager of that knowledge in the educational market within which his/her university competed. Therefore, from this time on, the teacher has had to prove his/her academic worth by gaining points on performance scales on evaluation programmes in order to receive an extra bonus to compliment his/her salary and to receive funding to be able to study higher degrees. In short, as Ibarra-Colado (2001) affirms, “This is the era of merit pay and pay for performance in Mexico” (para. 29).

1.2.4 Higher Education in Mexico: 2000-2006

Although the two aforementioned presidential administrations did promote extensive change and improvement, a lot more funding and longer term reforms are necessary in order to keep Mexico on the path towards modernization. To this end, it was expected that, during the administration of President Vicente Fox Quesada (2000 – 2006), which had been a major break with the 70 year old ruling PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) political party, things would change considerably. However, this was not the case. Although some degree of progress was made, there was more continuity in educational politics than actual change or improvement in the system. Consequently, Mexico did not manage to achieve the high level of quality in higher education that had been anticipated by this time (Rodríguez-Gómez & Casanova-Cardiel, 2005).

President Fox’s plan, the ‘National Program of Education: 2001-2006’, had “two emphases reflecting a rather utopian view of education in 2025 and the profile of a perfect teacher” (Ornelas, 2004: 403). It had high expectations with regard to being able to solve the problems in the Mexican education system, as well as converting it into a well-organized, quality education system, capable of competing on the international stage. However, apart from continuing the reforms initiated by President Salinas de Gortari from 1988 – 1994 and continued by President Ernesto Zedillo (1994 – 2000) to improve the quality of education and achieve education for all, the only really *new* goal of President’s Fox’s administration was to improve the quality of both middle and higher school management. Furthermore, the plan housed a series of weak points. Although it listed all the goals to be achieved, the plan did not provide a comprehensive strategy for achieving them nor how they would or could

be implemented in individual states and institutions (Rodríguez-Gómez & Casanova-Cardiel, 2005). Therefore, it may be argued that this administration was characterized principally by a series of ambitious projects that as yet have not been properly implemented or consolidated.

Based on the idea that education in general is absolutely necessary if Mexico is to develop and meet international standards, President Fox's plan focused on three aspects of higher education:

1. access, equity and participation;
2. quality;
3. integration, coordination and management

(Rodríguez-Gómez & Casanova-Cardiel, 2005: 59)

Amongst various policies, it promoted the opening of more schools, colleges and universities, as well as different study modes, such as the so-called 'open university' similar to the education at a distance mode in other countries such as in England, so that education would be accessible for students from different social levels both in and across states. It also continued allocating funding to improving teachers' performance and more attention was paid to postgraduate programmes. The impact of this can be seen at the School of Languages in Veracruz University where I, and my informants, have been involved in the design of a 'virtual' BA in English Teaching, as well as a postgraduate diploma and a Masters programme. Furthermore, support has been given to teachers in general in order to encourage them to further their studies.

The main problem that remains, however, is that of quality. On the one hand, teachers and institutions are evaluated on grades achieved and 'products' produced, not on the actual quality of the education that is being imparted, for which there is no classroom evidence available. On the other hand, people who have the resources and support are still going to private institutions or abroad in order to study higher degrees. Meanwhile, education for the majority of people still urgently needs an improved system that ensures both higher quality and greater access at tertiary level (Kent, 1999).

2. The Microcosm

2.1 The Local Organizational Culture Centred on in this Inquiry

The School of Languages at Veracruz University received its official status as an institution in 1976. It offered two BA degrees: La Licenciatura en Idioma Inglesa (BA degree in the English language), and La Licenciatura en Idioma Francesa (BA degree in the French language). Both BAs consisted in a four year curriculum focused, to a large extent, on the four main language skills. In addition, the School offered a series of general English and French language courses to the general public (Figure 2).

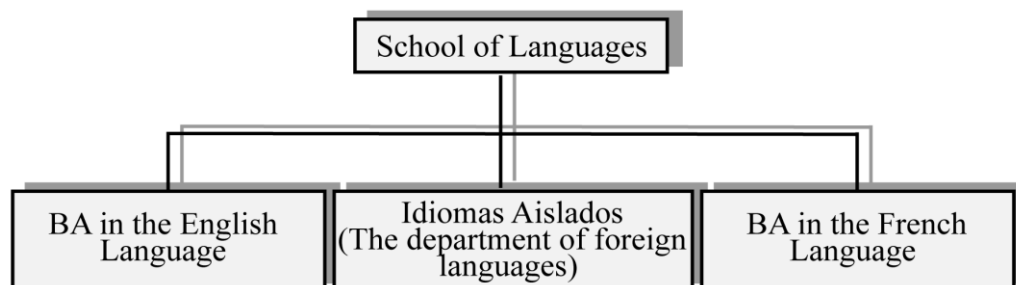


Fig. 2: BAs and courses offered at the School of Languages in 1976

The foundation of the School of Languages came at a time when, in Mexico in general, as mentioned in section 1.2.1, an unprecedented expansion of educational institutions (Rodríguez-Gómez & Sosteric, 1999) was taking place, and this, in the main, led to large numbers of insufficiently prepared teachers. The School of Languages, at this time, was no exception. As the teaching of English to BA level was a new discipline in the State of Veracruz, the teaching staff was initially composed of native English speakers, the majority of whom had first degrees, and Mexicans, who knew English because they had either studied in the United States or had studied English as a previous job requirement, none of whom had had any formal teacher training or experience. Later on, during the 1980s, this profile was modified as teaching posts were gradually filled by ‘pasantes’ from the School of Languages. That is, people who had studied the in-house BA but who did not have first degree status as they had not written the required final paper on completing their studies. This, in fact, was the way that the majority of my Mexican colleagues began working at this School.

2.2 Local Organizational Culture: 1976 - 1988

The first Dean of the School of Languages, a law graduate who had studied French, was helped with the administrative matters of the School by a Consejo Técnico (School Council). On this council sat the Dean, the consejero universitario (a teacher representative who attended the general meetings at the university and reported back to the teachers at the School), and both a teacher and a student representative for each of the two BAs. The rest of the teachers together with a student representative from each group formed a general regulatory body known as the Junta Académica. Although the Dean was the ‘head’ of the school, it was the Junta Académica that had the most power in decision-making (Figure 3).

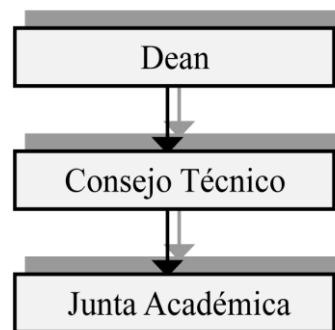


Fig. 3: Organisational structure of the School of Languages

The Junta Académica meetings were called at the Dean’s discretion. At these meetings, the Dean would convey the information and decisions given to him by the higher university authorities and deal with problems raised by the teaching staff. These would be discussed, and decisions and resolutions would be voted on. However, in reality, everybody at that time accepted the resulting decisions, given that the Dean was adept at verbally calming both students’ and teachers’ complaints and doubts.

The only concrete changes during this time were a few structural amendments to the curricula of both the BAs. Some teachers, in hindsight, blame this lack of change on the lethargy of the Dean who, after holding office for almost twenty years, appeared more interested in simply conserving the status quo than in making changes. However, more importantly, it may have also been because his attitude, unbeknown to the teachers, was perhaps influenced by the different elements in this context that dynamically interacted and defined his position at that time. For example, at this time, it would seem that in the eyes of

the ‘university authorities’, his role was more that of a coordinator who conveyed the changes they wanted the teachers to implement, rather than that of a change leader. Furthermore, he had very limited administrative power in that all decisions pertaining to the School had to be approved by the ‘Director de Humanidades’, that is, the Senior Administrator of Humanities who was the head of the six Schools: Antropology, History, Languages, Literature, Pedagogy and Sociology, housed on this campus. In addition, changes that were proposed by individual teachers at the Junta Académicas were often questioned, criticized and rejected by the rest of the teaching staff at the School, the majority of whom gave the impression that they also preferred to maintain the status quo. However, their response at that time may possibly have been, at least partly, due to their lack of training, their sheltered pedagogic practices within their classrooms, as well as their isolation from the greater national and international world of language teaching that prevented them from envisioning change.

2.3 The Beginning of the Change Process at the School of Languages: 1988-89

By the end of the 1980s, at a national level, teacher unrest was beginning to become manifest in several universities. This was primarily due to the deteriorating working conditions of the teachers. Teachers now felt economically threatened, as their wages were no longer keeping up with the rapid inflation rate that the country was suffering at that time. In addition, they were now realizing that they were not as professionally developed as teachers elsewhere and so were beginning to demand opportunities for professional growth. Furthermore, there were now teachers who were becoming aware that in order to remedy this situation, they would need to have a much stronger and better represented position in university politics.

This unrest was echoed among the teachers from the different Schools on the Humanities campus, including those at the School of Languages. As a result, in the hope of achieving change, as well as being encouraged by the intervention of one of the non-Mexican teachers in the School of Sociology, they began to demand that the long-standing Deans step down and, in accordance with university law, be replaced by Deans who had been democratically elected by the Junta Académica, that is, the teacher/student community of each School. This was in contrast with previous years when, even though the Ley Organica (University

Rules) stipulated a specific length of office of four years for the Deans, this ruling had never actually been respected. These Deans therefore had held office for many years, presumably with the tacit acceptance of the university authorities, given that there had been little previous complaint from the teachers who seemed on the whole to accept this situation.

After months of meetings and protests, the different School Deans were finally replaced. In the School of Languages, one of the teachers who taught French, was sponsored by the Junta Académica, and became the new Dean at the end of 1988. This was an important step, as it meant that she was expected to respond to the trust the School community had accorded her. Furthermore, from this time on, the university rules have been respected. That is, the Junta Académica has the power to re-elect the Dean for a further four years of office or give a list of three teachers' names to the Rector (Chancellor) who then chooses one of these after interviewing the candidates and reviewing their proposals. After the Dean's term of office is over, he or she either returns to their original teaching post, or, in some cases, may be given a higher post with greater responsibility in the University. Thus, in theory, this system is far more democratic and less hierarchical than, for example, the British one.

2.4 The Changes from 1989-2003

In strong contrast to previous years, from 1989 - 2003 a series of changes took place at the School of Languages (Table 1) including the design and implementation of new curricula, as well as the professional development of the teachers. Given that I will be exploring the teachers' responses to these changes in detail in the following chapters I will limit my account to focus only on the specific events and the initiatives that were taken. However, it is worth noting at this point that the change conditions, as well as certain contextual features in this particular context during this time were somewhat unusual. After the initial top-down recommendation for curriculum change from the Mexican education authorities (SEP), the university teachers at the School of Languages, encouraged by the Dean, were, to a large extent, left to decide *what* changes they would make and *when* they would make them. Atypically, no systems of *what* and *how* to do things or official dead-lines were imposed. As a result, possibly owing to the amount of freedom to establish their own challenges, and a strong sense of responsibility for change that these teachers experienced,

instead of there being overt resistance to change, these teachers as well as the majority of their colleagues, not only welcomed change, but this small group of teachers in particular felt empowered to both design and implement the following changes themselves.

2.4.1 ‘Plan 90’

The new Dean, aware of the national climate in higher education which favoured the modernization of higher education to thereby produce better trained professionals, encouraged her staff to begin work on the design of a new curriculum that is locally known as ‘Plan ‘90’. However, in order to change the curriculum a number of conditions that would enable the change first had to be met. For example, she realised that the teachers, who had no experience or training in curriculum design, would require professional help to accomplish this project. To this end, she went to Mexico City, in 1989, to seek help and financial support from different foreign institutions. The British Council was one of the first to reply by facilitating an external consultant from the University of York in England to collaborate with the Dean and the teachers in the English department over a four year period (1989-93).

As a result, the changes made in ‘Plan ‘90’ were notable ones. In contrast to the prior rather superficial BA curriculum that had been designed by a handful of staff who were no longer at the School, the majority of the teachers worked together to design a more appropriate and better focused curriculum for the benefit of their students. The inspiration for this was triggered by both the teachers’ own prior learning and academic work experiences at the School, as well as their strong desire to make improvements. Instead of comprising eight semesters (four years) as before, the curriculum was now extended to ten (five years) consisting in an ‘área básica’ (general basic area of study) for all the students (semesters one through six) followed by ‘tres áreas de concentración’ (three focused areas of study): Literature, Teaching and Translation. Students could choose which of the areas they wanted to pursue in the remaining semesters (semesters seven through ten). The main emphasis in the general basic area of study was on improving the language level of the students. Accordingly, on the whole the changes in the BA curriculum represented a move away from the traditional transmission approach to teaching towards a more constructivist model of learning.

Beginning Date	Kind of change and/or innovation	Where the initiative came from	Participants in the changes	Present status in 2009
1989	The beginning of the design of 'Plan '90'	The Dean influenced by National Politics	Most of the teachers	Now being replaced
1991	TEFL postgraduate diploma (Merida University & B.C)	British Council (B.C)	Four teachers sponsored by U.V.	Completed
1992	Opening of in-house TEFL postgraduate diploma	University authorities	A small group of teachers	On-going
1992	Opening of 'Centro de Documentación' (Resource Centre)	A few teachers	Most of the teachers, plus donations from international institutions	Recognised as having the biggest collection of books in the country, related to TESOL
1992	Standardised Exams	Initiative of a few teachers	All English department teachers	On-going
1994	Opening of SAC	British Council and a small group of teachers	2 of the full-time teachers trained by B.C. who, in turn trained other members of the staff	Other SACs including a 'MegaSAC' have now been added in other zones of Veracruz Univesity
1994 1995	Distance MSc in TEFL (Aston University, LSU, England)	ODEA funding & B. C. as regional centre U.V. agreement with Aston Univ. Funded by U.V.	3 out of 4 English teachers successful graduates 10 out of 12 English teachers successful graduates	Completed
1996	Opening of in-house MA	MSc graduates plus one other staff member. Consultancy received from Aston Univ. LSU	MSc graduates from Aston University plus one other staff member	On-going
1998	Initiation of work on another new curriculum for the BA	University authorities.	Changing staff members over the years	Began to be implemented in 2009
1999	Initiation of a modest research project	One teacher and a consultant from Aston University Funded by the U.V.	3 teachers	Not published
2001-03	Licenciatura de la enseñanza del inglés (Distance BA in TEFL)	Initiative of staff members due to a request from another university. Supported by U.V. & B.C.	Small group of teachers	Began to be implemented in 2008
2002 2003	Initiation of doctoral studies	2 independent teachers 6 other teachers encouraged by University Authorities and funded by PROMEP	8 full-time teachers	On-going

Table 1: The changes in which teachers at the English department were directly engaged: 1989-2003

For example, the BA in English now consisted of a lot more hours assigned to the new English and English Workshop courses which took on new methodologies and approaches such as the communicative approach. Furthermore, new courses such as ‘Cultura de los Pueblos de Habla Inglesa’ (Culture of the English Speaking People) were included as it was considered that the students needed a more ‘rounded’ education. The design of these courses represented a great challenge for the teachers involved. During this time, the university did not have an adequate library or access to the internet, as a result, in order to design the necessary materials teachers had to rely on their own knowledge and experience as well as on the private libraries of their friends.

Another significant change in the curriculum that proved to be greatly beneficial for the students was the inclusion of two courses in ninth and tenth semester called ‘Taller de Investigación para el Trabajo Recepcional’ (Research Workshop for the Final Paper). Before 1990, in order to be awarded degree status, students were supposed to write their final compulsory paper *after* leaving the School of Languages. However, few students had actually been able to become ‘titulados’ (first degree status achieved on presenting the final paper and passing a viva) given that too high a level was demanded, the fact that they had been given little or no guidance as to how to go about this, in addition to, the limited bibliographic resources that were available. Consequently, these courses were designed in response to this problem. Now students would receive help and guidance during the last two semesters of the BA programme in the hope that they would be able to submit their final paper either at the end or soon after completing the ten semesters. Furthermore, other options for achieving first degree status were also introduced by the university in general at the beginning of the 1990s. Students can now also become ‘titulados’ (first degree status) by obtaining a high average (9 or more), during the ten semesters, by successfully completing a subject related post BA diploma course, or by completing 51% of a related Masters degree. As a result, from this time onwards, there are now many more students that achieve first degree status than ever before.

2.4.2 TEFL Postgraduate Diplomas

In order to change the curriculum and implement ‘Plan ‘90’ the teachers needed to change at the same time, to become professionally developed as teachers. Thus, part of the change process involved a series of projects promoting these ends. The first of these projects was to

gain funding for four of the teachers, in 1991, to study for a postgraduate TEFL (Teaching of English as a Foreign Language) diploma in Merida, the first of its kind in Mexico, sponsored by the British Council. Later on in 1992, the School of Languages opened its own in-house postgraduate TEFL curriculum that included a course, in the final semester, to enable teachers to gain an international teaching certificate (COTE: The Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English). The successful completion of these courses allowed teachers to carry out the necessary procedure in order to obtain first degree status. This was an important step in the change process, as not only did the teachers become more *professionally developed*, but it also meant that they would be *better paid* for their work. Up to the present, 29 teachers at the School of Languages have gained BA status by this means. Nowadays, most of the students on this programme are ex-students of the School who prefer this option to writing a final paper, given that they are practising teachers in other institutions that are now demanding that they produce a degree certificate. So far, 177 ex-students of the School of Languages have gained degree status by this means.

2.4.3 The Opening of a Self-Access Centre (SAC)

Another change that aimed at supporting 'Plan '90' by motivating both teacher and student autonomy was the opening of a self-access centre (SAC) on the Humanities campus where the School of Languages is housed. The School language laboratory was, at that time, old and in need of serious repair. Furthermore, it was rendered almost completely unusable when it was flooded due to a lack of foresight when extending the building where it was housed. SACs had already been introduced in Europe, and Mexican teachers from different institutions who had visited them, had been trying to get the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) interested in setting them up in Mexico. Veracruz University was one of the first of four universities in the country to show interest in this project. The SEP, in turn, turned the project over to the British Council and this is when the SAC became a reality in the School of Languages. While it was being built, two teachers, graduates of the TEFL postgraduate diploma in Merida, went to Mexico City for training courses at the British Council. On return, they trained other teachers who were interested in participating and working in the SAC designing materials. During the 1990s, other SACs were built on different sites of the U.V. However, the two that stand out nowadays are the 'Library and Computing Centre' (USBI) in Xalapa, opened in 1999, and the Mega Self-Access Centre in Veracruz, opened in 2002. These centres have not only provided welcomed study areas where both students

and teaching staff can engage more successfully in autonomous learning and development, but they have contributed also in providing at least initial access into the virtual world of language teaching.

2.4.4 The Opening of the Resource Centre

Also in 1992, taking advantage of the British Council's programme of donating books, the Dean at the time also visited the American and French Embassies, and the French Institute for Latin America to ask for book donations. Once support was secured from these institutions, the university authorities also contributed. The project was well received by the teaching staff who contributed both books and financial aid during the first year. The Resource Centre was allocated more space for the 1,500 books and an extra room was equipped with a television, video and a satellite connection that could be used for giving classes and lectures. In 1995, the Centre again grew dramatically as both the Mexico-Japan Foundation and the Quebec Delegation in Mexico donated more material. In addition, the Language Studies Unit (LSU) at Aston University sent a large collection of over 300 books in support of the teachers who were studying their MSc in TEFL at distance from Aston University, England. Since then the Resource Centre has continued growing and now houses more than 10,000 books. More importantly, it has now been recognized as having the most complete collection of books related to TESOL in the country, as such it provides an important study area that previously had been non-existent in this context.

2.4.5 MSc in TEFL

Professional development was further encouraged in 1994, when four teachers from the School of Languages, along with teachers from other Mexican universities, were sponsored by the Overseas Development Agency (ODA) to study an MSc at distance with the Language Studies Unit (LSU) at Aston University, England. Due to the success and interest of both the teachers and the university authorities in this context, the following year a further twelve teachers in the English department were given grants, this time by the university. Instead of the teachers having to travel to Mexico City every six months to study with the visiting lecturers, the lecturers now came to the School of Languages at Xalapa. Owing to the successful completion of this further degree teachers not only became more capable and efficient in their teaching practices, but were also more motivated to continue their engagement in the change process.

2.4.6 In-House MA in TEFL

In 1996, after graduating from the MSc in TEFL, several of these teachers, in addition to, another of the teachers who had studied a MA in the United States, set themselves the challenge of designing and later implementing, their own in-house MA in TEFL. They were aided by consultancy received from the LSU at Aston University. The original teachers who designed the programme taught the first student intake from 1999-2001. Since then other teachers have taught on this programme, given that the original teachers are, at present, pursuing further postgraduate studies.

2.4.7 New BA Curriculum

In 1998, owing to the influence of national policies, the university authorities again requested a change in the curriculum. Courses were provided by the university authorities in order to inform the teachers about the philosophy and criteria underlying the model to be employed, now referred to as the 'Integral flexible educational model' (MEIF). Various teachers at the Language School, including those in the English department, have participated at different times and had different tasks during the planning for this.

2.4.8 Research

In 1999, again aided by the consultancy of the director of studies at the LSU at Aston university, three of the teachers who had been involved in the Masters programmes, previously mentioned, began a modest research project: "In search of classroom practice in preparatory schools". This was the first of its kind not only at the School of Languages, but in Mexico as a whole. The project was set up after a British Council Conference, in 1999, focused on quality issues in the Mexican degree programmes in teaching English. At the Conference, it had become clear that very little was known about the real successes and problems faced by these schools and so research was needed in order to understand the language learning experience of the students *before* they enter university degree programmes. Although the teachers never published their findings, several papers about the issues that emerged were given at National and International Conferences in Mexico.

2.4.9 Distance BA in TEFL

In 2001, triggered by a request from another university, several teachers accepted the challenge of designing the curriculum and the materials for a BA in TEFL by a distance

mode. During this time, they were supported by a consultant from the British Council who not only provided helpful feedback and guidance in the designing of the curriculum, but also gave an informative course on materials design for distance courses. The university authorities, interested in the project, also supported the teachers by allowing them a partial release from their classes while designing the materials. The programme was opened in 2007, and had an initial intake of 14 students.

2.4.10 Initiation of Doctoral Studies

In 2002, two teachers, on their own initiative, began doctoral studies. In the same year, six other teachers, encouraged by the senior administrator of humanities (the very same person who had held the position of Dean at the beginning of the 1990s) submitted research proposals. These were sent by the British Council, who served as an intermediary, to three British universities who subsequently accepted these teachers as candidates. In 2003, these teachers began their studies, funded by a grant awarded to them by PROMEP. At the time of writing this summary, one of these eight teachers has had to withdraw from her studies due to health reasons, two have finished, three are near completion and the theses of the remaining two are in process.

2.5 The Organizational Culture from 1990s Onwards

Due to the growth of the School in terms of both student enrolment and the programmes offered, the organizational structure of the School became in turn more complex. This is represented in Figure 4.

Although the Deans were still the sole heads of the School of Languages, during the 1990s, there was a sharing out of responsibilities in order to manage the School more effectively. Many of my informants, as well as teaching and being involved in curriculum design, have played different, more active roles in this emerging culture, albeit with no specific prior training. One of these roles was the creation of the post of School Secretary. This is occupied by one of the teachers recommended for the post by the Dean. He/she is given leave of absence from his/her classes in order to deal with the daily administrative work of the School on a full-time basis.

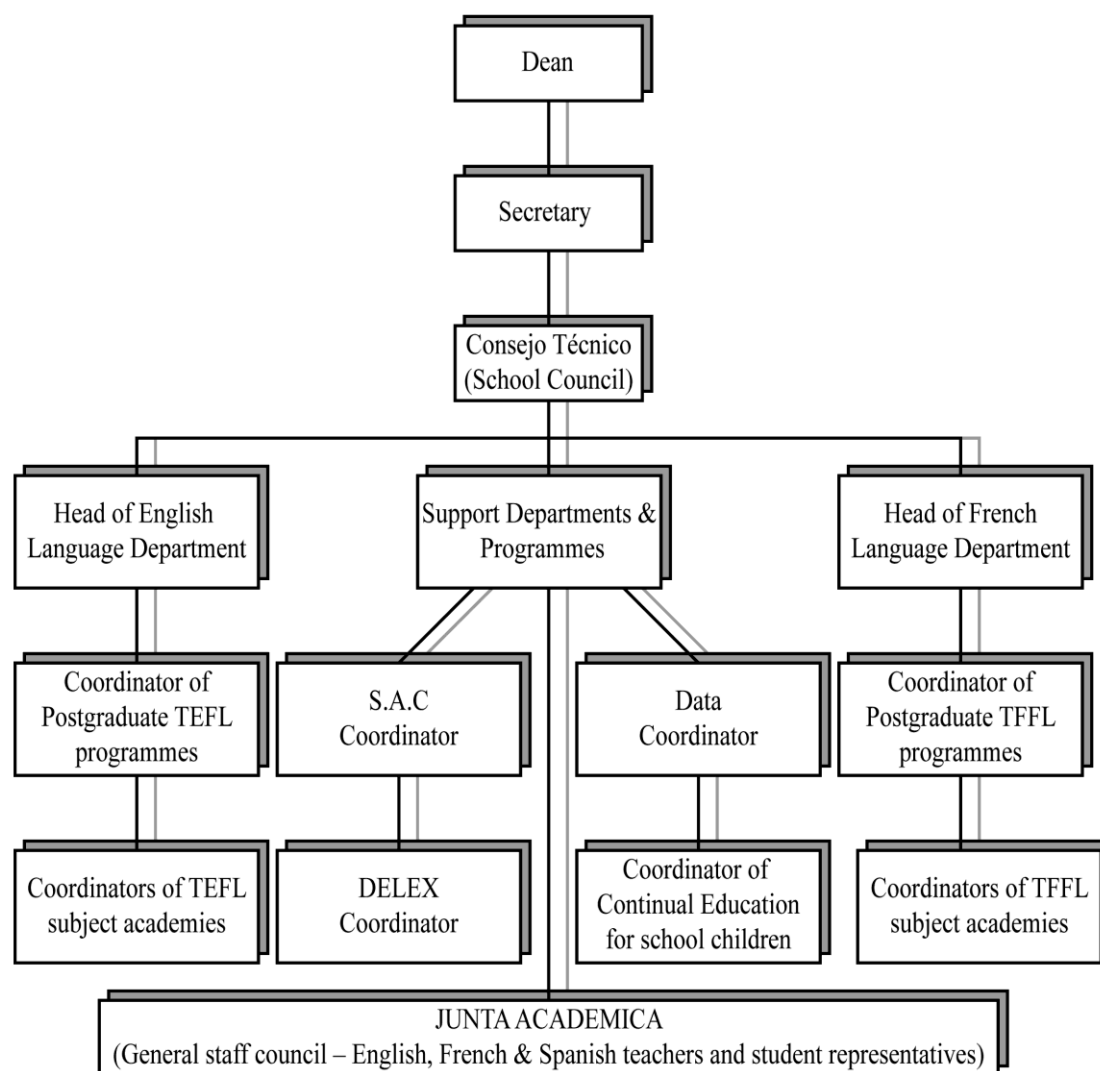


Fig. 4: Organisational structure of the School of Languages from the 1990s onwards

The School Council (Consejo Técnico) also gradually became a stronger, more formal and serious body. Up to now, it still comprises the Dean, the Secretary, department heads and postgraduate co-ordinators, a representative teacher from each of the three language areas: English, French and Spanish, and a student representative. Most of the heads of departments and postgraduate co-ordinators are chosen by the Dean while the teacher representatives are elected by the General School Council (Junta Académica) to represent their interests at the meetings. The School Council (Consejo Técnico) appoints teachers for activities such as the participation on panels in order to carry out different tasks e.g. vivas, supervision and examinations, the interviewing of potential new teachers, revalidation of academic grades, and serving on committees in the greater university. Both students and

teachers may also lodge a complaint or report a problem in writing to this Council in order to request consideration and solution.

Each language department and course now either has a head of department or a coordinator. These are usually teachers selected, on the Dean's recommendation to the Rector, as they are the people who work more closely with the Dean as a team. However, the Dean sometimes asks the Junta Académica or a specific subject area to nominate candidates for the position. Although their classroom contact hours are reduced while they are in office, they still have to teach some courses as well as carry out the obligations and responsibilities that go with their post.

For each subject area within the BA programme there is also a subject academy coordinator, who is elected by the other teachers in the particular academy. His/her job is to convene meetings in which anything from curriculum re-validation to lessons plans and materials, methodology and standardisation may be discussed. These teachers receive neither financial compensation nor time off to perform the functions involved in this job. Thus, apart from teaching, many teachers now have to find the time to fit in extra responsibilities according to the different extra role or roles they now play within this context.

2.6 Profile of University Teachers

Not only the roles, but also the profiles of the teachers have changed radically since the beginnings of the 1990s (Table 2). In Mexico, in general, university lecturers are referred to as 'personal docente', in other words, academic teaching staff. In general, there is no standardised system that stipulates how teachers are to be hired or what they need to do to achieve promotion. Different institutions set down their own ways of dealing with this; however, teachers, in general, are placed in one of three categories: (1) 'asistente or maestro por asignatura, (2) asociado and (3) titular' (as there are no English equivalents for these they will be explained below in Table 2). Within each of these categories there may be up to six levels. At the same time teachers may have full-time or half-time contracts or be hired by the hour. Teaching positions may be advertised in local newspapers, although in reality they are more often than not communicated by word of mouth, or occasionally

someone in one university might send or take a message to a member of staff in another university advertising a particular post.

Hierarchy	Category/level	Academic requirements	Number of working hours
Full-time teacher with tenure	‘Titular’ C	PhD	Works 40 hours: between 18 & 21 classroom hours and the rest ‘office’ hours. Plus possibility of teaching extra hours
	‘Tutular’ B	Masters	
	‘Titular’ A	Master candidate	
	‘Asociado’ C	Two year diploma	
	‘Asociado’ B	Diploma (less than two years)	
	‘Asociado’ A	BA	
Part-time teacher with tenure ‘maestro por asignatura’	‘Maestro por asignatura’ B	B.A	Can teach up to 30 hours
	‘Maestro por asignatura’ A	BA studies	
Temporary substitute teacher no tenure ‘maestro por asignatura’	IPP (substitute teacher)	BA studies	Can teach up to 30 hours
	ITD (substitute teacher for a specific course)		

Table 2: Teacher categories at Veracruz University

The ‘maestro por asignatura’ (which is the largest category of teachers in higher education in the whole of Mexico approximately 70% of all teachers) is employed by the hour to teach a particular subject in the semester, in fact they may only teach as few as two or three classes (the equivalent of 3 to 6 hours) a week. They are either hired as an ‘Interino por persona’ (IPP), that is, as a substitute for another teacher who is either on a leave of absence or has been seconded to another department, or they are hired as an ‘Interino por tiempo determinado’ (ITD), that is they are hired to give a subject for which there is no permanent teacher for a certain length of time. In both cases, in order to gain the post they have to provide the Dean of the particular School copies of their official documents that validate their curriculum vitae, as well as write a lesson plan for a particular class chosen by members of the teaching staff at the School. They are then either elected by the Dean or asked to ‘defend’ their lesson plan, in front of a panel of three teachers. This ‘defense’ consists of them giving a demonstration of how they would give the class and/or answering the panel’s questions. The panel gives marks to each candidate after reviewing his/her

documents and evaluating his/her performance. The marks for each candidate are then sent off to one of the administrative departments of the University, where they are checked and either approved or rejected.

When a teacher has given the same subject for three consecutive semesters or if a permanent teacher leaves, they can then ask to be given 'base' that is, tenure, for those hours. Tenure in Mexico means job security, as teachers become the 'owners' of their hours. Up to the present, the only way they can lose tenure, is if the authorities can prove that the teacher has been involved in some kind of extreme misconduct. However, as the teacher has both the support of the union and can also appeal to the Human Rights commission, this, to my knowledge, has very rarely happened at Veracruz University. Full-time teachers especially, are particularly well-protected in this respect. This is one of the reasons why it is such a coveted position to achieve.

The 'maestro por asignatura', which is the category the majority of my informants began with, apart from being paid by the hour, does not receive any fringe benefits, such as medical insurance (an important benefit here as there is no free national health care system in Mexico) nor does he or she qualify for the incentive bonus scheme. Although they are allowed to be assigned up to 30 hours a week class time, they have no permanent job security, as they have to go through the whole process again, every semester, for each course, in order to renew their contract. This is made even more difficult by the fact that their subjects only appear on the syllabus every other semester, as at the moment the University has an intake of students only once a year. Owing to this situation, teachers often work in other, either higher or middle education, schools as well as at the university, in order to fill up their working week so that they can survive financially. This situation is tacitly accepted by the university and so these teachers are not expected to do extra work, other than teach classes and attend particular meetings. Nevertheless, if they do participate in projects, they certainly do begin to gain a certain level of respect both from their colleagues and the university authorities.

Once a teacher has a 'base' or tenure for a certain number of hours, in addition to, a completed BA degree, he/she may be re-categorised and become an 'asociado', which is a higher category, and so receive a higher rate of pay per hour of class plus benefits. In order

to rise through the levels, reach the categories of a ‘titular’ and receive a higher set rate of pay, the teacher must amass a certain number of credits. These may be obtained by performing a collection of activities: studying for a Masters and then later a PhD, gaining a position such as head of department, participating in different projects and/or publishing. An ‘asociado’ and ‘titular’ may also teach up to 30 hours of classes a week, but cannot aspire for a full-time position until there is an opening, and these are few and far between. However, it is usually the case that teachers categorized as ‘titular’ are the ones who have a full-time contract.

In order to achieve a full-time position, teachers need to have at least 18 hours of classes per week each semester with tenure, and, nowadays, a Masters degree. Before the 1990s, it was sufficient to have completed just a BA. As various teachers always compete for these positions, factors, such as the number of years they have worked for the university, and whether or not they have published, also count. Full-time teachers are expected to dedicate 40 hours a week to the university. Of these, 18 to 21 hours are taken up by giving courses and the rest are ‘office’ hours during which students can ask for help and guidance. Apart from this, full-time teachers are also expected to attend all meetings and participate fully in all the other School activities, such as playing a role on commissions, exam panels for would-be new teachers, and academic tasks such as evaluating and writing new programmes and designing materials. They are also eligible for participation in the bonus scheme under which all their activities and tasks, that is, the “visible products” (Kent, 1998: 5) of their work, are worth a certain number of credits. However, the number of teachers who put in for this scheme declines every time it opens. The reason for this appears to be that the scheme is considered by most teachers as a time consuming process that involves competing in a constantly changing, unfair and demeaning bureaucratic paper chase (Preciado Cortés et. al., 2008).

2.7 Origins of Change and More Democratic Decision-Making

Prior to the 1990s, there was little change initiative at all at the School. Nowadays, proposals for change may come from different directions and at different levels of authority, for example, from the Public Education Ministry (SEP) via new national educational policies and/or based on university policies via the Dean, as a result of decisions made by the School Council (Consejo Técnico), or proposals made by a

department, subject academy or indeed by an individual proactive teacher. Changes in methodology, materials, standardization and so forth, are discussed in depth at the level of subject academies and/or specific study areas. Bigger proposals such as syllabus revalidation, change of curriculum or election of teachers for various posts are also discussed at the General School Council (Junta Académica) meetings. Once proposed change has been accepted by this council, it is then presented for acceptance at the Area Council (Consejo de Area) of the University. On this Council sit the Deans and postgraduate coordinators from all the different Schools in the University. If the change is accepted here then it can be implemented, or if necessary it can go on to the next stage for approval at the University Government meeting (Junta de Gobierno). Thus it would appear that the decision process regarding change is now more democratic.

Summary

In this chapter, I first described the macrocosm that is, the national Mexican educational context. I included a brief diachronic overview of the Mexican higher education system that has traditionally been fraught with difficulties, such as the lack of funding, the devaluations of the Mexican monetary system and the rapid unplanned growth of universities which, in turn, led to the hiring of inadequately trained, poorly paid teachers. I then summarised the reforms that were carried out in the 1990s and then from 2000 - 2006 in an effort to resolve these problems. These reforms were aimed at improving the access, equity and participation in higher education, as well as improving the quality of higher education by developing more 'marketable disciplines' and encouraging teachers to 'professionalise'. I pointed out that although there has been a lot of change and improvement, a lot more funding and much longer term vision and reforms are necessary in order to keep Mexico on the path towards modernization. Nevertheless, what is interesting to note here is that each of the presidential administrations up-to-date have prioritised and supported the already existing reforms to help professional teachers, thus recognising the importance of the role of teachers themselves in the educational change process.

In the second section of this chapter, I described the microcosm, that is, the local context of my inquiry. To this end, I gave a brief account of the pre-1990's organizational culture of the School of Languages. I then sketched the beginning of the change process in question and emphasised how in contrast to change in other contexts, we, the teachers were allowed

control over *what* changes we would make and *how*, as well as *when* we would make them. This was followed by a brief description of the changes in which the teachers in the English department participated. I ended this section by outlining the changes in the organizational culture of the School. These included the new roles and profiles of the teachers, in addition to, how changes may be now introduced.

However, the description of the local context does not end here. Viewing change as a series of events and dates only gives us one side of the picture. In order to further complete this picture, it is necessary to understand the possible issues and factors that will enable me to investigate my main research question: *How did this particular group of teachers within a higher educational context respond to change?* In order to gain an insight into the possible issues and factors involved in these teachers' response to change, in the following chapter, I will examine the research literature and studies regarding how people cope with and manage change in educational settings.

Chapter Two

Teachers and Educational Change

This chapter sets out to identify and examine the main issues which may influence how teachers respond to change in educational settings, as highlighted by other researchers. The in-depth study of existing research, as a point of departure for my own study, has alerted me to possible concepts and categories which might emerge from exploration of my two main research questions. Furthermore, it has also helped me to identify the gaps in the literature where my inquiry might make a contribution to knowledge. Nevertheless, I planned to be rigorously critically analytical in approaching my data, fully aware that other concepts and categories may emerge in my own bounded context.

This chapter is divided into the following five main sections:

- The first section, '**Teachers and Educational Change**', presents the main thrust of my argument. That is, it is not enough to merely identify the external and internal conditions of change, but also the interaction of these with the personal concerns of the teachers in each specific educational setting.
- The second section, '**Teachers' Receptivity to Change**', examines how prior research focuses mainly on identifying the reasons why teachers resist change and what can be done, but does not appear to explore in any depth how teachers' response to change may be influenced by teachers' personal and professional concerns.
- The third section, '**Teachers' Professional Identity**', examines the factors that may influence the formation and transformation of a teacher's personal construal of professional identity, as well as how this issue may interrelate with, and possibly influence, how teachers respond to change.
- The fourth section, '**Teachers' Emotional Response to Change**', examines how the emotional dimension of teaching is still an issue that is largely ignored by educational policy makers in general. In addition, it points towards how successful collaboration and change may depend, to some extent, on the emotional dimension of teachers' interrelationships.

- The fifth section, ‘**Teachers’ Communities**’, examines the research regarding the nature and behaviour of teachers’ communities and cultures in educational institutions. It also highlights how these communities are believed to enable teachers to develop their practices, as well as their collegial relationships that are generally considered as aspects which may help teachers to adapt to, accept, and implement change.

1. Teachers and Educational Change

Traditionally, according to many practitioners’ espoused beliefs, change outcomes may be guaranteed if given the “proper planning and appropriate action” (Seel, 2000: 2). Examples of this are Lewin’s (1946) unfreeze-change-freeze model, and a similar idea nowadays that organizations go through the stages of “initiation, implementation and institutionalisation” (Fullan, 2001:51). However, in reality these stages are not so clear cut or sequential, but are “only the general image of a much more detailed and snarled process” (Fullan, 2001: 50). Consequently, this rather technicist viewpoint is not particularly useful when trying to understand how people, in this case, teachers, feel, think and respond to change, as these “planned models of change fail to capture the realities and complexities of the school context” (Riley, 2000: 35). Instead, as Zembylas and Bulmahn Barker (2007) affirm,

...they overemphasize the rational and consequently do not take into account the complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty acknowledged to be part of the change in schools.

(Zembylas & Bulmahn Barker, 2007: 239)

In other words, they do not take into consideration the organisational cultures of educational institutions that are not fixed uniform entities, but rather a complex of overlapping cultures (Holliday, 1994, 1999), created, maintained and/or transformed by the *people* within them. More importantly, they seem to pay insufficient attention to what is needed by the members of these cultures in order for change to be accepted and implemented. This is an important omission as to how, and to what extent change will be taken on board by the organisation will depend on the organisation itself (Tierney, 1988) as organisations are composed of *people*. That is, much will depend on either the fit (Keup et al., 2001) or “creative tension” (Senge, 1990: 142) that ensues between change, and the

beliefs, desires, goals and values of the members of the organisational culture of the institution.

As a result, change in organisations is a complex process since it entails not only the successful interaction of external factors (e.g. national educational policies and support) with the existence of internal conditions (e.g. change agents), but more importantly, it also includes a dynamic interaction with the personal (Goodson, 2001b) and professional concerns of its members. That is, regarding this particular inquiry, the readiness of the teachers involved to embrace the change, which can mean developing new skills, assuming new responsibilities or altering beliefs and understandings, as well as value systems (Begg, 2004; Oplatka, 2005; Kirkgoz, 2008). In short, as Goodson (2001b) states, echoing Sheehy (1981), “the embrace of change only happens with an inner change in people’s beliefs and plans” (Goodson, 2001b: 46). More specifically, change involves how teachers actually respond both cognitively and emotionally to change, as well as how it affects them both as individuals, and as members of a particular social context or culture. Teachers’ cultures or communities are an especially important element in this complex organisational culture for, as Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) stated:

It is in the patterns of relationship between teachers and their colleagues in the forms of teachers’ culture that much of the success or failure of teacher development and educational change is ultimately to be found.
(Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992: 232)

This statement has also been echoed in more recent research (e.g. Coburn, 2001; Gallucci, 2003; Smylie & Evans, 2006) that has highlighted “that teacher community can impede reform if teachers’ beliefs and values are not aligned with those of the reform” (Coburn & Russell, 2008: 207).

In sum, therefore, as I propose to argue later on, it is only when all these factors (external factors, internal conditions and personal concerns) are “integrated and harmonized” (Goodson, 2001b: 46) that positive and constructive change may take place. In other words, instead of employing a “mechanistic paradigm” (Hoban, 2002:7) for examining educational change, I contend that it would be far more useful to employ a paradigm based on complexity theory as this theory takes into account, as demonstrated in my inquiry, that:

...causation is complex. Outcomes are determined not by single causes but by multiple causes, and these causes may, and usually do, interact in a non-additive fashion. In other words, the combined effect is not necessarily the sum of the separate effects. It may be greater or less, because factors can reinforce or cancel out each other in non-linear ways.
(Byrne, 1998: 20)

Furthermore, complexity theory, as Hoban (2002) affirms, acknowledges that “the behaviour of a system [such as educational change] is difficult and sometimes impossible to predict” (p. 23 [my emphasis]) owing to the “dynamism” of factors reinforcing or cancelling each other in ‘non-linear ways’ (Byrne, 1998: 20). However, this does not mean that the result is chaos. According to complexity theory, communities are capable of self-organisation (Hoban, 2002), what Marion (1999) refers to as “social homeostasis” (p. 59). That is, from the interaction of the different factors within a context, communities evolve the ability to maintain their stability or equilibrium. As Hoban (2002) affirms “it is this ability to more readily self-organize that distinguishes complexity from chaos” (p. 23). In other words, “non-linear interactions can result in a sense of order or balance” (Hoban, 2002: 25) as complex systems are “inherently dynamic and transformational” (Byrne, 1998: 51) and, as such, in accordance with Morrison’s (2002) view, can discover a way to survive, develop and adapt. Moreover, consistent with Mason’s (2008) notion from the interactions and interrelationships among their constituent elements, “new properties and behaviours” (p.36) can emerge that were not previously present or foreseeable, thus constructing a whole which is bigger and probably more complex than its previous parts.

One of the most important insights of complexity theory is this notion of emergence...The whole becomes, in a very real sense, more than the sum of its parts in that the emergent properties and behaviours are not contained in or able to be predicted from the essence of the constituent elements or agents.

(Mason, 2008: 37)

In general, however, although there is increasing agreement that educational change is a highly complex process, influenced by the dynamic interrelationship of numerous elements (e.g. Fullan, 1993, 1999; Banathy, 1996; Basica & Hargreaves, 2000b; Fink, 2000; Goodson, 2001a; Grounds, 2007), up to the present, educational authorities usually expect their teachers to accommodate surface layer changes in the organization (Riley, 2000), for example, change in curriculum and methodology, often without understanding that this may

imply deeper changes in the teachers themselves, such as changes in their attitudes, behaviour, beliefs and professional development (Hargreaves, 1997a), their professional identity (e.g. Henkel, 2000; Geijsela & Meijersb, 2005; Day, 2007), as well as their relationships with their colleagues. In addition, there still seems to be a tendency for change managers and even researchers to try and identify individual characteristics that facilitate educational change as an end in itself (e.g. Mortimer, 1998). However, although such research is valuable, it appears to be lacking in that it does not sufficiently consider:

- the complex and dynamic relationship which exists among these characteristics;
- the differences in each specific educational context;
- other factors that cannot be predicted from the onset of change (Hoban, 2002);
- the responses of individual human beings who are themselves complex systems (Seele, 1999) as individuals, and as groups, in their own right.

An example of the latter are the emergent issues that may lead to either teacher resistance or receptivity to change. Therefore more knowledge is needed about the causes, processes, effects and complexity of change, especially with regard to how teachers, such as those who participated in my inquiry, perceive and respond to it. Accordingly, I believe that the findings of my inquiry comprise a useful contribution towards the filling of this gap in knowledge given that it identifies the different elements that dynamically interacted with each other and resulted in change in both our institution and in ourselves.

During the time period focused on in this study (1989 - 2003) however, the research literature that existed regarding change in educational institutions appears to have concentrated mainly on the following:

- **The change in curriculum and management** (e.g. Goh, 1999; Kent, 1998);
- **The main problems that may occur in a change process**, for instance: "...the presence of too many innovations mandated or adopted uncritically and superficially on an *ad hoc* fragmented basis" (Fullan, 1993: 23);
- **The 'conditions' that are thought to enable the change itself** (e.g. Hannan, 2001; Fullan, 1997a & b, 2001; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Kennedy, 1999; Silver, 1998).

- **The forms of teaching cultures in educational institutions, in particular, the role of collaborative cultures** (e.g. Feiman-Nemster & Floden, 1986; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992, Hargreaves, 1997b).
- **Teachers' resistance to change** (e.g. Fullan, 1998; Hadjimanolis, 1999; Datnow & Castellano, 2000).

However, literature and research concerning teachers who have embraced change is hard to find (Oplatka, 2005). In particular, teachers' emotional responses to change seem to have been discussed in only theoretical and ideological terms (e.g. Fullan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Hargreaves, 1994). In short, although research was touching on issues that would prove to be vital dimensions of educational change nowadays, such as teacher collaboration, in general, as Bogler and Kremer-Hayon (1999) state, "the inner world of faculty members...remained a relatively neglected topic" (p.31).

In contrast, in the last ten years, as change initiatives have not always worked for a variety of reasons, more emphasis is now focused on what might lead to successful change. In particular, owing to the growing acceptance that teachers play a vital role in change (e.g. Fullan, 1998; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; McLaughlin, 1998; Datnow, 2000; Riley, 2000; Zembylas & Bulmahn Barker, 2007), educational research has been focusing even more on issues such as:

- **teachers' receptivity to change** (e.g. Lee, 2000; Moroz, & Waugh, 2000; Zinkeviciene & Janiunaite 2006; Waugh & Ketusiri, 2007, 2009);
- **teachers' professional identities** (e.g. Beijaard et al., 2004; Varghese et al., 2005; Flores & Day, 2006; Day, 2007);
- **the emotionality of teachers and teaching** (e.g. Day & Leitch, 2001; Hargreaves, 1998 a, b, 2000b, 2001 a, b, 2002; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Winograd, 2003; Zembylas, 2004);
- **the forms of teacher communities that enable teachers to improve both their practices and students' learning** (e.g. Wenger, 1998; Andrews & Lewis, 2007; DuFour et al., 2005; Hargreaves, 2007; Vescio et al. 2008).

However, the bulk of this research, in contrast to my inquiry, is often based on various individual teachers working in different schools, not on teachers, nor teachers' cultures or communities, in a specific context. This represents a significant gap in knowledge given that teachers and teachers' collaborative cultures and/or communities within an educational institution are an indispensable requisite for change (Peterson & Deal, 1998). Clearly,

further inquiry is needed regarding how these cultures and/or communities are formed or emerge in individual educational settings. In addition, although research has been carried out regarding teachers' emotions and the impact of change (e.g. Troman & Woods, 2000; van Veen & Slegers, 2006), there is still a lack of understanding concerning the emotional dimension of educational change (e.g. Hargreaves, 2004; Schmidt & Datnow, 2005). This issue, in addition to the ones in the list above, is highly relevant to my own inquiry. Therefore, I will examine them all in turn, in greater depth in the following sections of this chapter.

2. Teachers' Receptivity to Change

One of the acknowledged factors that influence the nature of change that may occur is the degree of teachers' receptivity to different kinds of change such as educational reforms, curriculum innovations and professional development. Up to the present, different researchers have referred to, and examined, teachers' receptivity to change by employing various terms such as: *attitude* (e.g. Sarason, 1991; Hargreaves, 1994; Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996; Tal & Yinon, 2002), *motivation* (e.g. Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Leithwood et al., 2002; Hunzicker, 2004), *openness* (e.g. Tal & Yinon, 2002), *will and capacity* (e.g. Huy, 1999; Ha et al., 2008), *receptivity* (e.g. Moroz & Waugh, 2000; Lee, 2000; Zinkeviciene & Janiunaite 2006; Waugh & Ketusiri, 2009) and *resistance* (e.g. Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Smit, 2005; Zimmerman, 2006; Goodson et al. 2006) to change. As a result, there are variations in the definitions used. However, in my view, the most complete and helpful definition is the following:

Receptivity is both a state and a process. At any fixed point in time, receptivity denotes an interpretive, attitudinal state (both cognitive and emotional) to accept the need for the proposed change. Receptivity as a process shapes and is shaped by the continuous sense making and sense giving activities conducted among various members of the organization...Some degree of receptivity to change is necessary for mobilization and learning to occur.

(Huy, 1999:328)

Huy's (1999) definition not only alludes to the complex nature of receptivity to change, but it also underlines the fact that without a certain degree of receptivity, an individual will not engage in change. In order to visualize the pivotal role of receptivity, Huy (1999) includes a

figure of a change model (Fig. 5) that shows the interplay of the three critical dynamics: receptivity, mobilization, and learning, that he identifies as being integral to the realization of change although he acknowledges that there may be others.

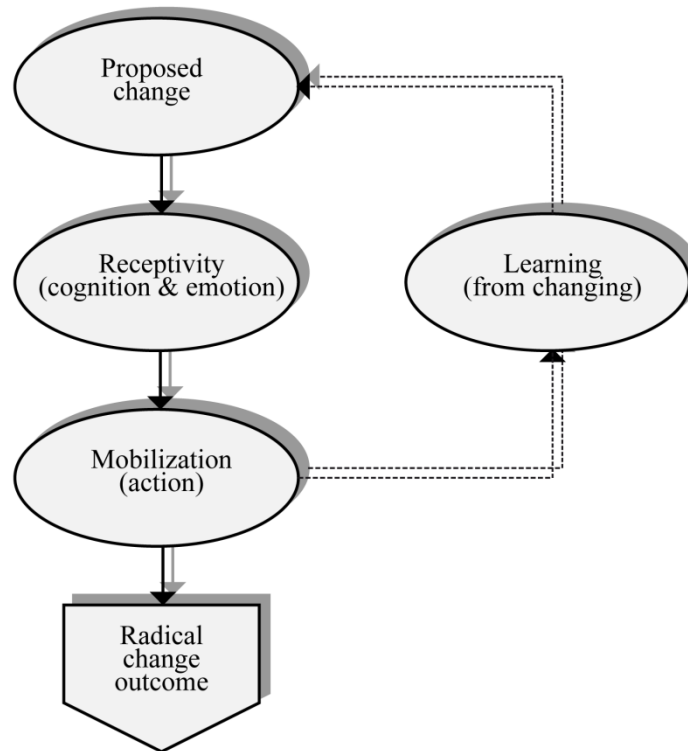


Fig. 5: Change Dynamics Model (Huy, 1999: 329)

In his model, by positioning ‘receptivity’ immediately after ‘proposed change’, and before ‘mobilisation’ that leads to ‘change outcomes’, Huy (1999) emphasises the crucial importance of receptivity in order for change to occur. Furthermore, of relevance to my inquiry, Huy includes not only ‘cognition’ but also ‘emotion’ when defining receptivity. In addition, his model clearly demonstrates the learning process that dynamically interacts with the other two elements.

Beyond receptivity leading to mobilization, individuals and organizations also can learn from the outcomes of the changes they enact, and learning provides a feedback loop from the outcomes of behavioural change back to receptivity.

(Huy, 1999:331)

Although many leading writers and researchers appear to agree with Huy (1999) and consider teacher receptivity as a major factor for understanding why educational change fails or succeeds (Giacquinta, 2005), there is relatively only a small amount of research in the last twenty years that actually focuses on teacher receptivity to change *per se*. For example, one of the qualitative studies that figures strongly is Mellencamp's (1992) inquiry. Mellencamp interviewed 40 teachers in a small rural district and identified five organizational and personal factors as affecting their receptivity to change.

Two factors were organizational in nature: basic conditions and support. Two were personal: meaning and efficacy. Another factor was both organizational and personal: voice.

(Mellencamp, 1992: 8)

Based on these results, she proposed the following model (Fig. 6) to show the interactive relationship among these factors.

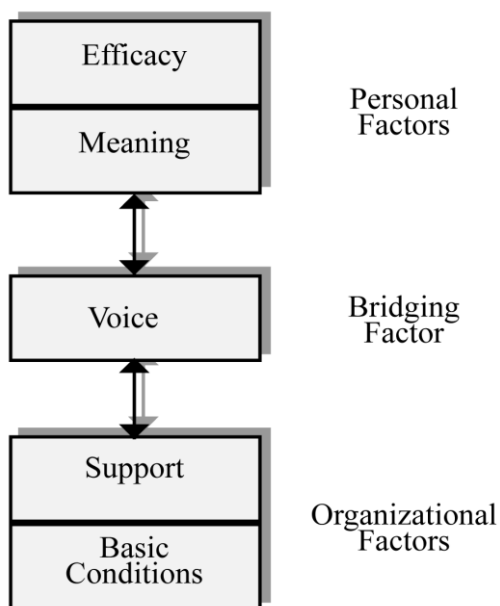


Fig. 6: Factors affecting teacher receptivity to change (Mellencamp, 1992: 33)

As can be seen in this model, the teachers' voice is the bridging factor between the organisational and personal factors. Thus she claimed that

...it is when teachers have a voice in change, defined by the ability to initiate and decide change and to be heard as respected members of the

school community, that they are able to bridge the organizational and the personal and engage in fundamental school change.

(Mellencamp, 1992: 8)

To a certain extent, Mellencamp's (1992) findings seem to support Goodson's (2001b) later affirmation that change involves the successful interaction of external factors (e.g. national educational policies and support), internal conditions (the organisational factors of the institution), as well as the personal and professional concerns of the teachers. However, as I shall suggest, apart from the factors Mellencamp (1992) mentions above, there are also other possible issues, depending on each individual context that may interact and influence teachers' receptivity to change.

Other examples of the research that exists regarding teacher receptivity to change *per se* have been quantitative studies, mainly based on a modified version of Waugh and Punch's (1985, 1987) model of teacher receptivity to a system-wide change. In this model the authors present empirical data for the following main variables that influence teacher receptivity to change.

- Beliefs on general issues of education;
- Overall feelings towards the previous educational system;
- Attitude towards the previous educational system;
- Alleviation of fears and uncertainty associated with the change;
- Practicality of the new educational system in the classroom;
- Perceived expectations and beliefs about some important aspects of the new educational system;
- Personal cost-appraisal of the change; and
- Beliefs on some important aspects of the new educational system in comparison with the previous one.

(Lee, 2000: 96-7)

Waugh and Punch's (1985, 1987) model has since been modified and applied in studies of curriculum innovation in Australia (Waugh & Godfrey, 1993, 1995; Collins & Waugh, 1998; Moroz & Waugh, 2000; Waugh, 2000); Hong Kong (Lee, 2000); and Thailand (Waugh & Ketusiri, 2009). However, no such studies, to my knowledge, either quantitative or qualitative, have yet been carried out in Latin America.

In addition, apart from the previously mentioned models, there are few other theories that attempt to explain teachers' receptivity to change. One such theory is 'A Status-Risk Theory of Receptivity' (Giacquinta, 1975, 2005). According to Giacquinta (2005) receptivity:

- (1) is largely innovation specific,
- (2) is strongly associated with statuses people hold (both formal and informal, both inside and outside the work setting),
- (3) is a direct outcome of what people think would be the probable benefits and/or losses to them (in terms of status-related perquisites) were they to embrace the innovation.

(Adapted from Giacquinta, 2005: 161)

This theory seems to be supported by a number of issues that have been documented in the organisational change literature regarding resistance to change, such as individuals' perception of threats to their

- expertise and proven abilities, and their belief that they lack the knowledge or skills to implement the change successfully (Fullan, 2001; Greenberg & Baron, 2000);
- power relationships (Robbins, 2000);
- social relationships of teachers who have formed strong friendships with their colleagues (Greenberg & Baron, 2000);
- resource allocations (Robbins, 2000).

(Adapted from Zimmerman, 2006: 240)

A rather negative implication that may be derived from this theory, as Giacquinta (2005) himself suggests, is that if receptivity is related to the perception of risk regarding status, would teachers, if they had an active role in change, attempt to influence change so that it would benefit them? In addition, "in case they cannot get their way, might they not compromise on an innovation in ways that assure them more benefits and less risks?" (Giacquinta, 2005: 162). However, although these may be valid questions, the majority of the educational literature and research available focuses more heavily on the factors that appear to influence teachers' receptivity to change, as well as answering the question as to what can be done to enhance their receptivity. For example, apart from the risks previously mentioned, other numerous factors have been identified that may influence teachers' receptivity to change such as:

- A failure to recognize the need for change (Greenberg & Baron, 2000);
- Negative attitude towards change (Awad, 2004);
- Lack of motivation (Hadjimanolis, 1999);
- Habit and sense of security with status quo (Greenberg & Baron, 2000);
- Fear of the unknown resulting in individual continuing prior habits (Fullan, 2001; Greenberg & Baron, 2000; Goleman et al., 2002);
- Resistance as a result of having experienced previously unsuccessful efforts of change (Greenberg & Baron, 2000);
- Personal goals differing from the organizational (Hadjimanolis, 1999);
- Capacity Beliefs - psychological states such as self-efficacy, self-confidence, self-concept, and aspects of self-esteem (Leithwood et al. 2002);
- Lack of knowledge (Hadjimanolis, 1999);
- Context Beliefs such as those depending on negative or positive past change experiences (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Leithwood et al. 2002);
- Lack of support from the central managerial group (Awad, 2004);
- Lack of time (Awad, 2004; Hadjimanolis, 1999; Fullan, 1998);
- Overload (Fullan, 1998).

As to answering the question: what can be done to enhance teachers' receptivity to change? there is now a growing body of research literature, especially in the field of teachers' receptivity to the use of technology (e.g. Liu & Szabo, 2009). Of specific interest for my inquiry is Barnes' (2005) qualitative research, focused on identifying factors that influenced a small group of teachers in Australia to implement a new technology curriculum voluntarily. During his inquiry, Barnes discovered five important factors that influenced teachers' receptivity and engagement in this change: flagging student interest, external curriculum, supportive school environment, personal renewal, and leadership style.

In addition, there is a growing body of research in the field of educational leadership, regarding, in particular, how change leaders may positively influence teachers' receptivity to change. For example, Zimmerman (2006), in her article that examines "Why some teachers resist change and what principals can do about it", proposes research-based strategies to promote teachers' readiness to change, as well as steps that may reduce their resistance, such as

- Developing a culture of shared decision-making based on trust;
- Enhancing teachers' self-efficacy;
- Promoting professional development and peer support;
- Overcoming resistance to change by means of creating "a sense of urgency, developing and operationalizing a vision, rewarding constructive behaviours,

aiming for short-term successes, and creating a professional learning community” (Zimmerman, 2006: 243-4)

In sum, although teacher receptivity is considered one of the vital factors for educational change, there is relatively little research, particularly, qualitative research, that examines receptivity *per se*. Instead, most of the research focuses more on identifying the reasons why teachers resist change and what can be done to assuage their resistance. However, although these studies are valuable towards understanding the complexity involved in teachers’ receptivity to change, they do not explore in any depth how teachers’ response to change may be influenced by the interrelationship of several issues such as: the possible changes in teachers’ personal construal of their professional identity, their relationships with their colleagues, as well as teachers’ emotions towards change that educational reform may imply. Thus the findings of my inquiry, based on a qualitative approach, focused on understanding teachers’ collective positive response to change in a Mexican educational context that explores all these issues, may help to contribute knowledge in this area.

3. Teachers’ Professional Identity

An important personal issue that interrelates with, and possibly influences, how teachers respond to change, is the sense they have of their own professional identity. The majority of the current research regarding the formation of teachers’ professional identities has been centred on teachers in primary and secondary schools (e.g. Day et al., 2006, Soreide, 2006, Watson, 2006), although recently there has also been an increase in studies regarding the identities of university teachers (e.g. Colley et al., 2003; Bahmaker & Avis, 2005; Bathwater & Avis, 2007, Hockings et al., 2007). This research reveals that the concept of a teacher’s professional identity was previously equated with that of role, in other words, the functions that he or she was expected to perform (Goodson & Cole, 1994; Volkmann & Anderson, 1998). However, it did not take into consideration at all how teachers think, and as I shall go on to stress, how they feel, at different points during their careers.

Before the 1990s, the role of a teacher was rather narrowly defined, as teaching was widely considered to be a technical activity (Nixon, 1996; McRobbie, 1994). Teachers were considered merely the content experts of their courses, as technicians who had a “set of relatively ordinary and teachable behaviours which can be improved through training and

practices” (Pennington, 1992: 43, cited in Webb, 1994: 43). In contrast, since the beginning of the 1990s, as more and more demands are made of teachers as educational institutions change and develop, a teacher’s role is viewed as far more complex, demanding and “ever-changing” (Fullan, 1995: 254). Teachers are expected to know about and use different kinds of methodology, be aware of the latest learning theories, as well as, in many cases, be competent in the use of new technologies. They are also expected to become involved in curriculum design and planning, as well as wherever possible, research. In addition, they are becoming “involved more in leadership roles, partnership with colleagues, shared decision-making and providing consultancy to others in their own areas of expertise” (Hargreaves, 1994: 14). As a result, from the 1990s onwards, teachers in general, similar to the ones focused on in this inquiry, “are no longer just in the conservation business; they are in the change business” (Fullan, 1995: 257).

However, roles are not the defining elements of a teacher’s professional identity, given that, as Britzman (1993) stated, “role and function are not synonymous with identity; whereas role can be assigned, the taking up of an identity is a constant social negotiation” (p. 24) between the social experiences that reflect the contexts in which the teacher lives and works, and the teacher’s personal and professional experiences that reflect his or her life history (Day, 2007). Consequently, nowadays the definition of a teacher’s professional identity has been extended to include the teacher’s own personal construal of his or her identity (Beijaard et al., 2004, Ottensen, 2007), which as Tsui (2007) concludes, from her research focused on exploring an EFL teacher’s identity formation, is “highly complex...relational as well as experiential, reificative as well as participative, and individual as well as social” (Tsui, 2007: 678). Moreover, it involves “an ongoing and dynamic process which entails the making sense and (re)interpretation of one’s own values and experiences” (Flores & Day, 2006: 220) that evolves over career stages (Ball & Goodson, 1985; Huberman, 1993; Lasky, 2005). For example, Flores and Day (2006), in their longitudinal study of teachers’ professional identities in the early years of teaching, discovered that teachers’ personal biographies housed key mediating influences such as pre-teaching identity, past influences and contexts of teaching (Figure 7) that had a relative impact on the formation, and transformation, of their identities over time.

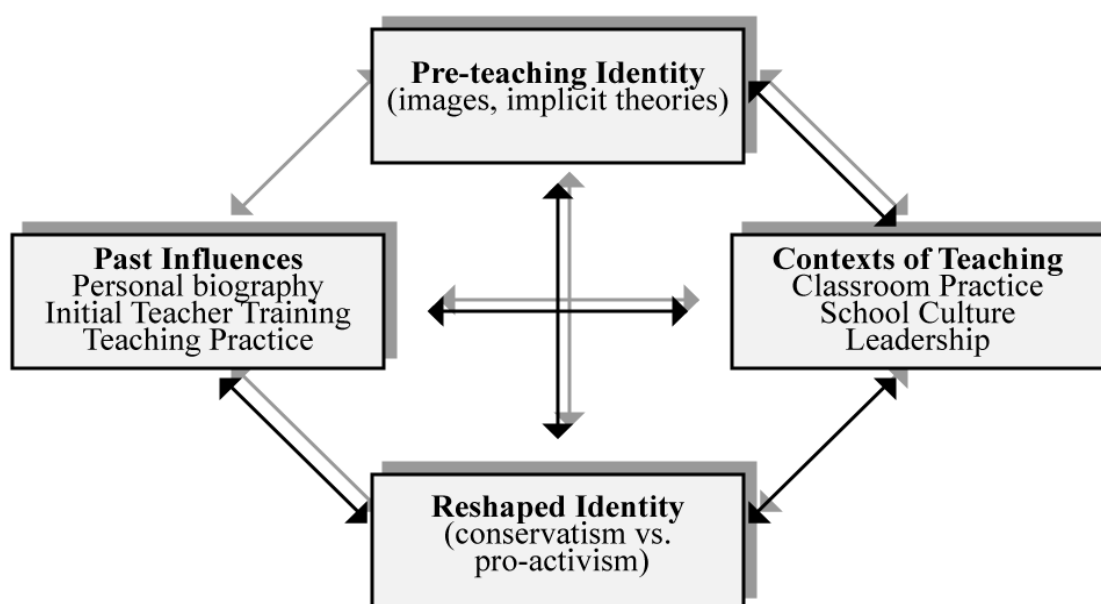


Fig. 7: Key mediating influences on the formation of teacher identity. Adapted from Flores and Day (2006: 230)

Thus, the process of identity construction has been defined by researchers as a self-reflexive endeavour that comprises a “network of personal concerns, values and aspirations in which events are judged and decisions made” (MacLure, 1993: 314) in answer to the questions, “Who am I at this moment?” and “Who do I want to become?” (Beijaard et al. 2004: 122). In other words,

Teachers will define themselves not only through their past and current identities as defined by personal and social histories and current roles but through their beliefs and values about the kind of teacher they hope to be in the inevitably changing political, social, institutional and personal circumstances.

(Day et al. 2006: 610)

For instance, one of the main aspects that was important for Tsui’s (2007) informant’s professional identity formation was the desire of “reifying oneself and having oneself reified as a member of a community” (Tsui, 2007: 678). As such a teacher’s professional identity cannot be considered as either a fixed or stable personal attribute (MacLure, 1993; Day & Hadfield, 1996; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Day, 2002, 2007; Varghese et al., 2005; Day et al., 2006), but as a “relational phenomenon” (Beijaard et al., 2004: 108) that “is continually being informed, formed, and reformed as individuals develop over time and

through interaction with others” (Cooper & Olson, 1996: 80) in the contexts in which they live and work. In other words, as Hooley (2007) succinctly affirms

Professional identity for teachers...is a constant process of negotiating the many socio-cultural forces, trends and structures within which they work and the relationship they seek to develop with knowledge, with students and their families and with other professional colleagues.

(Hooley, 2007: 52-3)

Therefore, a teacher’s personal construal of his or her professional identity may be influenced according to the importance the teacher assigns to a number of factors (Beijaard et al., 2004) at different stages throughout the course of his or her life history while interacting with his or her environment (Zembylas & Bulmahn Barker, 2007). Based on my review of the empirical research available, these include the following:

- Teachers’ personal biography and prior education experiences
- Teachers’ feelings about themselves
- Influence of a teacher’s working context.
- Influence of a teacher’s membership in a teaching culture and/or community
- Teachers’ feelings about reform and political contexts

3.1 Teachers’ Biography

As revealed in the research (e.g. Goodson & Cole, 1994; Carter & Doyle, 1996; Potts, 1997; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Hockings et al., 2007), personal and professional experiences in a teacher’s life history can both inform and affect how their professional identity is constructed and transformed, given that:

...as lives unfold new situations and contexts are interpreted, understood and subjectively incorporated as experiences. Eventually the production and transformation of identities can be seen as a result of this lived process.

(Buch, 1999: 52)

Experiences, in this lived or experiential process, will include a teacher’s prior education (Lasky, 2005) including perceptions of his or her teachers, perceptions of themselves as learners (Beijaard et al, 2000) and their values and beliefs about education (Prosser, 2006), as well as the influence of relevant others and occurrences in their personal social life

(Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Acker, 1999; Ball, 2003, Day, 2007). In sum, similar to the university researchers that Collison's (2004) inquiry focused on, teachers carry with them "a multiplicity of biographical elements" (Collison, 2004: 316), in other words, a 'biographical baggage' that aids them in the process of making sense of their practices and their selves as teachers which thereby influences the construction of their professional identity.

3.2 Teachers' Feelings about Themselves

Teachers' feelings about themselves consist in "their own beliefs and values about what it means to be a teacher and the type of teacher they aspire to be" (Sachs, 2001: 6). Teachers' beliefs and values are important issues, given that, as identified by Nias (1996), in her work concerning the emotional dimension in teaching,

Teachers...experience self-esteem when they feel that they are acting consistently with their beliefs and values...These beliefs help to form a set of self-defining values which are central to a stable sense of identity. Teachers do not feel good about themselves...if they feel that they are acting...in ways which run counter to these values.

(Nias, 1996: 297)

In addition, teachers' feelings are framed by the evaluation of themselves as "subject matter experts, pedagogical experts and didactical experts" (Beijaard et al., 2000: 749). However, nowadays this is further complicated by the growing intensity of teachers' work and the roles they are required to play in change initiatives (Day & Leitch, 2007). As a consequence, teachers' perceptions of whether or not they have "the capacities to manage these...to become and remain effective" (Day et al., 2007: 707) will influence the perception they have of their professional identity, as well as possibly "promote a teacher's commitment to his professional development" (Nault, 2007: 2).

Teachers' feelings concerning the evaluation of themselves as professional may also be influenced by their perception of their status and autonomy. However, this perception of their identity is not "an entirely internal process. Rather, identity is co-constructed with interested others" (Reeves, 2009: 34). That is, by a relational, socially negotiated process (Goldstein, 2003; Harklau, 2000; Johnson, 2006; Lasky, 2005; Marsh, 2002; Morgan, 2004;

Soreide, 2006; Toohey, 2000; Watson, 2006) with their peers, students and educational authorities.

Furthermore, all these elements are influenced by teachers' past, present and future experiences and expectations both within and outside their working context (Nixon, 1996; Hockings, 2007 et al.; Sachs, 2001). All of these elements have an impact on teachers' construction of their professional identity, given that:

The ways in which teachers form their professional identities are influenced by both how they feel about themselves and how they feel about their students. This professional identity helps them to position or situate themselves in relation to their students and to make appropriate and effective adjustments in their practice and their beliefs about and engagement with, students.

(James-Wilson, 2001: 29)

For example, Beijaard's (1995) study of 28 school teachers in the Netherlands revealed that experienced teachers' positive perception of their professional identity was closely aligned to their ability to interact with, and their commitment to serve, their students (Beijaard et. al. 2004). However, teachers who had poor relationships with students could be negatively influenced, often resulting in their departure from the profession (Beijaard, 1995).

3.3 Influence of a Teacher's Working Context

Various researchers (e.g. Reynolds, 1996; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Flores & Day, 2006; Parkinson, 2008; Smit & Fritz, 2008) have highlighted the influential role that the educational context plays in identity formation. For example, Flores and Day (2006) discovered that in the formation of the professional identity of their informants:

The influence of workplace...played a key role on (re)shaping teachers' understanding of teaching, in facilitating or hindering their professional learning and development, and in (re)constructing their professional identities.

(Flores & Day, 2006: 230)

In other words, a teacher's working context, depending on its nature, may have either a negative or positive effect on the professional life of a teacher, as according to Reynolds (1996), "the teachers' workplace is a 'landscape' which can be very persuasive, very

demanding, and, in most cases, very restrictive” (Beijaard et al. 2004: 113). For example, the negative impact of this ‘landscape’ can be found in the number of teachers who leave the profession owing to the fact that they can no longer reconcile their professional identity with the values, practices and/or reforms in their educational context (MacLure, 1993; Beijaard, 1995; Day et al. 2006). Alternatively, teachers may develop “a sense of belonging and purpose...a sense of spiritual well-being” (Parkinson, 2008:52) in a context that appreciates and legitimises their identity (Kelchtermans, 1996; Day et al., 2006; Watson, 2006; Parkinson, 2008) and allows them to “interact in a system characterized by empowerment and political and social agency” (Parkinson, 2008: 52).

3.4 Teacher’s Membership in a Teaching Culture and/or Community

According to Becher and Trowler (2001),

...being a member of a disciplinary community involves a sense of identity and personal commitment ‘a way of being in the world’ a matter of taking a cultural frame that defines a great part of one’s life.

(Becher & Trowler, 2001: 37)

This ‘culture frame’ or community is fundamental as it not only helps to define a teacher’s professional identity, but it also enables it to be ‘socially legitimated’ (Coldron & Smith, 1999: 711). However, this may be more complex than it first appears, given that teachers in their institutional context may be involved in several what may be defined as communities of practices (this chapter, section 5.1), at the same time. For example, teachers, especially in higher education, may be members of “an academic department or (subunit of it)...research, curriculum development or teaching program team” (Trowler & Knight, 2000:30). In addition, it is in these communities that “culture is both enacted and constructed and where personal identity coalesces, is shaped and re-shaped” (Trowler & Knight, 2000:30). In sum, their sense of professional, as well as personal, identity,

...will result from their experience of multi-membership and will involve reconciliation of one identity across many boundaries, influenced by their varying levels of commitment and participation within those communities.

(Anderson, 2008: 87)

Furthermore, I will argue that the success or failure of educational change may be strongly influenced not only by a teacher's "varying levels of commitment and participation" (Anderson, 2008: 87), but also by the nature of the interpersonal relationships with his or her colleagues within these cultures and/or communities (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992).

3.5 Teachers' Feelings about Reform and Political Contexts

Over the years, educational reforms and changes have influenced the formation of professional identities (Henkel, 2000; Geijsela & Meijersb, 2005; Lasky, 2005; Day, 2008). For example, these changes have required fundamental, massive shifts in teachers' roles from being a transmitter to a facilitator of knowledge and teacher/researcher. As a result, this change in roles may affect the way a teacher construes his or her professional identity (Volkman & Anderson, 1988; Beijaard et al., 2000). In particular,

...the ways and extent to which reforms are received, adopted and sustained will not only be influenced by their emotional selves but will exercise influence upon them.

(Day et al., 2006: 613)

For example, McNess et al. (2003), focus on the impact of current imposed educational reforms on teachers' practices in three European countries (England, France and Denmark). They support Ball (2001) who argues that educational reforms "have promoted high degrees of uncertainty, instability and vulnerability for teachers" (p.7). In addition, further research focused on examining the interrelationships among teacher identity, emotion, and educational change in Canada (Hargreaves, 2005; Lasky, 2005), the Netherlands (van Veen et al., 2005), and the United States (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005; Zembylas, 2005), has suggested that teachers' emotional experiences of change influence not only the formation of their professional identities, but also their response to change. As a result, researchers, such as Day (2007), conclude that there is a need to work "closely with teachers and their individual emotional and intellectual identities because unless these are addressed reform is unlikely to succeed in the longer term" (Day: 2007: 608).

Finally, the formation of a teacher's professional identity is rooted both in the personal and professional dimensions of being a teacher, given that as Day (2008) remarks,

There are unavoidable interrelationships between professional and personal identities, if only because the overwhelming evidence is that teaching demands significant personal investment.

(Day, 2008: 250)

A teacher's professional identity, therefore, not only includes societal perceptions about what a teacher should know and how a teacher is expected to think and behave professionally, but also what teachers themselves discover to be of importance in their teaching practices (Vähäsantanen et al., 2008), as well as in their personal life histories (Tickle, 2000, Day, 2007). Furthermore, as Beijaard et al., (2004) citing Coldron and Smith (1999) state:

Professional identity is not something teachers have, but something they use in order to make sense of themselves as teachers. The way they explain and justify things in relation to other people and contexts expresses, as it were, their professional identity.

(Beijaard et al., 2004: 123)

A teacher's personal construal of his or her professional identity can thus be a strong mediating influence on his or her "sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness" (Day et al., 2006: 601) and consequently, his or her response to change (Beijaard et al, 2000; Day, 2002, van Veen & Slegers, 2006). However, as Day et al. (2006) state, more "investigation of those factors which influence positively and negatively the contexts in which these occur and the consequences for practice, is essential" (p. 601) in particular, how a teacher's personal construct of professional identity may influence his or her response to change (Nixon, 1996; Beijaard et al., 2000; Beijaard et al., 2004). This is true, above all in the field of TESOL, where very few studies have focused on teacher identity (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Morgan, 2004; Pavlenko, 2003; Pennington, 2002), especially regarding the possible issues and processes that are involved in its formation. Therefore, my inquiry, focused on a number of TEFL teachers and our response to change that included a transformation in our professional identity, may make a contribution to this field of knowledge.

4. Teachers' Emotional Response to Change

In the well-known words of Fullan (1982) regarding educational change "educational change depends on what teachers think and do – it's as simple and as complex as that" (p.

107). In other words, change depends on a combination of both cognitive and behavioural changes. However, I would argue that both cognitive and behavioural change is further complicated by people's emotional response to change which influences what they "think and do".

However, although the literature on teachers' emotionality and their emotional response to change has been growing during the last decade, the emotional dimension of teaching is still an issue that is largely ignored by educational policy makers in general (e.g. Day & Leitch, 2001; Smit, 2003). Even worse, it would appear to be that there is still the assumption that "teachers think and act; but never really feel" Hargreaves (1998b:559). This is an important misconception as teaching and learning are emotional practices. Hargreaves (2002) argues

As an emotional practice, teaching activates colours and expresses teachers' own feelings and actions as well as the feelings and actions of others with whom teachers interact. Teachers are engaged in an emotional practice when they enthuse their students or bore them ...when they trust their colleagues or are suspicious of them. All teaching is therefore inextricably emotional either by design, or default.

(Hargreaves, 2002:5)

Therefore, it follows that there is also an emotional dimension involved in teachers' response to change. Nevertheless, little attention has been focused on this issue (Spillane et al., 2002; Schmidt & Datnow, 2005; van Veen & Slegers, 2006). Furthermore, in contrast to my inquiry that highlights our collective positive emotional response to change, when attention has been afforded to this dimension, it has been focused more pointedly towards some of the negative rather than the positive emotional responses to change (e.g. Blackmore, 1996; Woods et al., 1997; Troman & Woods, 2000; van Veen et al., 2005; Conley & Glasman, 2008), in addition to discussing how to 'manage' these (Hargreaves, 2000b; Klaassen, 2002; Lasky, 2000; Day & Leitch, 2001; Winograd, 2003; Zemblyas, 2004; Oplatka, 2007). Consequently, it still seems to be the case as Hargreaves (1998a) argued over a decade ago that

Emotions are usually acknowledged and talked about within the educational change and reform literature only insofar as they help administrators and reformers 'manage' and offset teachers' resistance to

change, or help them set the climate or mood in which the ‘really important’ business of cognitive learning or strategic planning can take place.

(Hargreaves, 1998a: 837)

This is probably owing to the generally accepted view that educational and organizational changes are “rational, cognitive processes in pursuit of rational cognitive ends” (Hargreaves, 1998b: 558) in which emotions do not have a role given that they are considered as “somehow separate from reasoning” (Hargreaves, 1998b: 560). For example, although it is recognised that professional development enables teachers to become more capable change participants (e.g. Fullan, 1991; Borko et al. 2002; Guskey, 2002; Reio, 2005), it still appears to be the case that “teachers’ emotions are either ignored in much teacher development or re-inscribed within rational frameworks where they can be planned and managed in dispassionate ways” (Day & Leitch, 2001: 406). This is surprising given that “feelings and emotion...have a vital role in the development of learning” (Day & Leitch, 2001: 406) and, by extension, their engagement in change processes.

According to Zembylas and Bulmahn Barker (2007), teachers’ responses to change emerge from the interrelationship between the rational and the emotional. This echoes Hargreaves’ (1998a) prior statement that

Educational change initiatives do not just affect teachers’ knowledge, skill and problem-solving capacity. They affect a whole web of significant and meaningful relationships that make up the work of schools and that are at the very heart of the teaching process...Teachers make heavy emotional investments in these relationships. Their sense of success and satisfaction depends on them.

(Hargreaves, 1998a: 838)

In other words, a major part of a teacher’s life revolves around the meaningful social relationships they have with other people that are an integral part of their profession as well as irrevocably, their emotionality (Hargreaves, 2001a, b; Zembylas, 2004). Teachers invest time and effort in, and are responsible for, the quality of students’ learning and progress; they also work in close association with colleagues and are accountable to both educational authorities and parents (Hargreaves, 2001a, b). Owing to this close contact with other people and their work that involves both a personal and professional investment in their

practices, the school as Nias (1996) affirms, “becomes a main site for their self-esteem and fulfilment” (p. 297). Accordingly, these feelings of self-esteem and self-fulfilment, hinge on teachers’ own perceptions, as well as those of ‘significant others’, as to whether or not, they are succeeding or failing in their practices. A teacher’s ‘significant others’, apart from the students they teach, are the adults who populate their world. It is the relationships among these adults, as Hargreaves (2002) mentions, that “seem to generate the most heightened expressions of emotionality among them” (p.4). This occurs especially during times of change when teachers need to work with their colleagues, as this may either result in feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Little, 1996). Thus their perception, their “unique sense of self which every teacher has is socially grounded” (Nias, 1996: 294).

Neither cognition nor feeling can be separated from the social and cultural forces which help to form them and which are in turn shaped by them. The emotional reactions of individual teachers to their work are intimately connected to the view that they have of themselves and others.
(Nias, 1996: 294)

As a result, teachers’ response to change may be influenced by how they perceive change to either threaten or enhance their “unique sense of self” (Nias, 1996: 294), that is, the personal construction of their professional identity. This is evidenced by a small but growing body of research that clearly shows how emotions are a key dimension of teachers’ lives including their professional identities, especially in contexts of educational change (e.g. Kelchtermans, 2005; Hargreaves, 2005; van Veen et al., 2005; Schmidt & Datnow, 2005; King, 2006; van Veen & Sleegers, 2006; Zembylas & Bulmahn Barker, 2007; Darby, 2008).

For instance, Schmidt and Datnow (2005), based on their awareness that there had been scarcely little research “to illuminate how emotions are embedded in, and shaped by, reforms and how these emotions manifest themselves in, and affect, teachers’ work” (p.950), explored teachers’ emotions in the process of making sense of educational reforms. They discovered that, depending on the nature of their interaction, teachers’ emotional responses to reform ranged widely from very positive to very negative feelings, given that

Meaning making is emotionally laden as teachers sort through feelings of anxiety of the unknown, frustration of the ambiguous, joy and recognition

of shared ideologies (i.e. reform and self), and guilt in constructing modifications despite possible professional repercussions
(Schmidt & Datnow, 2005: 962)

Thus they concluded that whatever the nature of any change, “teachers need to find it meaningful” (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005: 962) otherwise little real change would be possible.

Another example is the research of van Veen and Slegers (2006) that focused on exploring teachers’ emotions in a context of change. In particular, these authors examined “what the current reforms mean for teachers, how what they think is important in their work is affected, and how they appraise and emotionally experience those contexts of reform” (van Veen & Slegers, 2006: 87). They discovered that the way in which teachers appraise and respond to educational reforms

...is largely determined by whether the teachers perceive their professional identities as being reinforced or threatened by reforms. This determines not only what teachers think about the reforms...but also how they *feel* about the reforms.

(van Veen & Slegers, 2006:106)

Darby’s (2008) research findings further extend this idea. These findings show that “school reform initiative that at first challenged the teachers’ professional self-understandings...subsequently supported their reconstruction” (p.1161) and improved their teaching practices. According to the author,

These improvements left teachers ecstatic, and their pride and excitement in the students’ achievements and their own success made all the pain and uncertainty they had experienced seem worthwhile.

(Darby, 2008: 1171)

Of particular interest for my inquiry, is the ethnographic research carried out by Zembylas and Bulmahn Barker (2007) regarding the emotional responses of six elementary teachers in the U.S.A who were involved in a change process during a two year period. These authors not only confirm prior research that “Educational change...seems inevitably to be a deeply emotional sense-making experience for teachers” (p.251), but they also highlight another important issue: “the space teachers create to deal with reform in their school”

(Zembylas & Bulmahn Barker, 2007: 256). The authors define their conceptualisation of the term “spaces for coping” (p.238) as

...those spaces emergent through the enactment of practices that attempt to deal with educational reform in terms of awareness, thinking, feeling, and relating...an understanding of coping in terms of signifying practices and processes...the term “spaces for coping” captures the inseparable components of the dynamics of spatial production. The concept of spaces for coping explores how efforts to attend to and through processes and practices can work to extend rather than diminish the emotional field in which teachers move.

(Zembylas & Bulmahn Barker, 2007: 238)

Their research identifies three aspects of spaces for coping with change that were created by the teachers in their inquiry:

- (1) Time and space as sources of social and emotional support;
- (2) Teacher collegiality and trust;
- (3) Teachers’ moral values and concerns.

(Adapted from Zembylas & Bulmahn Barker, 2007: 256)

Their findings both incorporate, and expand on, Hargreaves’ findings (2000b, 2001a, b, 2002, 2005) in his inquiries which focused on “how teachers’ emotions are experienced and represented in various contexts and in patterns of interaction with others who are part of teachers’ working lives” (Hargreaves, 2002: 7). Hargreaves grounds his understanding of teachers’ emotions during interpersonal relationships in two basic concepts:

Emotional understanding defined by Denzin (1984) as an

...intersubjective process requiring that one person enter into the field of experience of another and experience for herself the same or similar experiences experienced by another. The subjective interpretation of another’s emotional experience from one’s standpoint is central to emotional understanding. Shared and shareable emotionality lie at the core of what it means to understand and meaningfully enter into the emotional experiences of another.

(Denzin, 1984: 137)

Emotional geographies that, according to Hargreaves (2000b, 2001a, b, 2002; 2005), consist in

The spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure and color the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other.

(Hargreaves, 2005: 968)

As indicated by these concepts, emotions are not only personal dispositions but they are also social or cultural constructions, influenced by interpersonal relationships and systems of social values (Zembylas, 2004). That is, according to Denzin (1984), emotions are “a form of consciousness, lived, experienced, articulated, and felt” (Zembylas, 2004: 186). Thus emotional understanding during interpersonal relationships may be achieved by any number of the following:

1. The subjective interpretation of another’s emotional experience from one’s own as well as the other’s perspective.
2. Shared and sharable emotionality.
3. An approbation of the other’s perspective as one’s own.
4. The merging of shared feelings of experience into a common field.
5. A production, reproduction, or co-production of the other’s emotional experiences.
6. Vicarious participation in the other’s emotionality and visualization.
7. An awareness and visualization of the other’s body as a field of expression for their experience.
8. A shared biographic situation, a common language and stock of knowledge.
9. Emotional infection and contagion.
10. Remembered emotionality.

(Denzin, 1984:145-6)

One of the main ways of establishing emotional understanding, therefore, as implied by this list, is “by developing long-standing, close relationships with others” (Hargreaves, 2005: 968). However, by implication, when such close relationships do not exist this may lead to emotional misunderstandings, that is, when people “mistake their feelings for the feeling of the other (Denzin, 1984: 134). An example of this may be observed

...in teachers’ relations with colleagues, where lack of closeness in relationship or of similarity in identity threaten the bases for effective emotional understanding

(Hargreaves, 2005: 968)

Regarding the issue of closeness and/or distance in teachers' relationships, Hargreaves (2000b, 2001a, b, 2002, 2005), argues that teachers' emotional understanding and misunderstanding result from what he defines as emotional geographies (Table 3).

personal geographies	that delineate how close to or distant from one another, people become in the personal aspects of their relationships
cultural geographies	their differences of race, culture, gender and disability, including different ways of experiencing and expressing emotion , can create distance between people, and lead them to be treated as stereotypes
moral geographies	where people pursue common purposes and feel senses of accomplishment together , or where they are defensive about their own purposes and unconcerned or in disagreement about the purposes of others
professional geographies	where definitions and norms of professionalism either set professionals apart from their colleagues and clients, or open them up to exploring professional issues together
political geographies	where differences of power and status can distort interpersonal communication, or where such differences can be used not to protect people's own interests but to empower others
physical geographies	of time and space which can bring and keep people in proximity over long periods so that relationships might develop, or which can reduce these relationships to strings of episodic interactions.

**Table 3: Summarised definition of emotional geographies [bold my emphasis]
(Adapted from Hargreaves, 2001b: 508-9)**

However, it is important to emphasise that when defining this concept, Hargreaves also includes three caveats:

- There are no “natural” or “universal” rules of emotional geography in teaching or elsewhere...Like senses of personal space, emotional geographies are culture bound, not context free.
- The emotional geographies of human interaction are not only physical phenomena...[they] are therefore subjective as well as objective in nature.
- Emotional geographies of teaching are therefore active accomplishments by teachers that structure and enculture their work, as much as being structured and encultured by it.

(Adapted from Hargreaves, 2001a: 1061-2)

In sum, given that, as Martin and Dowson (2009) affirm, “intrapersonal energy, gained from interpersonal relationships, provides a primary pathway toward motivated engagement in life activities” (p.330); both Hargreaves’ (2000b, 2001a, b, 2002, 2005) and Zembylas and Bulmahn Barker’s (2007) research findings have a significant relevance for my inquiry. That is, how the concepts of emotional understanding may influence teachers’ interrelationships and thus their response to change.

Up to the present, however, apart from the inquiries mentioned above, there are few other inquiries (Sutton & Wheatly, 2003; Day, 2007) focused on how teachers develop emotional understanding (Denzin, 1984) of each other (Zembylas, 2007) in a physical, face-to-face, rather than an on-line, context. There is, however, prior research in studies of successful cultures of collaboration. In these inquiries, it has been reported that teachers spend a lot of time talking to each other and, as such, reveal and share their attitudes, emotions, perceptions, values and beliefs (Nias et al., 1989). By means of these collegial conversations and working together on shared projects (Little, 1990), it is considered that stronger personal and professional relationships may be developed as “The sharing of lives involves the sharing of emotions, and people come to understand others more deeply and develop reciprocal, trusting relationships” (Jarzabkowski, 2002:5) especially as “in these interactions there is validation of colleagues as equals” (Zembylas & Bulmahn Barker, 2007: 239). As a result of these collaborative interrelationships, teachers may become more flexible and participative in changes, owing to their feeling that they are academically and emotionally supported by their colleagues, and so better equipped to face new challenges and demands that otherwise may be perceived as threatening if they are working in isolation (Jarzabkowski, 1999).

In short, the crucial point to underline here is that successful collaboration and change will depend on the nature of teachers’ interrelationships (Zembylas & Bulmahn Barker, 2007). However, although “collegial relationships create important spaces for teachers to cope with change...it is also possible that these spaces may simultaneously undermine the reform effort” (Zembylas & Bulmahn Barker, 2007: 252), especially if their strong “social ties...inhibit independent thinking and action” (Ávila de Lima, 2001: 108), or if they feel that by engaging in change, their interrelationships with their colleagues may be put at risk (Zembylas & Bulmahn Barker, 2007). Consequently, as these researchers state, more

inquiry is needed in order to explore teachers and change, not only at an individual, but also at a collective level. This is particularly the case in countries in the process of development. Apart from Smit's (2003) study in South Africa that attempts to understand and explain the emotional state of teachers during educational change, there is very little research that has been carried out in other developing countries. This is an important omission, for as Smit (2003) affirms,

It appears reasonable to assume that teachers' experiences, emotions and understandings of...change...would be influenced and constructed by the contexts in which they work.

(Smit, 2003:1)

Therefore, my inquiry, focused on teachers' collective response to change in a Mexican university, including an account of how we developed our emotional understanding while engaging together in change, will contribute to existing knowledge regarding the emotional dimension of teachers' interrelationships. In addition, it will extend knowledge concerning how this dimension may have influenced our response to change.

5. Teachers' Communities

In recent years, the research literature regarding different kinds of teachers' communities has led to a deeper understanding of "the organizational structures, relationships and nature of individuals within an organization", as well as the "ways that community members can work together to facilitate change and school improvement" (InPraxis Group Inc. 2006: 7). In particular, regarding the interplay between professional development and the nature of teachers' collegial relationships, various leading writers (e.g. DuFour et. al. 2005; Graham, 2007; Stoll & Louis, 2007; Lieberman, 2008; Vescio et al., 2008) have affirmed that when teachers can work together and share their experiences with colleagues, this can have a profound impact on teachers' and students' learning, as well as educational change. For example, grounded in their extensive research into school-based learning communities, McLaughlin and Talbert (2006) argue that these communities can negotiate meaning between external policy demands and their own context and culture.

Various terms have been employed in the research literature to refer to these communities such as: communities of continuous inquiry and improvement (Hord, 1997); communities

of practice (Wenger, 1998; 2000); learning communities (Oxley, 2001); professional learning communities (Swick, 2001; Achinstein, 2002); communities of learning (Burns, 2002); and community learning networks (Chen, 2003). However, here I will only centre on the two that appear to have significant relevance for my inquiry.

- Communities of Practice
- Professional Learning Communities

5.1 Communities of Practice

According to Gajda and Koliba (2008:137), “Communities of practice form the basic building blocks of a school’s larger professional learning community”. The notion of communities of practice (CoPs) was first introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) who proposed CoPs as a social mode of learning. According to Wenger’s (1998) seminal work that followed:

A CoP is a unique combination of three fundamental elements. These elements are a *domain* of knowledge that creates a common ground and sense of common identity, a *community* of people who care about the domain and create the social fabric of learning, and a shared *practice* that the community develops to be effective in its domain.

(McDonald et al., 2008: 2)

Defined as naturally forming or sponsored (Nickols, 2000) “self-organising systems” (Owen, 2004: 6), CoPs are formed by any number of people, in any line of work or setting. For example, nowadays, they “may be either “present” or “virtual” communities” (St. Clair, 2008: 25). In addition, people may be members of several such communities and have a different level of participation in each.

Since Wenger’s (1998) work was published, different practitioners and researchers in diverse areas, such as business and education, have proffered varying definitions of CoPs. As a result, there is no one definition of CoPs that fits all contexts. However, there are certain characteristics that these definitions have in common, albeit to differing degrees (Kimble et al., 2008). Depending on their goals, interests and pursuits, people can be the principal members of some CoPs while in others they are only fringe members.

The membership involves whoever participates in and contributes to the practice. People can participate in different ways and to different degrees.
(Wenger, 1998a: 3-4)

The membership in a CoP grows through a process, referred to in the literature, as 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lave, 1997; Wenger, 1998). That is, new members may, over time, progress "from being a novice to an expert" (McDonald & Star, 2006: 3), and acquire a more central position in the CoP. This, however, depends on the nature of their interaction and whether they can successfully negotiate meaning, as well as acquire the shared beliefs of the community (Owen, 2004). The crucial factor however, on which membership in a CoP is hinged is that the members share:

...a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis

(Wenger et. al., 2002: 4)

By means of their "participation in collective life on a daily basis" (Owen, 2004: 6), apart from sharing goals and interests, employing common practices, language and similar tools, the members of this community can develop a shared set of beliefs, and a shared value system (Wenger, 1998). In other words, a collective social identity is fostered based on the members':

- *joint enterprise*: "that involves, among other things, making money, being an adult, becoming proficient...having fun, doing well, feeling good, not being naïve, being personable, dealing with boredom, thinking about the future, keeping one's place" (Wenger, 1998: 78);
- *mutual engagement*: the members share responsibility, collective understanding and action that enable them to negotiate shared meaning (Wenger, 1998);
- *shared repertoire*: of ideas, concepts, commitments, memories, and ways of doing things (Wenger, 1998);
- *shared identity*: formed by social interaction and participation. "Participating...is both a kind of action and a form of belonging. Such participation shapes not only what we do, but also who we are and how we interpret what we do (Wenger, 1998: 4).

These four vital characteristics strengthen interpersonal relationships and identity in such a community, given that this type of participation lends itself to the development of what Putnam (2000: 19) and others have termed ‘social capital’:

Social capital consists of the stock of active connections among people: the trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviours that bind the members of human networks and communities and make cooperative action possible.

(Cohen & Prusak, 2001:4)

The development of social capital has been shown by several researchers (e.g. Adler & Kwon, 2002; Uzzi & Lancaster, 2003; Frank et al., 2004; Gibbons, 2004) to have had an influence on “a range of outcomes related to reform implementation, including increased problem solving, transfer of complex information, and diffusion of innovations” (Coburn & Russell, 2008: 206). Trust especially, one of the vital elements of social capital, as highlighted later on in my inquiry (Chapter Six: 2.6.5a,), is highly regarded in society as it can facilitate all kinds of both business, as well as social, negotiations and transactions, thus leading, not only to the resolution of problems, but also to the enrichment of human relationships. For example, research has revealed that in educational institutions where there is a climate of trust, teachers are said to be more open when talking about their practices, as well as more prone to taking risks (Hoffman et al., 2006).

Given that a CoP depends on the development of interpersonal relationships and a collective social identity, although it may be cultivated (Wenger et al., 2002), it does not automatically come into being but emerges over time, owing to the shared knowledge and the “passion for joint enterprise” (Wenger & Synder, 2000: 139) of its members. Wenger et al. (2002), describe this process during which the community evolves, grows and declines by means of five stages (Fig. 8).

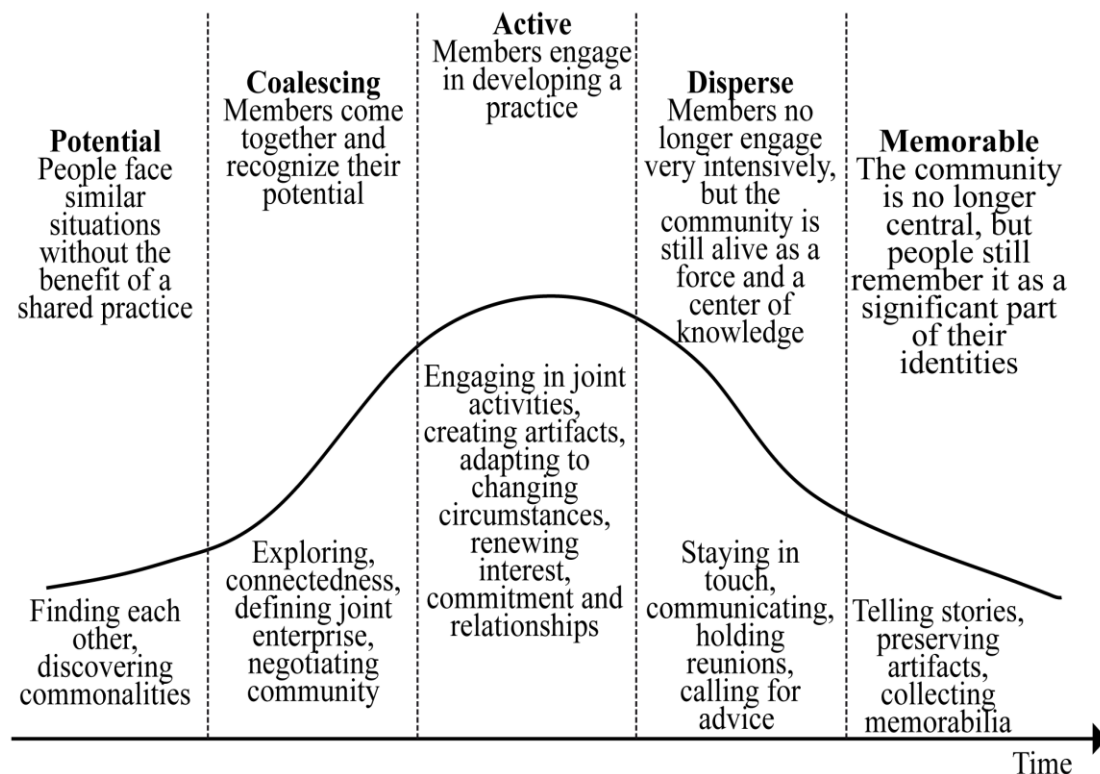


Fig. 8: Community of practice stages of development (Wenger et al., 2002: 69)

Thus these authors propose that, in contrast to a team, specific work unit or network, the life cycle of a CoP, instead of depending on external mandate for its existence, will continue while it is of value to its members given that it

...develop(s) around things that matter to people. As a result, their practices reflect the members' own understanding of what is important ...Even when a community's actions conform to an external mandate; it is the community not the mandate that produces the practice. In this sense, communities of practice are fundamentally self-organizing systems.

(Wenger, 1998: 2)

The important issue is that the nature of a CoP promotes and strengthens learning (e.g. Wenger, 1998; Hung & Chen, 2001; von Kotze, 2003; Kimble et al. 2008). New people to the practice can learn from people who are already members, while the latter can learn from the different perspectives the newcomers bring with them. In particular, Hung and Chen (2001), basing their argument on situated cognition, Vygotskian thought and the nature of communities of practice, categorised four dimensions of learning that contribute to both developing and sustaining these communities: "situatedness, commonality,

interdependency and infrastructure” (Hung & Chen, 2001:7). My summary of these concepts follows.

- *Situatedness*: Both implicit and explicit knowledge may be acquired by ‘joint enterprise’ combined with ‘mutual engagement’ in a shared context of application and use. These socially constructed acts dynamically interact, and result in, more meaningful learning, that is, situated cognition.
- *Commonality*: Owing to shared goals, interests, and problems, the members’ ‘joint enterprise’, and ‘mutual engagement’ are not only validated, but lead to the community members’ bonding and the emergence of their collective social identity. Wenger et al. (2002), affirm that this sense of community is vital in the development of social learning.
- *Interdependency*: When mutually engaged in a ‘joint enterprise’ members can profit from others’ abilities, given that “An individual learns not just from the activities that they carry out themselves but from different members of the community” (Hung & Chen, 2001:7).
- *Infrastructure*: Members are aware of the process entailed in their ‘mutual engagement’ in a ‘joint enterprise’ and depend on each other for support and encouragement.

In short, CoPs are socio-cultural contexts of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) where members, in this case teachers, owing to the nature of their participation and acquiring knowledge by means of a social process:

...learn through practice (learning as doing), through meaning (learning as intentional), through community (learning as participating and being with others), and through identity (learning as changing who we are)...rooted in the human need to feel a sense of belonging and of making a contribution to a community where experience and knowledge function as part of community property.

(Lieberman, 2008: 227)

Thus, CoPs can play an indispensable role in professional development, given that they promote

A process of learning how to put knowledge into practice through engagement in practice within a community of practitioners.

(Schlager & Fusco, 2004: 4)

Of particular relevance to my inquiry, recent research (Table 4) has advocated the benefits of educational systems cultivating CoPs, not only for teachers (e.g. Klein et al. 2005; Klein & Connell, 2008), but also for students (e.g. Hildreth & Kimble, 2008), as well as their educational institutions (e.g. Caldwell, 2008).

School	Staff
Knowledge is externalized (for training) (Zboralski & Germunden, 2005)	Personal knowledge increased through access to collective knowledge (Zboralski & Germunden, 2005)
There is synergy across the school (within individual classrooms) (Wenger, n.d.)	Individuals can gain a higher reputation (Zboralski & Germunden, 2005)
The school gains a flexibility regarding the future (Zboralski & Germunden, 2005)	Personal job satisfaction is higher (Zboralski & Germunden, 2005)
Collaboration between staff means distributing leadership (Harris, 2003)	Staff are mentored into leadership roles (Harris, 2003)
Schools can innovate and keep abreast of new teaching methodology (Wenger, n.d.)	Sense of belonging to a group (forming professional identity) (Moltke, 2007)

Table 4: Benefits of CoPs for both the school and its staff (Allan, 2008: 4-5)

However, although there are many potential benefits, the cultivation of CoPs may be more complex than educational institutions who wish to adopt this model for learning and educational change may realise. For example, care must be taken to encourage CoPs not to “perpetuate stereotypes, prejudice, and staid or destructive practices” (Printy, 2008: 189). Furthermore, although McDonald and Star (2006), in their paper focused on teachers in an Australian university, make a strong case that supports the cultivation of CoPs, they also pinpoint the following five challenges that are involved:

- the need for financial support to provide infrastructure and administrative support,
- overcoming academic time poverty and the institutional demands on these academics,
- the need for a well placed institution champion(s),
- the difficulty of identifying and quantifying outcomes from the CoP, and
- the question of sustainability and ongoing support.

(Adapted from McDonald and Star, 2006: 72)

A further challenge is that most of the research on CoPs is based on knowledge gained from business contexts; therefore, awareness, as well as more specific knowledge of how to nurture such communities in educational contexts, is needed so that conditions may be provided that help to trigger and support the different stages involved in the natural development of the community. For example, one of the necessary conditions may involve institutional authorities being more respectful of teachers' time. Owing to heavy teaching loads (Forgasz & Leder, 2006), in addition to the growing institutional and even bureaucratic demands, teachers may feel they are unable to devote the time (Goodyear, 2005) that is vital to developing and sustaining a CoP. Therefore, organisational support is essential, otherwise "communities of practice may languish, depending on the volunteer or spare time efforts of particularly energetic teachers" (Galluci, 2003: 19) such as the teachers focused on in my inquiry.

In addition, elements that may foster a climate of trust especially need to be seriously examined. Traditionally, individualism has been the most common form of teacher culture in educational institutions. The main advantage of teachers' isolation within the confines of the classroom is that it "offers many teachers a welcome measure of privacy, a protection from outside interference which they often value" (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992: 220). Whether or not this individualism has evolved due to choice, preference, habit, lack of opportunities or conformity with a set way of working, the results are the same, and neither teacher development nor educational change are ever seriously entertained within this culture (Hargreaves, 1992). Therefore, in order to cultivate this kind of community in such a culture, it is essential to nurture trust so that teachers feel both motivated and safe when engaging in this learning process that involves developing interpersonal professional relationships. Finally, apart from trust, another major challenge is identifying the institutional issues that teachers may also feel passionate about which will motivate their engagement in the community. Without this match in passion, it will be challenging, to say the least, to cultivate a thriving community of practice (Denning, 2004).

In sum, the learning in a community of practice is a participatory process that, in the words of Ng and Hung (2003: 62), is focused on "doing, becoming, and belonging, not simply acquiring". This strengthens professional development as

A professional community characterized by a focus on student learning, peer collaboration, and reflective dialog provides social and normative support for teacher participation in professional development.

(Smylie et al., 2001: 57-58)

Two of the most important recognised benefits that are highlighted in CoP research are authentic learning, and a more collaborative culture. Owing to these and other potential benefits, different types of CoPs with diverse goals such as improving practice, as well as constructing and/or sharing knowledge (Klein et al. 2005), may now be found in various educational contexts across the world. These include:

- CoPs in the classroom- that is the school as a community of learners;
- CoPs to support students;
- Virtual CoPs supporting new and existing teachers;
- CoPs in informal education;
- CoPs supporting educational specialists;
- Informal CoPs created by interested educational practioners;
- CoPs in higher and adult education;
- Local-area CoPs supporting teachers in specific geographical locations;
- CoPs in e-learning;
- Curriculum-specific CoPs; and
- Subject-specific CoPs, for example English as a foreign language.

(Hildreth & Kimble, 2008: x)

In conclusion, McDonald et al. (2008), grounded in their exploration of Australian university teachers' stories concerning their response to the development of a community of practice, argue that

CoPs are valuable additions to the professional life and professional spaces of academics. These spaces provide a number of key supports for academic staff: real communication and ongoing dialogue across institutional barriers; a sense of trust required to open up a safe place to share common challenges and enable social learning; support and professional development; and a model of strategic thinking and strategic action.

(McDonald et al., 2008: 2)

However, a necessary caveat to mention at this point is that the cultivation of CoPs is not a simple process. It entails serious consideration of the possible interacting elements and their interrelationships otherwise the growth of CoPs may be stunted. For example, Anderson's

(2008) qualitative inquiry into CoPs and part-time lecturers discovered how “institutional policy and procedures can significantly affect the development of a shared repertoire within CoPs” (Anderson, 2008: 96). Therefore, more research is needed in different educational contexts in order to understand how educational organizations may cultivate and nurture CoPs, in addition to identifying the conditions, and creating awareness of what they involve. Consequently, the findings (Chapter Six) of my inquiry that explore these issues may help to contribute knowledge regarding how CoPs emerge and develop.

5.2 Professional Learning Communities

Although both the definition and interpretation of professional learning communities (PLCs) vary from one educational context to another (Stoll et al, 2006; Williams et al., 2008), there does appear to be a shared consensus that a ‘professional community of learners’ is one

...in which the teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning, and act on their learning. The goal of their actions is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals for the students’ benefit.

(Hord, 1997:1)

Here Hord (1997) is highlighting the idea that by working and learning together, teachers and school administrators may not only develop and improve their own learning and that of the students, but also contribute to school development (Stoll et al, 2006; Reichstetter, 2006). In other words, as recognised in the business world (Senge, 1990), in order for an organisation to change it must become adept at learning. For this to happen

...each individual member of an organization must continue to learn. Without individual growth, the organization will stand still...An organization will not continue learning if the individuals are not learning.

(Hughes & Kritsonis, 2006: 2)

Consequently, an organisation, instead of only focusing on training individuals to get the job done, needs to “tap people’s commitment” (Senge, 1990:4), and promote conscious, continuous and cumulative learning (Taylor, 1998) to promote the development of a learning organisation

...where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.

(Senge, 1990:3)

According to Senge's (1990, 2000) influential work, a learning organisation is defined by five essential disciplines: personal mastery, analysis of one's mental models to promote different ways of thinking about the world, the construction of a shared vision, learning as a team and thinking systemically. Systems thinking, the fifth discipline links together all the other disciplines and enables people to cope more effectively with change. In a nutshell, "Each has to do with how we think, what we truly want and how we interact and learn with one another" (Senge, 1990:11). It is based on the idea that everyone involved in the organization needs to understand both the organization itself and its place within its environment in order to be able to appreciate how each individual's actions has implications for the rest of the system. This involves

...a shift of mind from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping their reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future.

(Senge, 1990: 69)

Research into learning communities in education clearly reflects the influence of Senge's (1990, 2000) vision of learning organisations. This may be seen in the various sets of key characteristics of a professional learning community (PLC) that have been identified in research literature (e.g. Hord, 1997; Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Dufour et al., 2006; Stoll et al., 2006). Although the terminology from one researcher to another may differ, from these studies it appears that PLCs share certain characteristics that do not "exist in a vacuum. Rather they are deeply intertwined, having impact on and impacting, each other" (Morrissey, 2000: 25). These characteristics are as follows:

- Supportive and shared leadership;
- Shared values and vision;
- Continuous, reflective and iterative, collective inquiry;
- Commitment to learning for all;

- Collaboration.

5.2.1 Supportive and Shared leadership

Effective supportive and shared leadership is one of the fundamental required characteristics identified in the research literature regarding both educational change, and in particular the development of PLCs (e.g. Eaker & Gonzalez, 2006; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Stoll et al. 2006; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006; Huffman et al., 2007; Printy, 2008), because, as McLaughlin and Talbot note

For better or worse, principals set conditions for teacher community by the ways in which they manage school resources, relate to teachers and students, support or inhibit social interaction and leadership in faculty, respond to the broader policy context, and bring resources into the school.
(McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001: 98)

In order to be effective, leaders need to have a number of characteristics or attributes. For example, apart from being the “torchbearer of the vision for improving their schools” (Morrissey, 2000: 35), they also need to facilitate the necessary conditions teachers need in order to engage in continuous learning and inquiry (Huffman et al., 2001; Bolam et al., 2005). In addition, according to Fullan (2002), change leaders who focus on the improvement of school culture have “moral purpose, an understanding of the change process, the ability to improve relationships, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making” (Fullan, 2002:3). They also have the ability to earn teachers’ trust (Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Marzano et al., 2005), and show optimism and determination (Duke, 2004), all of which are vital when fostering teachers’ motivation to engage in change. What is more, as Hargreaves and Fink (2003) affirm, apart from focusing on current realities, they also have to consider what conditions need to be created in order to sustain both PLCs and change initiatives, even when their period of office as a leader has ended given that

The main mark of an effective principal is not just his or her impact on the bottom line of student achievement, but also on how many leaders he or she leaves behind who can go even further.

(Fullan, 2005:31)

In order to prepare teachers as future leaders, instead of being an “omnipotent” (Morrissey, 2000:5) leader, school principals need to share (DuFour et al., 2006) or distribute (Harris, 2003; Spillane, 2006; Graham, 2007) their leadership with teachers. By being provided with opportunities to take leadership roles regarding teaching and learning (Stoll et al, 2006), teachers will not only feel more ownership regarding the changes, but they will also be more committed given that they have played a significant role in the decision-making process, as well as in the implementation of the changes (Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Olivier & Hipp, 2006). As a result of this active participation, more meaningful and sustainable change can take place (Roberts & Pruitt, 2003; Chrisman, 2005; Sullivan & Glanz, 2006), given that “Meaningful participation is a cornerstone of professional and school communities”, however, it is “a stone that we often leave unturned” (Lambert, 2003: 11).

5.2.2 Shared Values and Vision

One of the indispensable characteristics of PLCs identified in educational research is the sharing of vision and values (e.g. DuFour, 2004; Bolam et al., 2005; Sparks, 2005; Andrews & Lewis, 2007; Feger & Arruda, 2008). However, as Hord (1997) affirms,

Sharing vision is not just agreeing with a good idea; it is a particular mental image of what is important to an individual and to an organisation.
(Hord, 1997: 12)

According to Senge (1990; 2000) this ‘mental image’ is based on the construction of mental models, that is, “deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures and images that influence the world and how we take action” (Senge, 1990:8). In the main, people are neither aware of these models nor the influence they have on their responses. Nonetheless, Senge (1990) argues that in order to change, people need to first identify and then analyse their mental models, both on their own and with other people. This involves

...turning the mirror inward; learning to unearth our internal pictures of the world, to bring them to the surface and hold them rigorously to scrutiny. It also includes the ability to carry on ‘learningful’ conversations that balance inquiry and advocacy, where people expose their own thinking effectively and make that thinking open to the influence of others.

(Senge, 1990: 9)

If in this careful examination, it is discovered that the existing mental models inhibit learning or the ability to change, then new mental models need to be constructed (Senge, 1990; 2000). This can be enabled, in part, by what Senge (1990) refers to as ‘learningful’ conversations during which, in a similar fashion to Schön’s (1983) concept of reframing, teachers ask each other questions in an attempt “to learn more about their own, and each other’s, most deeply held attitudes and beliefs” (Senge, 2000:68). As a result of making “the tacit explicit, meaningful and useful” (Loughran, 2002: 38), these conversations can lead to the construction of a shared vision. For example, instead of a dean or principal imposing his or her vision and values on the school community, he or she needs to include the teachers and their personal visions in collaborative discussions in order to construct a collective vision for the school that can be embraced by all involved (Hughes & Kritsonis, 2006). This will not only help to avoid long term problems such as a lack of sustainability (Hughes & Kritsonis, 2006), but it also has the added advantage that as it is a shared vision, “a genuine vision (as opposed to the all-too-familiar “vision statement”) people excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to” (Senge, 1990: 9). Therefore, the characteristic of shared values and vision is an essential ingredient of a change process because it will “foster genuine commitment and enrolment rather than compliance” (Senge, 1990: 9) that, in turn, will enable more productive results.

5.2.3 Continuous, Reflective and Iterative, Collective Inquiry

Another characteristic of PLCs is continuous, reflective and iterative, collective inquiry (Senge, 2000).

It is through communities of continuous inquiry in which teachers store, retrieve, examine, transform, apply, and share knowledge and experiences about practice for a shared purpose that a school becomes a professional learning community.

(Gajda & Koliba, 2008:139)

Instead of being conformist and passive, the members of a PLC are active participants in inquiry and learning, continually engaging in what Louis et al. (1996) refer to as ‘reflective dialogue’ which involves identifying and discussing the issues or problems in their context and “seeking answers to questions, collaboratively researching new ideas, discovering new methods, and testing and evaluating them” (Hughes & Kritsonis, 2006: 7). As a result of

engaging in these conversations, the community members “learn to apply new ideas and information to problem solving” (Hord, 1997: 11), that in turn “pays off in high-quality solutions to problems, increased teacher confidence, and remarkable gains in achievement” (Schmoker, 2005, xiii). Furthermore,

...as principals and teachers inquire together they create community. Inquiry helps them to overcome chasms caused by various specializations of grade level and subject matter. Inquiry forces debate among teachers about what is important. Inquiry promotes understanding and appreciation for the work of others...And inquiry helps principals and teachers create the ties that bind them together as a special group and that bind them to a shared set of ideas. Inquiry, in other words, helps principals and teachers become a community of learners.

(Griffin in Sergiovanni, 1994: 154)

In other words, collective inquiry is recognised as a vital activity as it is a means of examining existing mental models, as well as enabling the construction of new ones as “changing personal beliefs is more likely to happen when the individual is discovering and researching” (Hughes & Kritsonis, 2006:7). As a result, inquiry can lead to the development of a shared vision and goals and thus the emergence of a learning community that is open minded regarding change.

5.2.4 Commitment to Learning for All

The members of a learning community are committed to, and focused on, enhancing student learning (DuFour, 2004; Louis, 2006; Feger & Arruda, 2008). As Dufour et al., (2005: 15) affirm, “The PLC concept is grounded in this making-a-difference sense of moral purpose.” This involves the members’ continual exploration of three basic questions:

- What do we want each student to learn?
 - How will we know when each student has learned it?
 - How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?
- (Dufour, 2004:1)

According to Dufour (2004), it is the third question that distinguishes PLCs from traditional schools. In traditional schools the focus is on teaching, whereas in PLCs, teachers concentrate their collective efforts towards enabling students’ learning. Thus they

...seek the best strategies and instructional practices to engage their students in learning, and they make the necessary adjustments to respond to the students' diverse learning needs.

(Morrissey, 2000: 6)

This involves an equally committed focus on teacher learning (Mitchell & Sackney 2001; Hulley, 2004) or what Senge (1990; 2000) refers to as personal mastery. For as Mitchell and Sackney (2001) affirm,

Within a learning community, the learning of the teachers is as important as the learning of the children.

(Mitchell & Sackney, 2001:n.p.)

This does not only refer to the acquisition of competency and skills, it also involves, more importantly, people's awareness "of their ignorance, their incompetence, their growth areas" (Senge, 1990:142) as well as their "observing and trying to make sense of current realities" (Hughes & Kritsonis, 2006: 2). The desire for personal mastery can be responsible, in part, for teachers' motivation to engage in continuous professional development that includes "continually clarifying and deepening...personal vision, of focusing...energies, of developing patience, and of seeing objectively" (Senge, 1990: 7). For example, teachers might want to think about how educational change implies a corresponding change in their roles and the impact this has on their sense of professional identity.

Furthermore, teacher learning not only involves individual learning, but also learning in teams (Senge, 1990). Morrissey (2000) summarises the advantages of collective learning as follows:

...learning is more complex, deeper, and more fruitful in a social setting, where the participants can interact, test their ideas, challenge their inferences and interpretations, and process new information with each other. When one learns alone, the individual learner (plus a book, article, or video) is the sole source of new information and ideas. When new ideas are processed in interaction with others, multiple sources of knowledge and expertise expand and test the new concepts as part of the learning experience.

(Morrissey, 2000: 4)

Thus, the members of a PLC take advantage of the combination of minds being more intelligent due to their learning and working together in the same context rather than just being satisfied with the results produced by the mere sum of minds in a group. In addition, “they recognize that learning always occurs in a context of taking action, and they believe engagement and experience [and experiment] are the most effective teachers” (Dufour & Eaker, 1998: 27 [brackets in original text]). They are also aware that even when they do not achieve the desired results, the experience they gain is valuable (Dufour & Eaker, 1998).

5.2.5 Collaboration

Collaborative relationships are considered as a fundamental characteristic of a PLC (Bolam et al., 2005; Feger & Arruda, 2008). The development of these relationships is considered as a means of establishing an effective teaching culture in which collaboration not only provides “teachers access to the new ideas, creative energy and moral support” (Hargreaves, 2001b: 503), but is also “expected, inclusive, genuine, ongoing, and focused on critically examining practice to improve student outcomes” (Seashore et al. 2003.3). This is based on the argument that

...what teachers do together outside of the classroom can be as important as what they do inside in affecting school restructuring, teachers’ professional development, and student learning.

(Seashore et al., 2003:3)

In addition, the development of an effective collaborative culture has been recognised as an indispensable requisite for change, as without its presence, little may be accomplished (Peterson & Deal, 1998). A strong and healthy school culture is reported to be facilitated by supportive structures. These consist in the structural conditions within a school and especially teachers’ collegial relationships (Hord, 1997), summarised as follows:

The structural conditions include use of time, communication procedures, size of the school, proximity of teachers, and staff development processes. Collegial relationships include positive educator attitudes, widely shared vision or sense of purpose, norms of continuous critical inquiry and improvement, respect, trust, and positive, caring relationships.

(Morrissey, 2000:6-7)

In particular, regarding collegial relationships, the notions of trust and respect have been highlighted in the research focused on PLCs (e.g. Stoll et al., 2006; Williams et al., 2008). For example, Huffman and Hipp (2003) found that without these characteristics, it is impossible to build a PLC. Thus, they are considered as the backbone of collaborative relationships (Skytt, 2003; Hargreaves, 2007). In fact, they are necessary requirements for teachers to feel confident when sharing their personal teaching practices (e.g. Hord, 1997; Morrissey, 2000; Bryk & Schneider, 2002), and engaging in honest interactions, challenging questions, as well as constructive feedback (Wenger et al., 2002), all of which are vital in learning processes and for meaningful professional growth (Dooner et al, 2008). However, as MacMillian et al., (2005) affirm in their work that focuses on “Principal succession and the continuum of trust in schools”, trust is not developed automatically, but is negotiated and earned in reciprocal relationships. Nonetheless, ways of fostering trust in collaborative relationships are imperative, given that as Hargreaves (2007) strongly stated in his support of PLCs:

Culture, trust and relationships are at the heart and soul of PLCs, and of all that will eventually sustain them.

(Hargreaves, 2007: 188)

According to research findings, when these five characteristics associated with PLCs interact and have a mutual impact on each other, strong professional learning communities may develop and there are potential significant benefits for both professional development, and especially, educational change. This is summarised by DuFour et al., (2005), well known advocates of PLCs.

The use of PLCs is the best, least expensive, most professionally rewarding way to improve schools. In both education and industry, there has been a prolonged, collective cry for such collaborative communities for more than a generation now. Such communities hold out immense, unprecedented hope for schools and the improvement of teaching.

(DuFour et al., 2005: 128)

Relevant to my particular inquiry, the potential benefits of developing PLCs in schools include the ones, summarised in Table 5.

Benefits	Supported by research
They are powerful contributors to staff development - members share situated learning and act on what they learn	e.g. Lave & Wenger (1991); Grossman et al., 2001; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Little, 2003; McGrath (2003); Berry et al. (2005); Bolan et al. (2005).
They stimulate school change and improvement	e.g. Hord (1997); Foster et al. (2003); Little (2003)
They play a significant role in many educational reform agendas	e.g. Newmann et al., (2000); Coburn (2001); Hargreaves et al. (2001); McLaughlin & Talbert (2001); Frank et al. (2004)
They enable teachers to adapt to, “negotiate the meaning and implications of reform” (Coburn & Russell, 2008: 204), accept and implement change	e.g. Coburn (2001, 2006); McLaughlin & Mitra (2001); Gallucci (2003); McLaughlin & Talbert (2006).
They foster the growth of teacher communities and so dissipate teacher isolation	e.g. Hord (1997); Fullan (2001); Snow-Gerono (2005)
They foster the necessary trust for risk-taking	Bryk & Schneider (2002, 2004); Newmann et al. (2000)
They create conditions that foster the creation of social capital	e.g. Coburn & Russell (2008)

Table 5: Examples of the benefits of PLCs reported in research findings

Therefore, it is crucial to understand how these “communities form, cope and are sustained over time” (Achinstein, 2002: 422). Nevertheless, although there is a wealth of literature that defines the principles of PLCs, there appears to be less known about their experiences as they evolve (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). For example, one of the issues that need to be examined is “how teachers learn to work collaboratively” (Dooner et al., 2008: 564), that is, what is the nature of the dimensions that result in teacher collaboration, especially during educational change? However, these dimensions have yet to be fully researched. In addition, the majority of the research that exists has been carried out in English speaking countries, mainly in secondary schools regarding how the development of PLCs has influenced teachers’ professional development, and thus their practices, regarding students’ learning (e.g. Vescio et al., 2008). There are very few (e.g. Coburn & Russell, 2008) that examine the elements that are the basis for fostering teachers’ strong professional relationships.

In sum, PLCs, according to the research examined, are well suited to enhancing teacher professional development. For example, a study of professional development in Chicago by Smylie et al., (2001) highlights how professional communities can have a significant impact on teachers' professional development.

In schools with strong norms for innovation and strong professional communities, teachers find motivation, direction, and accountability for continuous learning and development. They find among their colleagues sources of new ideas, intellectual stimulation, and feedback essential to deepen learning and promote instructional change. They also find encouragement and safety in challenging taken-for granted assumptions, risk-taking, and experimenting with new ideas.

(Smylie et al., 2001: 50)

Furthermore, of particular relevance to my inquiry, learning communities are believed to enable teachers to develop their practices, as well as their collegial relationships. As reported in the research, these are vital aspects that may help teachers to adapt to, accept, and implement change (Coburn, 2001; McLaughlin & Mitra, 2001; Gallucci, 2003).

Consequently, this review of the research has enabled me to understand some of the aspects involved in both our response to change, as well as how change, changed us, a small number of teachers in the English department of a university School of Languages. For example, we did seem to group together and go through the stages of development of a CoP, as suggested by Wenger et al. (2002), to perform certain tasks, for example: curriculum and material design. In addition, we seem to have developed several of the characteristics of a PLC such as shared vision, commitment to learning and collaboration. However, although leading authorities offer useful ideas regarding the design and evaluation of PLCs, the stages of development of such communities, as well as the situated learning that may ensue when mutually engaged in a joint enterprise, they do not deal in any depth with the impact of change on teachers' relationships (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). For example, as Coburn and Russell (2008) affirm in their exploratory study regarding "the role of policy in the nature and configuration of teachers' social networks" (Coburn & Russell, 2008: 204),

...we know little about how the traditional bureaucratic mechanisms of policy influence what is at root an emergent and perhaps professionally governed phenomenon.

(Coburn & Russell, 2008: 204)

In addition, leading authorities (e.g. DuFour et al., 2005) have suggested that the question of how to create and sustain effective professional communities in schools,

...has now reached a critical juncture, one well known to those who have witnessed the fate of other well-intentioned school reform efforts. In this all-too-familiar cycle, initial enthusiasm gives way to confusion about the fundamental concepts driving the initiative, followed by inevitable implementation problems, the conclusion that the reform has failed to bring about the desired results, abandonment of the reform, and the launch of a new search for the next promising initiative.

(DuFour et al., 2005: 31-32)

Accordingly, more knowledge about *what* PLCs are, as well as *how* they develop and are sustained (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; Dooner et al., 2008) is vital given that:

...as the idea and implementation of PLCs has spread, the result (as is common in many cases where innovations are scaled up) is that their original meaning is becoming diminished and their richness is being lost.

(Hargreaves, 2007: 183)

Therefore, my inquiry, which is set in the School of Languages at Veracruz University in Mexico, and that reveals the interacting dimensions that influenced the growing relationships of a number of English teachers, will hopefully draw attention to, and add empirical knowledge regarding the “richness” of PLCs. In particular, it may contribute to generating theory regarding the emergence of a small collaborative culture of professionals by highlighting the emotional dimension of professional relationships. Although this dimension is an integral part of teachers’ relationships and subsequently their communities’ identity, it is not a dimension that has received sufficient attention in research. Thus, awareness of the emotional dimension is imperative, given that, as I will argue later on in Chapter Six (section, 2.6), it is the “glue” that binds people together.

Summary

In this chapter, drawing on existing literature, and my own reflections and critique of that literature, based on my own lived experience, I have identified the main issues that may influence how teachers respond to change in educational settings. These included:

- Teachers and educational change
- Teachers' receptivity to change
- Teachers' professional identity
- Teachers' emotional response to change
- Teachers' communities

In particular, I have argued that it is not enough to merely identify the external and internal conditions of change, but also the interaction of these with the personal concerns of the teachers in each specific educational setting. This includes not only understanding individual, but also collective response to change. However, although this review of the research literature is helpful as a springboard for understanding the complex and overlapping nature of the issues involved in teachers' response to change, it also highlights a number of areas in which there is a need for more research. As a result, this strengthens my extrinsic motivation to examine if new concepts/categories may emerge from my inquiry to enhance current theory regarding educational change. In short, I hope that my findings, grounded in teachers' perceptions of their engagement in change, and the nature of the issues that influenced both the transformation of their sense of professional identity, as well as their emerging interrelationships with their colleagues, will contribute, not only knowledge concerning teachers' response to change, but also regarding the complexity of educational change itself.

In the following chapter I will explain the methodology I employed in this inquiry. This will include my research stance, my role, how my informants were identified, how I obtained and analysed my data, as well as the limitations of my approach.

Chapter Three

Research Approach and Methods of Inquiry

In this chapter, I describe the methodological framework I employed to explore the collective response to change of a small number of English teachers in Veracruz University, Mexico. I first present the research stance that led me to adopting an interpretative qualitative approach for my inquiry. This is followed by an explanation of my reasons for employing aspects of life history research as a key element in my work. Given that I am not only a researcher of, but also a complete participant in this particular bounded research context, I include an examination of the complexities of this issue at this point. I then continue by giving a detailed account of the research procedure implemented. This comprises: the identification of my informants; the ethical issues I took into consideration, and how I attempted to deal with these conscientiously throughout the course of my inquiry; the data generation strategies I adopted, and the techniques I used in analysing the data, based on certain aspects derived from grounded theory. This section precedes a brief discussion of the limitations of my inquiry, as well as a summary of the ways in which I took into account the issue of trustworthiness during all stages of the research process.

1. Research Stance

My research stance in this inquiry is based on my view that people, just like the characters in a post Victorian novel, are round and not flat. In other words, they are complex entities with feelings, thoughts, beliefs, wants, desires, and value systems that influence their own particular perceptions of, and participation in, change and progress, and even life itself. Consequently, within every educational context,

...each teacher experiences and emotionally understands education policy change from his or her own point of view, and so encounters and conceives a different reality.

(Smit, 2003:3)

From this stance, therefore, reality is whatever people consider it to be (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Richards, 2003). Nevertheless, although human beings are the ones who experience, attribute meanings and achieve understandings of the world, I believe that the meanings they construct are also influenced by their social interactions with significant others, in both

the context, and the socio-cultural milieu, in which a person lives and works (Gubrium & Holstein, 1995), all of which can have significant influences on their careers and lives (Huberman, 1993; Kelchtermans, 1993; Dhunpath, 2000; Richards, 2003). Therefore, it follows that these perceptions may also be created and shared “by groups of individuals at different times and in different circumstances” (Richards, 2003: 34).

In the following chapters (Four and Five), therefore, by quoting extensively from the interview sessions so that the reader may evaluate the data in which my claims are later grounded in Chapter Six, I will present an analysis of the main categories that emerged in response to my research questions. I will demonstrate that what has emerged from my data are the commonalities of our collective experience that, in turn, have enabled me to construe a trustworthy account, not only regarding our collective response to change, but also how being involved in the change process changed us as professionals in an educational context.

1.1 The Nature of Knowledge

The nature of the emergent knowledge arising from this inquiry, hinges on my analysis and interpretation, as well as reconstruction, of the residue of my informants’ transitory emotions and thoughts, and their perceptions of these recollections during our interview sessions. Various cognitive structures and processes are said to enable us to select, organize, and interpret our perceptions, and construct theory, regarding knowledge, and representations of the social world. Two of these, for example, are schema theory (Rumelhart, 1980) and mental models (Craik, 1943). Both schema theory and mental models seem to have much in common, in the sense that they attempt to offer an explanation of how the human mind achieves meaning. In fact, it has been argued (Macrae et al., 2000) that the mind needs both, as they can complement each other. Whereas schema theory accounts for our generic knowledge of the world, mental models can help to account for how the mind copes with novel incoming information.

In other words, schemas are precompiled generic knowledge structures while mental models are specific knowledge structures that are constructed to represent a new situation through the use of generic knowledge of space, time, causality and human intentionality.

(Brewer, 1987:189)

According to Crotty (1998), at times perception may occur unconsciously, but at others, the human mind is proactive, in the sense that we can consciously *choose* to be in a particular situation, *focus* on a certain object, or *listen for* a particular sound. Whether our systems of perception are passive or proactive, they are responsible for the process by means of which our minds create meanings within the boundaries of our respective social worlds.

In addition, Schutz (1962, 1964, 1967, and 1970) argues that both the meanings we allocate to experience and the ways in which we construct our framework for making decisions, seem to be influenced by a complex series of issues:

Individuals approach the life world with a stock of knowledge composed of ordinary constructs and categories that are social in origin. These images, folk theories, beliefs, values, and attitudes are applied to aspects of experience, thus making them meaningful and giving them semblance of everyday familiarity...The myriad phenomena of everyday life are subsumed under a delimited number of shared constructs (or types).

(Gubrium & Holstein, 2003: 217)

According to this viewpoint, our perceptions are influenced by our experiences, our cognitive and sensory capacities, our motivations and needs, as well as our locus of attention – change, for example, can attract our attention, as well as our culture, and our own place within that culture. In any particular given moment, people may give more weight to either sense perception or, as in this inquiry, people’s testimony as a reliable source of knowledge. Furthermore, since the construction of meaning is a life-long process, knowledge cannot be a static product, but rather a fluid and on-going process of construction. During the course of life experiences, knowledge may evolve, and, more importantly, be transformed.

Truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of engagement with the realities in our world. There is no meaning without a mind. Meaning is not discovered, but constructed. In the understanding of knowledge, it is clear that different people may construct meanings in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon.

(Crotty, 1998: 8-9)

This would seem to indicate that “there are no fixed truths or totally definitive knowledge” (Mezirow, 2000:3) as knowledge depends for its existence on human perception. Thus, one

of the difficulties in my role as a researcher was the need to both identify, and understand, the issues that would influence my informants' perceptions concerning how they had responded to the different phenomena they had experienced, as well as to explore how my informants rationalized and/or justified these perceptions. Consequently, I am well aware that my findings regarding my informants' perceptions about how they responded to change can only be judged as 'reasonably accurate' in terms of their 'likely truth' (Hammersley, 1990:61). Arguably, however, my findings, as they are grounded in the personal verbal responses of my informants concerning their own perspectives, meanings and understandings of their experiences in a particular context, in other words, the subjective, idiographic and emic, are indeed valuable. Furthermore, although, my inquiry is limited by its capacity to uncover the total complexity of this social world, by justifying my methodological approach, and meticulously describing the processes and procedures that helped me to construct, shape, and connect meanings (Morgan & Drury, 2003) as transparently as possible, I hope to establish trustworthiness in the knowledge that emerged.

2. Methodological Framework

My intention was to explore, and attempt to understand, human response to change, based on my informants' personal individual and collective experiences. More specifically, I wanted to explore my informants' experiences (Plummer, 1983) and responses during a change process within a particular bounded context (Goodson, 1992 a, b), based on their retrospection (Watson & Watson-Franke, 1985, Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995), and a subsequent "reconstruction" of their "individual feelings and interpretations" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995: 189). Consequently, I needed to find ways to gain access to, and comprehend, their perceptions. Being allowed access to, and achieving understanding of, people's perceptions, is both a delicate and difficult task. Therefore, in order to attempt to understand people's worlds *as they experience them*, and in this particular inquiry, to explore what my informants' responses had been during an extended change process, it was of vital importance that I, as a researcher, identified potential ways to be given access to this knowledge. Therefore, I needed to devise a methodology that was not rigid or static, but flexible enough to permit modifications and perhaps even changes in direction, during the process of my inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Moser, 1999). Consequently, for the purpose of this inquiry, I adopted an interpretative qualitative research approach that included aspects of narrative inquiry (Roberts, 2002).

An interpretative qualitative approach appeared to me to be the most suitable for my inquiry, given that it embraces aspects of both symbolic interactionism and hermeneutics. Symbolic interactionism takes the *informant* very much into consideration and places great emphasis on understanding the meaning that the social context has acquired for him/her, in the informant's own terms (Blumer, 1969; Crotty, 1998). This is summed up succinctly by Blumer (1969) in his definition of the "three basic interactionist assumptions":

- 'that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them';
- 'that the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows';
- 'that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters'.

(Blumer (1969:2) in Crotty, 1998:72)

In other words, symbolic interactionism proffers the belief that humans respond to multi-dimensional phenomena, such as change, according to the meaning it has for them, derived from, and modified by the social interaction these humans have with other members of their context (Charon, 1995). Consequently, the best, and perhaps only way, of interpreting the attitudes, feelings, perceptions and values of others is by means of dialogue with "the emphasis on putting oneself in the place of the other and seeing things from the perspective of others" (Crotty, 1998:76). This view accords with that of hermeneutics, especially with Dilthey's concept of *Verstehen* "that to understand the meaning of human action requires grasping the subjective consciousness or intent of the actor from the inside" (Schwandt, 2003: 296).

Nevertheless, it needs to be acknowledged that this "inside" understanding is not easily accessible, as 'the actors' - my informants - may not even be aware themselves of all the meanings and intentions they are conveying, or might have trouble with expressing. Therefore, my task as a researcher, in a similar vein to both Vygotsky's (1978) notion of ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) and Tharp and Gallimore's (1988) notion of assisted performance, consisted of enabling my informants to express these meanings more explicitly. That is, I based my participation during the interviews, in 'orientating and energizing' my informants' testimony until they were able to further explore and reveal

their perceptions, on their own, “that until that point were probably inaccessible to examination because they were so 'obvious' to the person who held them” (Dunne, in Myhill, 1995: 4).

In brief, given that I believe that human interpretation is not static, but evolves dynamically according to our responses to our social world, I considered that an interpretative approach was appropriate for my inquiry as it acknowledges that

...interpretation is a *process*, a process that continues as our relation to the world keeps changing. We have to follow that process and acknowledge that there will always be a gap between the things we want to understand and our accounts of what they are like if we are to do qualitative research properly.

(Parker, 1999: 3)

In addition, this approach focuses more on “meaning rather than phenomena” (Cohen et al., 2000: 29). Therefore, in order to generate knowledge and acquire meaning, a researcher employing this approach may employ various methods such as “interacting with participants, interrogating data...following-up leads and checking out hunches” (Morgan & Drury, 2003: 1). By these means, verbal, as opposed to numerical, data can be examined that may reveal “the shared beliefs, practices...and behaviours of some groups of people” (Goetz & Le Compte, 1984: 2). That is, this approach, in my view, is responsive to exploring teachers’ perceptions - their attitudes, feelings and thoughts - that help shape the “complexities and conundrums of [their] immensely complicated social world” (Richards, 2003:8) that are basically unquantifiable.

2.1 Investigating Lived Experience

In particular, I decided to use aspects of a life history approach in my research process, given that, life history research specifically has as its focus the “phenomenal role of lived experience and the way in which members interpret their own lives and the world around them” (Plummer, 1983: 67). That is, from this viewpoint, the researcher is interested in exploring:

...how individuals or groups of people who share specific characteristics, personally and subjectively experience, make sense of, and account for the things that happen to them.

(Goodson & Sikes, 2001: 39)

Furthermore, in teacher education (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002; Feuerverger, 2005; Phillion et al., 2005), and especially in the field of language teacher education, it has been affirmed that not only the researcher, but also the informants, may profit in various ways from participating in narrative inquiry (Doecke, 2004; Golombek & Johnson, 2004). For instance, one of the benefits is that the relating of lived experience, requires both reflection and meaning making that leads to teachers' understanding their practices (Freeman, 2002; Jay & Johnson, 2002) and their experiences. During the process of narrative inquiry, the researcher has access to this understanding that will enable him or her to both analyse, and interpret, the teachers' experience (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008).

Secondly, my choice of using aspects of a life history approach for this inquiry concurred with Kelchtermans' view that a 'biographical perspective' (Kelchtermans, 1993: 443) is the most appropriate in order to understand teachers' behaviour and experience. According to Kelchtermans (1993), this 'biographical perspective' consists of five characteristics. It is "narrative, constructivistic, contextualistic, interactionistic, and dynamic" (Kelchtermans, 1993: 443). *Narrative* refers to the subjective form in which the informants are encouraged to voice their experiences. That is, this form places emphasis on the meaning, rather than on the factual accuracy of the experience that is being interpreted and reconstructed by both the informant, and later by the researcher. Furthermore, due to this process of interpretation and reconstruction, it can also be said to be *interpretative*, *constructivistic* and *dynamic* in nature (Dhunpath, 2000) in that, "Biography presents rich opportunities for individuals to re-examine and reconstruct their own perceptions of personal experience" (Dhunpath, 2000: 546) from the past in present time.

In addition, this 'biographical perspective' also has the characteristic of being *contextualistic*. Broadly defined, life histories are informants' life stories that have evolved, during a certain period of time, within a particular context (Goodson, 1992 a, b). Contextualisation of these stories is important (Kelchtermans, 1993; Dhunpath, 2000)

given that a context may not only influence, but also reflect, the lives of its members. In other words, people's - in this case teachers' - lives and experiences, cannot be separated from the socio-economic and political characteristics of the context that in one way or another have an impact on their careers, as Ball and Goodson (1995) point out:

By definition individual careers are socially constructed and individually experienced over time. They are subjective trajectories through historical periods and at the same time contain their own organising principles and distinct phases. However, there are important ways in which individual careers can be tied to wider political and economic events. In some cases particular historical 'moments' or periods assume special significance in the construction of or experience of a career.

(Ball & Goodson, 1995: 11)

Owing to people's meaningful interaction with both the context and with significant others, this 'biographical perspective' may also be regarded as *interactionistic* (Kelchtermans, 1993; Dhunpath, 2000). In short, a narrative inquiry approach is a useful means of exploring how humans experience their world, as when people are motivated to tell their life stories they are engaged in "a perceptual activity that organises data into a special pattern which represents and explains experience" (Bruner, (1990) in Cortazzi, 1993: 19).

In sum, aspects of a life history approach seemed to suit the area on which my research aimed to focus, as it:

...is firmly grounded in qualitative traditions and stresses the 'lived experience' of individuals, the importance of multiple perspectives, the existence of context-bound, constructed social realities, and the impact of the researcher on the research process.

(Muller, (1999: 223) in Roberts, 2002:117)

In fact, this definition provides an adequate summary of my inquiry which is focused on the 'lived experience' of both my informants and myself – the teachers who embraced and engaged in change – taking into consideration 'the importance of our multiple perspectives' that have influenced the construction of 'social realities' within the bounded context of an English department at the School of Languages (Veracruz University) which, in turn, also needs to be understood from within the general context of which it is a part (Burns, 2000). In this particular case, for example, our English department exists within the School of

Languages of Veracruz University, itself a *state* university (as opposed to a private one) which, in turn, is located within the educational system in Mexico. Furthermore, I am not only a researcher of, but at the same time a complete participant (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) in, this context. Inevitably, therefore, I must have had an undeniable impact on this research process by sometimes “getting in the way, and out of the way” (Lather & Smithies, 1997, xiv-xv).

2.2 My Dual Role

In qualitative research, the researcher does not impose his/her preconceived assumptions and understanding on the setting of the inquiry, but begins from the premise that this social world in which the research is to take place already makes sense to its own members. In this inquiry, this idea acquired an added level of complexity given that I am not only a researcher, but also one of the members cohabiting within this social context, one who, together with my informants, became engaged in the changes. Consequently, my informants’ prior experiences are closely interrelated with my own at all stages. Therefore, I needed to take into careful consideration the potential ramifications of my role as a complete participant (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) during the time focused on in this inquiry, as well as during my research process.

In all human oriented inquiry, the researcher, depending on his/her level of involvement both within the research context and with the informants, is engaged in participant observation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Participant observation is used in order

...to understand the world as it is seen by those acting within it (*not just to accomplish everyday actions*); and to reveal the taken-for-granted, common-sense nature of that everyday world itself.

(Brewer, 2000:60)

An added level of complexity derives from the researcher finding him/herself positioned on the participant-observer continuum (Fig. 9).

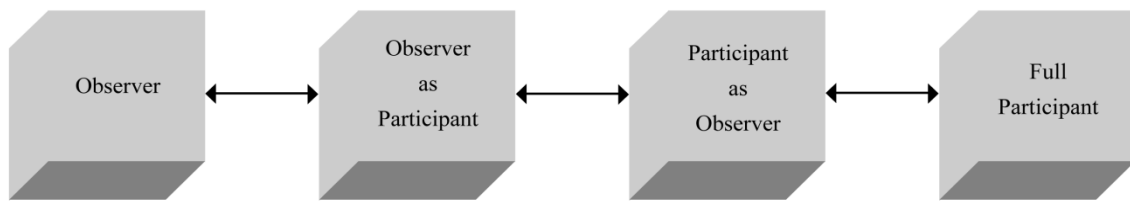


Fig. 9: Participant-observer continuum (Mertler, 2008: 81)

This position depends on the researcher's degree of participation within the research context and his/her relationship with his/her informants. At one extreme of this continuum, the *complete observer* enters an unknown context and so wants to discover as much information as possible from his/her informants. The *observer-as-participant*, is principally an observer, but has a certain amount of interaction with the informants. The *participant-observer*, apart from observing, has a more active role in the setting (Glesne, 2006). At the other extreme, the *complete participant*, as in my case, is totally involved and immersed in the context (Maykut & Moorehouse, 1994; Brewer, 2000; Merriam, 2002; Mason, 2002). The amount of influence, the level of engagement, both past and present, the researcher has in his/her research context and with his/her informants, as well as his/her position on the participant observer continuum, will raise questions regarding the veracity of the data (Kawulich, 2005), given that,

How the researchers position themselves within the context, process and production of the research is of central importance in understanding the perspectives of the people being looked at: the researcher and researched are parts of the same social world.

(Parker, 1999: 37)

In this inquiry, I am very much a 'part of the same social world' as my informants. In fact, in understanding and narrating their story, I am also comprehending and relating my own. Consequently, this gives rise to several complex issues. At present, I am looking back in retrospect on a context in which I have participated, to differing degrees, since 1979. However, during this time I did not observe the events and peoples' responses for research purposes. Therefore, I had to "overcome years of *selective inattention*, tuning out, not seeing, and not hearing" (Spradley, 1980: 55 [italics in the original]). More importantly, I could "not take this world for granted" (Holloway & Wheeler, 1996:5), instead, I had to "strenuously avoid feeling 'at home' [as otherwise] if and when all sense of being a

stranger is lost, one may have allowed the escape of one's critical, analytic perspective" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995: 115 [my emphasis]).

Therefore, as an integral part of my inquiry, apart from adopting the procedures such as data and informant triangulation, I also spent valuable time engaging in critical personal reflexivity that

...centralises, rather than marginalizes or denies, the influence of the researcher's life experience on the research and the construction of knowledge...we need to develop a reflexive quality, be critically subjective, able to empathize with participants, yet be aware of our own experiencing in order to achieve a resonance between subjectivity and objectivity.

(Banister et al., 1999: 150)

Part of this critical personal reflexivity necessitated an examination of the relationships I had and now have with my informants, in order to appraise how these may have influenced my research process and the drawing of my final picture of the results. This will be further discussed in section 4.1.1 where I outline the limitations of my inquiry. However, it is important at this point to mention that some of the possible factors that may have influenced my relationships with my informants are: the fact that I am British not Mexican. (Three of my informants are also non-natives from different countries); I am also at an 'in-between age' – younger than some, but a little older than others; in addition, I am a woman married to a Mexican, and the mother of a mixed race son. Perhaps even more importantly, my relationships with my informants are influenced by the mixture of different roles I have played within the group and the institution over the years. These include those of teacher, friend, colleague, fellow student, and finally, researcher.

Taking all these issues into consideration, I conclude that I myself have a lot in common with my informants (Banister et al. 1999). We certainly had, and still have similar jobs and earn similar wages, but more importantly, we have experienced together, within this same context, not only institutional, but also professional and personal change, as well as other experiences that include an array of different emotions. Nevertheless, it is clear that the memories of our experiences may not always be sharp, but be fuzzy or even buried. This will depend on various factors, for example, the amount of attention that we paid to these

experiences, in addition to the possibility that our interpretations of these memories may have been altered or misconstrued either unintentionally or deliberately (Yow, 1994). This issue will be further examined in section 4.1.2 where I discuss the limitations of my inquiry.

On the whole, therefore, a great deal of critical personal reflexivity and “close scrutiny” (Mason, 2002:7) was required throughout my research process with regard to the extent to which each and all of these issues influenced my inquiry at different times. This led me to constantly monitor, reflect upon, and question, my own actions, assumptions, values and biases, and to make it clear that I was doing this, to allow the reader to judge how far these may have influenced my findings and interpretations. This entailed continually asking myself and trying to answer a series of questions while interviewing and later interpreting the data. For example: am I influencing my informants’ perceptions in any way? Am I distancing myself enough? In addition, I jotted down these thoughts in a journal for further deliberation. Furthermore, I consider it is vital to acknowledge these issues at this point, given that if I had ignored these characteristics, they could have raised issues regarding my possible social-cultural bias, or even the concern that I had ‘gone native’ (Jorgensen, 1989: 62). That is, that my bias and prejudices may have influenced my findings. Instead, by means of identifying, understanding, acknowledging and making these aforementioned issues explicit (Goodson, 2001a), in addition to giving an in-depth account of the methodology I used, and the procedure I followed, I am showing how these issues may have affected my work so that my findings may be considered trustworthy.

3. Research Procedure

3.1 Identification of Informants

The first step in my research procedure consisted of identifying the informants who would be involved in this inquiry. Given my inside knowledge of, and experience in, the context, this was not a difficult task. The most obvious choice owing to her crucial involvement in the changes was the person who had been Dean from the beginning of the change process up to 1995. The rest were the teachers who were the original focus of my inquiry. That is, the small number of teachers who like myself, had become involved in professional development while at the same time participating in the various changes in our institution. Their participation in the main changes, along with my own can be found in Table 6. In an

attempt to protect my informants' identity, I have replaced all their names, except my own, with pseudonyms.

This Table shows the sequence of the changes in which I, and most of my informants, participated in together from the beginning of the long change process when all but two of my informants, who were not yet teachers in our context, worked together during the design and implementation of the new curriculum, 'Plan '90'. In addition, it displays our mutual participation in professional development (postgraduate TEFL diploma, MSc in TEFL, PhD studies), as well as in the design of the in-house MA in TEFL, the distance BA in TEFL and the first design stage of a new curriculum for the BA that incorporated the MEIF educational model. Furthermore, it shows the different projects (S.A.C. and research) in which some of us became engaged.

3.2 Informants' Profiles

These profiles include details such as my informants' approximate ages in 1990, and a summarised overview of their individual academic life histories up to 1989. In an effort to provide the teachers with confidentiality and anonymity, all the names are pseudonyms. The order in which I will present them conforms to the number of years they had worked at the School.

Modesta is a non-Mexican then in her late fifties. She began her career as an English teacher at the University several years before the School of Languages existed and was, in fact, one of its first teachers. In a similar fashion to the other teachers who were her first colleagues at the School, when she began her university teaching career, she had had neither previous teaching experience nor any academic qualifications. Nevertheless, she was highly respected and well-liked by both her students and the other teachers.

Isela is a non-Mexican then in her early forties. Although she had aspired to be a journalist, she trained as a teacher of Germanic languages and subsequently taught language classes in the equivalent of a sixth form college. In 1972, she moved to Mexico and began her teaching career at the University in 1974, two years before the School of Languages gained its status as an independent institution in 1976. After teaching at the University for six months, due to her popularity with the students, she obtained a full-time teaching position.

Pseudonyms	Plan '90'	S.A.C.	Studied TEFL Courses	Studied MSc in TEFL	Developed in-house MA in TEFL	Investigation U.V./Aston University	Developed distance BA in TEFL	Involved in 1 st stage of the MEIF	Involved in PhD studies
Modesta	X		X				X	X	
Isela	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Rosaurio	X	X	X				X	X	X
Carmen	X	X	X	X			X	X	
Irma	X		X	X	X				X
Verónica	X		X	X	X	X			X
Chela	X			X			X	X	
Maria	X		X	X	X		X		X
Carlos	X		X	X				X	
Raphael			X	X	X		X	X	X
Jorge			X	X	X			X	X
Barbara	X			X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 6: Identified informants and their engagement in change

Aide is a Mexican then in her late thirties. She studied a BA in English and French at the School of Languages at Veracruz University from 1969-74. On finishing her studies she obtained a grant from the French government to study for a Teaching Diploma and a Certificate in Modern Contemporary Literature in France. On her return to Mexico, due to her having studied French literature, she managed to write her final paper for the BA and so gain first degree status. In 1977, she began her teaching career at the School as a part-time French teacher. In 1979, by means of a second grant, she went to France again for two years, this time to study a Masters in Sociolinguistics. On her return to the School of Languages in 1981, she gained a full-time teaching position. At the end of 1988 she was elected Dean.

Rosaurio is a Mexican then in her late thirties. Originally, she had wanted to study journalism, however, because this was not an option in her home town, she instead studied a BA in English and French at the School of Languages from 1969-73 which she hoped would then lead her into a career in Tourism. On finishing her studies, she spent a year as a foreign language assistant in the U.S.A. On her return to Mexico, she worked as a bilingual secretary, translator and interpreter before entering the School of Languages as a part-time English teacher in 1976.

Carmen is a Mexican then in her earlier thirties. She studied a BA in English at the School of Languages from 1971-75. While studying, she taught at a preparatory school (equivalent to a UK Sixth Form College) for a few months. As she had begun a family, she did not return to the School until 1977 when she became Isela's assistant. The following year she obtained a part-time position as an English teacher on the BA programme.

Irma is a Mexican then in her early thirties. She studied the BA in English at the School of Languages from 1975 to 1979. While at the School, from 1977 onwards, she worked as an English teacher, translator and interpreter in both private institutions and at two Schools in the University and later at PEMEX (The National Mexican Oil Company). In 1980, she went to England for a year to study English language and culture. On her return, she worked as a part-time English teacher at both the School of Pedagogy and the School of Literature. It was at this time that she also began her working career at the School of

Languages as a substitute English teacher on the BA programme. In 1985 she was awarded first degree status after successfully writing and defending her final paper, and she also began teaching at Idiomas Aislados (The Department of Foreign Languages) as a part-time teacher. Later, in 1988, she became the unofficial coordinator of the department.

Veronica is a Mexican then in her early thirties. She studied a BA in English at the School of Languages from 1977-81. While she was at the School she attended an English summer course in Texas, and later became a part-time English teacher at both a secondary school, and a preparatory school. On finishing her studies she became a part-time teacher at Idiomas Aislados (The Department of Foreign Languages), as well as on the BA programme.

Chela is a non-Mexican then in her early forties. As part of her BA in Liberal Arts (1965-9) she spent three study periods at Veracruz University. She returned to Mexico in 1971, and a year later opened her own private English language institute. At the time it was one, of only two, in the city. In 1981, she obtained a part-time teaching position on the BA programme at the School of Languages. Also, during the summer from this time onwards, she taught at the International Summer School at Berkeley University in the U.S.A.

Carlos is a Mexican then in his early thirties. Originally he had aspired to a career as an oceanographer. However, as this was not possible; he changed direction and took a BA in English and French at the School from 1978-82. During the final year of his BA studies, he began working as a freelance translator. On finishing his studies, he worked for a time as an interpreter, before substituting for the language laboratory assistant at the School, and working as a part-time teacher at a secondary school. Later in the same year, he obtained a part-time position as an English teacher on the BA programme.

María is a Mexican then in her early forties. After an unsuccessful beginning studying law, she changed direction and took a BA in English at the School of Languages from 1977-1983. Immediately on finishing her studies, she became a part-time English teacher at the School. At the same time, she also taught English at a secondary school, a private institute,

and later she became a part-time translation teacher at the School of Literature. In 1985, she also began teaching part-time at Idiomas Aislados (The Department of Foreign Languages).

Raphael is a Mexican then in his late twenties. Originally he had aspired to a career in business administration. Unlike my other informants, he did not teach at the School before the 1990s, but was a student on the BA in English and French from 1983-7. On finishing his studies, he spent six months in the U.S.A. looking for bibliography in order to write his final paper. On his return in 1988, he gained the position of a part-time English teacher at both a private institute, and at the CELE-UNAM (Language Centre – National Autonomous University of Mexico) in Mexico City where he worked for two years. He began working at the School of Languages in 1990.

Jorge is a Mexican then in his early twenties. Originally he had wanted to study psychology. Similar to Raphael, before the 1990s he was not yet a teacher at the School, but still a student on the BA in English from 1986-90. In fact, many of the other informants were his teachers. However, during his last two years at the School, he gained some teaching experience by volunteering to work on the summer programme that was open to the general public.

In sum, all but four of the women, Chela, Isela, Modesta and myself, are Mexicans who were originally students at the School of Languages, even though studying English and becoming teachers was neither a deliberate, nor even in some cases, their first choice. As it happens, some of my colleagues and I were the teachers of the younger informants when they were students. The other non-Mexicans and I had lived 15 years or more in Mexico and so had strong, not just professional, but personal ties with this Mexican context. The majority of the teachers, except for Carlos, Carmen and Jorge, had spent time abroad studying. Most of us, except for Modesta, had had some experience teaching before beginning our career at the School. However, before the 1990s, only Aide, Chela and Isela, had been involved in any professional development or had had any teacher training. Furthermore, due to both the lack of qualified teachers who could serve as supervisors for the final degree paper, and the extreme shortage of books and resources, only three of the

Mexican teachers, Aide, Carmen and Irma, had actually managed to complete their final paper and thus achieve first degree status.

3.3. Ethical issues

It may appear that my research process was very much facilitated by the fact that, unlike other researchers, I neither had to go through the conventional steps of gaining access (Hoffman, 1980) into my research context, nor did I have to use strategies to identify my informants. However, the fact that I knew my informants so well prior to this inquiry meant that I had to seriously consider, and critically reflect upon, not only the gamut of issues regarding my dual role as both a complete participant and a researcher, but also the *ethical* issues that this implied and the impact these might have on my research.

According to many writers, such as Glesne and Peshkin (1992), ethical issues lie at the heart of social research. In particular, “the level of intimacy involved in life history research does in itself increase the potential for harm and, therefore, poses a different batch of ethical questions” (Goodson & Sikes, 2001:90) especially as the researcher is involved in “face to face relationships with other human beings in which ethical problems of the personal as well as the professional are bound to arise” (Soltis, 1989: 127). In short, ethical issues “are inseparable from your everyday interactions with your others and with your data” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992: 109). In addition, there are no easy or infallible solutions for resolving the ethical dilemmas that may emerge (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Therefore, the only way of making sure that research is as ethical as possible “depends on the researcher’s continual communication and interaction” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992: 125) with the informants involved, although in the end, as Richards (2003: 139) has succinctly pointed out, “the ultimate arbiter of what is right and decent is your own conscience” as a researcher.

Owing to my sense of “what is right and decent” as a researcher, throughout my research process, I constantly reflected upon how my inquiry might affect or harm my informants, and how I could afford them the respect that they richly deserved (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). For example, during my data collection I reflected on the possibility that not all my prospective informants might want to give up either the amount of time, or permit the

“intimacy of involvement” (Goodson & Sikes, 2001: 90), that was needed in order to be both “actively and...consciously...a collaborating participant” (Goodson & Sikes, 2001: 90). Furthermore, I took into consideration how their participation may be influenced by possible fears of their losing face, in my eyes those of other informants, or even those of the readers of my thesis.

Consequently, owing to the confidence and trust my informants placed in me, in addition to the desire not to harm our relationships, I was especially sensitive to, and reflective upon, the potential “intrusiveness” (Kelchtermans, 1994:102), and emotional risks (Roberts, 2002), that were involved in asking my informants to narrate part of their lives, as

...the closer the relationship, the riskier it is to tell the friend certain stories about oneself...there might be limits that friendship imposes on what can be told...plus unarticulated tension between friendships and the goal of research in which the researcher’s goal is always to gather information.

(Sparkes, 1994: 53)

I became increasingly attentive to whether or not, I might be given ‘privileged access’ (Burman, 1999:66) into my informants’ private world of emotions, and how they understand, as well as describe, their social reality. I also realised that asking people to think back to the past about why they did certain things might upset them (Seale, 2002).

As a result, I constantly strived to enable my informants not to feel that they would leave “the research situation with greater anxiety or lower levels of self-esteem than they came with” (Cohen et al., 2000:64). I did this by trying to be as socially sensitive and tactful (Kelchtermans, 1994) as possible, and showed both concern for my informants’ welfare, as well as “compassion, respect, gratitude and common sense without being too effusive” (Cohen et al., 2000: 59-60). I also made a conscious effort to interrupt them as little as possible while they were talking during our interview sessions. Neither did I consciously coerce them in any way, either to participate in my inquiry, or to reveal more than they wanted or were comfortable with disclosing. I also respected their decision to switch off the tape recorder whenever they seemed to be upset, or not to include ‘off the record’ comments, or names of people, that they did not want to be known publicly. Moreover, I

strenuously reminded them, throughout the research process, of their rights. Firstly, that although it is not possible to promise full anonymity (Plummer, 1983), I could, however, promise confidentiality as I would only use the data needed to ground the interpretations, and I would replace their names with pseudonyms (Measor & Sikes, 1992). Secondly, they had the right to read both the transcripts of our meetings, and the resulting interpretation of the data, and be able to add, modify and/or edit anything they wanted. Fortunately, it would appear that to a large extent I was successful in achieving my goal as my informants stated that they had found our sessions together to be generally both interesting and illuminating.

3.4 Methods of Data Generation Employed

At the beginning of my data collection process, I had hoped to be able to find documentary evidence such as the minutes from the ‘juntas académicas’ (general school meetings) and other meetings that would help me to confirm or verify certain aspects of the change process during the 1990s. However, this proved to be an impossible task. By all accounts, few official records seem to have been kept and these have long since disappeared, as all documents were periodically sent in ‘archivos muertos’ (dead files) that is, cardboard boxes, to the ‘Rectoría’ (the main administrative office block of the University) where no one seems to know what happened to them.

Owing to this lack of documentary evidence, throughout my inquiry I had to depend on both my own, and my informants’ memories regarding the specific details of the change process, and their responses to this. This given, I played the role of ‘human-as-instrument’ rather than just only a ‘collector’ of information. In brief, I was “the culler of meaning from that data which most often is in the form of people’s words and actions” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994: 46). In other words, I was not just responsible for collecting the data, but I was also an active listener, simultaneously reflecting upon and trying to understand what my informants were saying (Edge, 1992). Regarding this, the term ‘data generation’ (Baker, 1997, Freebody, 2003) is more appropriate than ‘data collection’ as it “encapsulate(s) the much wider range of relationships between researcher, social world, and data which qualitative research spans” (Mason, 2002: 52). In addition, it takes into account the assumption that

...reality is holistic, multi-dimensional and ever-changing; it is not a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed and measured.

(Merriam, 1988:167)

In an attempt to explore, and understand, my informants' perceptions regarding their responses to change, I relied mainly on different kinds of informant testimony. It may be argued that testimony "does not, as such, generate knowledge though it may be described as transmitting it" (Audi, 2003:140). Moreover, we have to depend frequently on others' testimony in order to understand the world in which we live - in this case, the testimony of the actual people who embraced and participated in the changes in this social context.

Much of what we justifiably believe and much of what we know is, in a sense, *socially grounded*: based on what others have said to us, whether in person or impersonally in their writings.

(Audi, 2003: 331)

Therefore, I employed a range of different interview methods in order to generate, and subsequently triangulate results, derived from the different types of data. These are summarised in Table 7 with the respective coding I assigned to each. The final coding for each transcript also included the informant's pseudonym and the date the interview took place.

Originally I had planned to proceed with these different interview methods in a linear fashion, that is, step-by-step, in the order that they appear in Table 7. However, in practice, this process resulted in being more organic. However, this was perhaps beneficial for as Grounds (2007) affirms

Adhering unswervingly to a strictly linear plan could blind any researcher to possible new lines and/or methods of enquiry which may emerge as part of the process, and thereby impoverishing the research experience and the research findings.

(Grounds, 2007: 119)

My research schedule from October 2003 – January 2005, became dependant on the amount of time my informants could fit into their busy schedules, as well as whether or not, both they and I, were in Mexico or in England, busy with their own projects or research

processes. Furthermore, my informants often included comments on topics in one interview that I had originally planned to explore in another. However, instead of being a disadvantage, this turned out to be beneficial for my inquiry. Not only was I able to gather a wealth of data, but as my methods of data generation, and data analysis, were initially two overlapping and interrelated procedures throughout my field work, by identifying when this happened, I was enabled to probe further the categories that were emerging in the analysis, as well as triangulate my data.

Methods of data generation	Code	Description
Life history interviews	BA90	Semi-structured in-depth interviews focused on the life history of the School of Languages: comparison of academic life before and after 1990 to understand the context.
	LH	Semi-structured in-depth interviews focused on the academic life histories of the informants to identify their career stages.
	Prelim	Semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore the informants' perceptions of change and their academic selves during and after the change process.
Critical incident interview	CritInc	Informants were asked to think in retrospect about a specific change of their choice and remember what they had felt and thought at that time.
Repertory grid interviews	RG1	Informants' personal constructs in relation to the institutional change process in this context.
	RG2	Informants' personal constructs in relation to the characteristics of the people who participated in the changes.
Personal log	PL	My observations and reflections, both during and after the above sessions.
Further Probing	FP	Semi-structured interviews to clarify terms and perceptions employed in prior interviews
Verification interview	Ver	Semi-structured interviews to verify my findings

Table 7: Methods of data generation employed

3.4.1 Primary Data Generating Method: Conversations with a Purpose

As my primary data generating method, I employed semi-structured in-depth interviews in order to gain knowledge about my informants:

- academic lives before and after 1990;
- academic life histories;

- their academic selves and perceptions of change during and after the change process.

I also employed this method at the end of my research process to verify my findings. I gave my informants a summarised list of the issues I had discovered, and asked them to comment as to:

- whether or not they agreed with them;
- if there were issues they would edit;
- if there were any issues they would like to add;
- what they thought about the issues I had discovered.

My rationale for the use of this method was that in life history studies, the most common strategy used in the generation of data in order to gain knowledge of an informant's context and career (Drever, 2003, Gillham, 2000, Kvale, 1996), is the interview-conversation between informant and researcher (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). In other words what Goodson (2001a) has referred to as 'grounded conversation', that is, conversations prompted by the general concerns of the researcher with the purpose of affording "individuals with the opportunity of telling their own stories in their own ways" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995: 186). These conversations have the purpose of encouraging informants "to reflect on the past and to look again at their own life and experiences in an introspective and subjective fashion" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995: 192). In sum, the interview-conversation "facilitates the reconstruction and interpretation of subjectively meaningful features and critical episodes in an individual's life" (Hitchcock & Hughes (1995: 186).

During these interview-conversations, the researcher is not only an interviewer, but also a "sympathetic listener, friend, colleague and fellow human being" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995:194) who interacts with the informant in order to gain meaning and construct knowledge. As a consequence, the "empathy between researcher and subject is therefore an essential ingredient in this research as a result of the highly collaborative nature of the activity itself" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995: 188). In other words,

...the researcher, is not neutral, distant, or emotionally uninvolved. He or she forms a relationship with the interviewee, and that relationship is likely to be involving. The researcher's empathy, sensitivity, humour, and sincerity are important tools for the research. The researcher is asking for a lot of openness from the interviewees; he or she is unlikely to get that openness by being closed and impersonal.

(Rubin & Rubin, 1995: 12)

By means of these “conversations with a purpose” (Burgess, 1984: 102), the researcher, by “listening carefully enough to hear the meanings, interpretations, and understandings that give shape to the worlds of the interviews” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995: 7), may “understand the world from the subjects’ points of view, [and] unfold the meaning of peoples’ experiences” (Goodson & Sikes, 2001:1).

3.4.2 Secondary Data Generating Method: Critical Incident Interviews

As a complementary tool, I employed an interview method known as the Critical Incident Technique (CIT). This interview method not only generated data regarding my informants’ perceptions, but it also permitted me to probe further into their responses in previous interviews, as well as to triangulate the issues that were emerging.

The CIT was originally developed by Flanagan in 1954 to gather data about job behaviours that have either hindered or enabled a job to be performed effectively (Zemke & Kramlinger, 1982). Regarding educational practices, it has been used to understand issues such as leadership development in vocational education (Finch et al., 1992; Lambrecht et al., 1997); teachers’ roles in the integration of vocational and academic education (Schmidt et al., 1992); the role of professional development programmes (Schmidt et al., 1997); and has been posited as an approach to examine critical incidents in teaching in order to develop professional judgment (Tripp, 1993).

In a nutshell, CIT is “an epistemological process in which qualitative, descriptive data are provided about real-life accounts” (Di Salvo et al., 1989: 554-5), in this case, about incidents which had taken place during teachers’ professional practices. Thus, the ‘critical incidents’ that I explored may be understood, on the one hand, as occurrences that have marked an important change in a person, institution or social phenomenon. On the other

hand, they may not be so dramatic or obvious. However, the fact that the person recalled them shows that they are significant.

Incidents which we recall only to dismiss as trivial are often a good indicator of criticality because the very fact that we have recalled them means that there is probably something important about them, something which has made them salient for us in one way or another.

(Tripp, 1993: 35)

They then may be categorised as ‘critical’ after careful analysis and interpretation that views the incident from a wider context (Tripp, 1993). In other words,

Incidents happen, but critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation: a critical incident is a value judgment we make, and the basis of that judgment is the significance we attach to the meaning of the incident.

(Tripp, 1993:8)

Therefore, as my intent was to explore the meanings my informants attached to the changes they identified both in their working life and context, I employed CIT because “critical incidents are useful areas to study because they reveal, like a flashbulb, the major choice and change times in people's lives” (Sikes et al., 1985: 57).

3.4.3 Secondary Data Generating Method: Repertory Grid Interviews

Based on Kelly’s Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, 1955), I employed a repertory grid interview technique as another secondary complementary tool in order to explore and triangulate my informants’ personal constructs that had emerged during our other interview sessions. Kelly uses the term personal constructs to refer to “the dimensions that we use to conceptualize aspects of our day-to-day world” (Cohen et al., 2000: 338). According to Kelly (1955) a person’s construct system represents truth as they understand it. From his studies he concluded that:

...there is no objective, absolute truth and that events are only meaningful in relation to the ways that are construed by individuals. Primary focus is upon the way individuals perceive their environment, the way they interpret what they perceive in terms of their existing mental structure, and the way in which, as a consequence, they behave towards it.

Kelly (1955) found the repertory grid interviewing technique to be useful to gain access to people's personal construct system. Here repertory refers to the repertoire of constructs that the person has developed. Personal constructs represent some form of judgment or evaluation that has been developed by making a comparison, thus by definition they are scalar; for example, the construct 'good' can only exist in contrast to the construct 'bad'. Kelly (1955) discovered that these two poles of construct can be elicited by using three elements and requesting the informant to pair two of them in contrast with a third. For example, in the first interview I employed using the repertory grid technique interview (RG1) I used a random number generator - a table of the different possible combinations of the numbers one to eight, in threes - each number represented one of the main eight changes (Appendix 5). Using the different combinations of the numbers, I asked my informants to compare and contrast how two of the institutional changes that had occurred during the 1990s differed from the third. In a similar way, in the second repertory grid technique interview (Appendix 6), I asked my informants to compare and contrast the characteristics of the main eight people who they remembered had been involved in the changes in the English department. By means of these interviews, I was able to gain access to their perceptions, their personal constructs of institutional change, as well as identify the characteristics of the people who had participated in the changes. For example, some of the characteristics that emerged regarding the main people engaged in the changes were the following: 'people with vision', 'open to change', 'committed', 'cared about students', 'worked well together', and 'hard-working'.

3.4.4 Personal log

During and after each interview session, I jotted down field notes in a personal log. These notes included descriptive comments about the setting, and both mine, and my informants' behaviour, as well as my personal reflections, and responses, to the data I was collecting. These notes proved to be very useful. They not only provided support for both a critical and reflective approach to my research process, and a means of balancing the subjectivity of my interpretations (Deshkin, 1988), but they also assisted in my analysis process, given that they included:

- interesting words, turns of phrase, metaphors and concepts that I identified during the interview session;
- concepts, issues and words that seemed to be repeating among my informants;
- questions that occurred to me to include later in either the present or a future session;
- emerging issues to be explored in the literature;
- ideas and points to be included when writing my thesis;

and especially:

- my reflections that included:
 - my personal reactions; my ideas and impressions;
 - my thoughts regarding possible problem areas and prejudices such as my relationship with my informants;
 - the feelings that I observed and experienced personally;
 - speculations about what I thought I was learning and the themes that were emerging.

3.5 Data Generation Process

In order to provide my informants with a setting conducive to their feeling at ease to speak freely, I met with my informants on different occasions, in locations of *their* choice, over a period of eighteen months. I gave them the option whether the conversation be carried out in English or Spanish. The duration of the interviews varied from informant to informant depending on the type of interview, and the length of my informants' responses. The sessions were recorded on a mini tape-recorder that I hoped would be less intrusive given its size.

Prior to each of the life history interview-conversation sessions and the critical incident interview, I designed interview guides (Appendixes 1-4) in order to help focus our sessions. Regarding the conversations I had with my informants concerning their academic life at the School before and after 1990, this guide only consisted in a list of topics e.g. BA Curriculum, working conditions, teaching materials, that I used as triggers to help my informants reflect upon different issues, and compare and contrast their working context,

and practices before and after 1990. The guides for the other sessions consisted in a number of general questions to help focus the conversations. However, as I wanted to maintain the flexibility and natural flow of a conversation, I did not adhere to the sequence of these questions, or to their exact wording. Instead, I used them as a kind of check list and inserted them where I considered they were necessary, and included others as the need arose. In addition, I adopted a process similar to Woods' (1985) notion of progressive focusing, that

...allows the interviewer to identify missing details, points needing correction (inconsistencies, *non sequiturs*, and so on) and issues that are worth following up, so that subsequent interviews can be effectively focused.

(Richards, 2003: 23)

Furthermore, during this process, I jotted down notes in my log, and transcribed each interview before continuing with the next one. The examination of my personal log, as well as the preliminary analysis of the transcripts, that included both preliminary micro analysis and constant comparison (detailed in the following section), helped me to probe further my informants' responses in subsequent conversations.

Although, I am a complete participant in the context of my inquiry, I made every effort to avoid making assumptions, and instead questioned, and asked for clarification, even concerning things which, on first hearing, seemed to be obvious for me. In addition, I sometimes paraphrased, or summarised, parts of the conversation for the informants in order to confirm that in fact, I had understood their comments in the way they wanted me to understand them. In addition, as I was intent on listening to my informants and learning from them, I consciously made an effort not to dominate the conversations or to interrupt, except when there was a long pause, so that my informants would feel at ease to talk as much as they wanted about the issues that they considered of interest or significance. Owing to this, the extent of my involvement in the conversations varied from informant to informant. In a few cases, there were informants who seemed to prefer that I ask direct questions. In contrast, the majority were quite happy and content in taking control of the floor and talking long turns. Consequently, my interventions either consisted of subtle verbal nudges to get the conversation back on track in relation to my research interests, or questions to either clarify, or confirm, what I thought I had understood.

Apart from the interview-conversation sessions, I also asked my informants if they would take part in two repertory grid interviews, one regarding the changes and the other concerning the people who they remembered had been engaged in them. In an attempt to preserve anonymity, I requested that they not tell me who these people were that they had identified. In both sessions, by using a rounded number generator, I asked my informants to compare and contrast how two of the changes or people differed from the third. I both jotted down the salient points they mentioned and also taped these interviews so that I could later transcribe and analyse them. A transcribed example of the resulting data from each of these interviews can be found in Appendixes 7 and 8. Although I do not quote from these in my analysis chapters, given that I found richer quotations in my other interviews, the resulting data from these particular interviews fed into the analysis of the other interviews and enabled me to triangulate and thus confirm several of the emerging concepts and issues.

Once I had finished the interview sessions, transcribed the tapes, and shown the resulting texts to several of my informants for validation purposes (Radnor, 2002), as well as analysed the data, I summarised my findings in the form of a list (Appendix 9) and showed it to the majority of my informants (one was in England). During this interview-conversation that was focused on verifying my findings, I asked my informants to give me their opinions and thoughts about what I believed I had discovered, and confirm, modify, add or subtract anything that they felt was appropriate, inappropriate and/or necessary.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

As referred to in the section above, the methods of data generation and data analysis were initially two overlapping and interrelated procedures throughout my field work (Fig. 10). Carrying out both these procedures concurrently helped to inform me concerning what questions to ask, and which issues to pursue, in subsequent interview sessions. This process was facilitated by the fact that I transcribed all, but a few of the tapes, myself. Given the speed with which one of my informants spoke in Spanish, these few tapes were transcribed by a friend's brother who did not know my informants, but who was nevertheless duly sworn to confidentiality. Once these tapes were transcribed, I checked them again for errors or omissions. For example, as this person had no knowledge of the School, he had

misunderstood some of my informant's abbreviations. Although this process was lengthy and time-consuming, it not only enabled me to become familiar with the data, but it also aided my analysis given that "ideas and themes can emerge or be developed as a consequence of repetitive listening and intimate engagement with the data (Goodson & Sikes, 2001: 33).

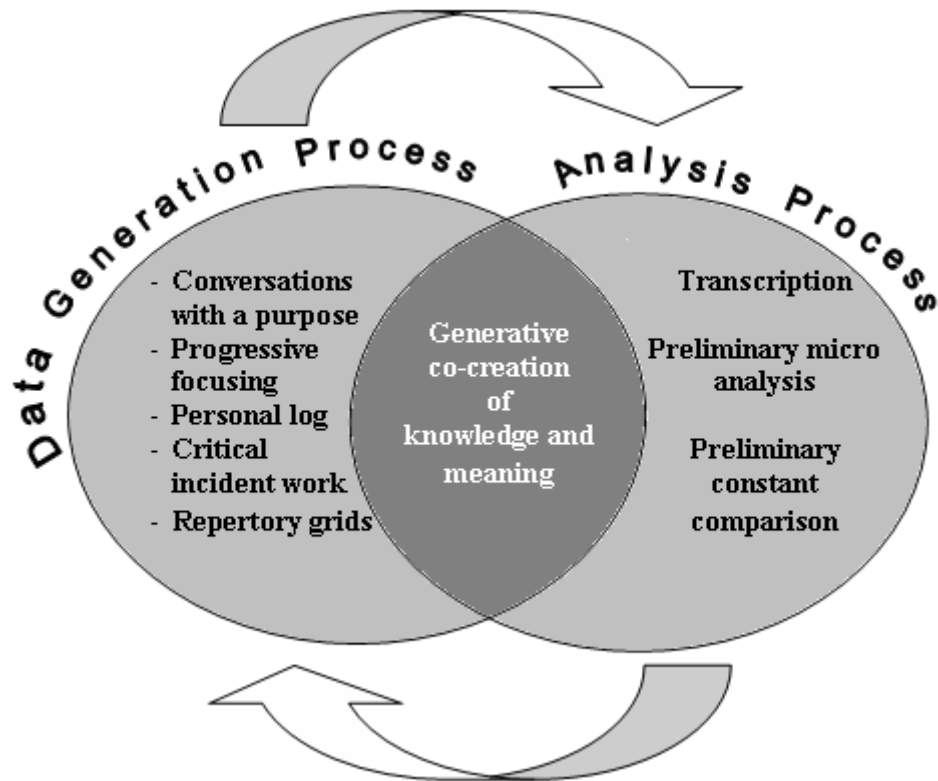


Fig. 10: Research process 2003-5. Stage One: While in the field

Later, when I had concluded my field work, I revisited my data as a whole and employed a more systematic approach in order to reduce, arrange, analyse and interpret the data more thoroughly (Fig. 11). To this end, I used aspects of the Grounded Theory approach to data analysis (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2003; Goodley et al., 2004). I considered this approach to be the most appropriate, as instead of trying to match the data with a predetermined theory Grounded Theory is concerned with generating theory from the data. That is, resulting theory is 'grounded' in the data drawn from the informants themselves, influenced by their emic understandings of their context and lives.

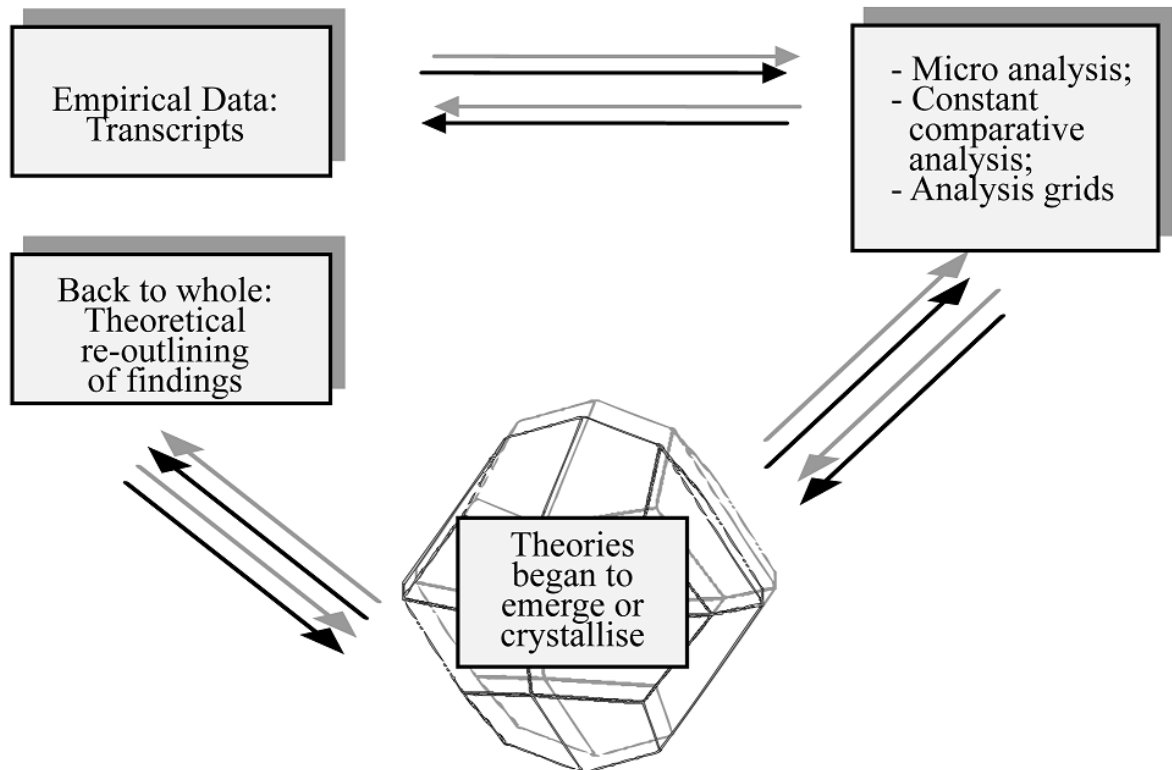


Fig. 11: Research Process 2005-6. Stage Two: Systematic approach to analysis

In short, Grounded Theory:

...offers a well-established approach to ensuring that ideas and recommendations which the researcher develops and makes emerge *from* the data, are *grounded in* what key participants have contributed through their words and experiences. Grounded theory gives an analytic qualitative approach explicitly concerned with seeking out theoretical explanations for what is going on...and is sufficiently adaptable to be fitted to projects in which the research methodology and the process of analysis are developing in unpredictable ways.

(Goodley et al., 2004: 119)

The specific analytic sequence of steps I employed consisted in:

- Microanalysis;
- Constant comparative analysis;
- Analysis grids.

During the initial coding of the data, I first engaged in what Strauss and Corbin (1998) refer to as microanalysis, that is,

...the detailed line-by-line analysis necessary at the beginning of the study to generate initial categories (with their properties and dimensions) and to suggest relationships among categories...

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 57)

This consisted in my carefully reading each line, and sentence, of the data, and performing the following procedure:

- Highlighting in green: words, metaphors and turns of phrase that either the informant had emphasised in some way or that I identified as an interesting choice of words. For example, an informant's use of metaphor.
- Reflecting on the importance and possible meaning of each of the above and seeing if there were other words or phrases that related to these that would help my understanding. All this was noted on the right hand side of the transcript in the column I had reserved for this purpose.
- Highlighting in blue: complete or parts of sentences that appeared to illustrate emergent themes or topics.
- Asking myself a series of questions about the above, such as: what is the informant actually referring to? What does this mean for the informant? How does this affect or influence the informant? What am I learning from this?
- Labelling in bold font on the data, the category or subcategories and their dimensions and properties these highlighted sections referred to by using first an umbrella term, followed by a more specific term that defined my findings, for example: **Perception of group: trust** (Fig. 12).

During the data analysis, I also employed a constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2003), by which I first analysed one set of data and then analysed the second set with the first one in mind. That is, I analysed an interview, and compared my findings with those from both a past, and a further interview I had had with the same informant.

Line no.	PreLim/R/14/06/03	Interesting words; my comments and questions
0870	all this er effort trying to be better and	‘Effort’: the physical and/or mental
0871	trying to trying not to disappoint you	energy that is needed to do something
0872	and my other friends who trusted me er	especially when it involves a lot of hard
0873	made me be as open as possible, you	work or determination.
0874	know me very well, you are of all these	‘better’ – desire to improve, to be the
0875	friends ¿no? know me so well, that I	best you can be.
0876	can be myself without any problem,	Doesn’t want to ‘let people (friends)
0877	¿no? so I feel er like I’m inside a huge	down’ or to betray their ‘trust’.
0878	family ¿no?	Friends have helped him develop security/confidence to be true self Interesting that he first spoke about ‘teams’ and a ‘club’ and then progressed to the idea of friends and then to being part of a family. In other words, is he referring to the growth of a community of practice or a small culture?

Fig. 12: Example of extract from analysed transcript

I also analysed one informant’s interview, and then compared my findings with those I found in another informant’s interview. This entailed both an accumulative and cyclical process. It was accumulative in the sense that by this means, I not only refined and confirmed and so validated the emergent categories, as well as the themes that were emerging, but at the same time I discovered and identified other categories, and interesting words, as well as phrases, to add to my growing list of findings. The process was also cyclical in nature, as I then returned to the data I had already analysed to detect if these new findings I had discovered had been referred to, but had been previously undetected, in my initial analysis of other informants’ testimonies.

As a final step, I then constructed an “analysis grid” (Gillham, 2000: 65) or table for each of the categories I had identified in order to compare and contrast my informants’ responses. I wrote the properties and/or dimensions that had emerged down the left hand side of the grid and the informants’ pseudonyms along the top. Owing to the number of informants, it was impossible to include each grid on one sheet of paper. Consequently, I divided the informants into groups according to their degree of participation in the change process (Table 6), and constructed a grid for each group, and then compared and contrasted these grids both within, and between, groups. In each space on a grid I noted the interview

and line number where a particular informant had referred to the property and/or dimension of the category and either a summary of, or a quotation from, the data. Figure 13 is an extract from one of these grids.

Category: Characteristics of research group:

	Rosaurio	Maria	Irma	Veronica
Mutual support	<p>(Prelim/16/04/04: 0315 –20): “This is a group that has been made, that has grown here and that support you and if you want to do something I believe it can be achieved with the support of your colleagues.”</p>	<p>(Prelim/14/07/03: 0622-28): Might not agree or want to participate but does so when she sees who else is involved as feels more supported when working with a certain group of people. (CritInc/03/12/03): 0341 – 51): People work well with people they get along with. The advantage of working in a group like this is that people help each other - what one can’t do another can so things get done.</p>	<p>(Prelim/30/03/04: 0738 –53): During the research period, sometimes there was no support from the university authorities. They expected that the ‘elastic band’ could be stretched and stretched without breaking as they didn’t seem to want to pay out for a stronger one. Is this one of the reasons why this R.G. became closer as they did support each other? (Prelim30/03/04 Side B: 0836 -9): ‘We supported each other and that’s what helped us to carry on’</p>	

Fig. 13: Extract from analysis grid

During this process I also refined the emerging categories by doing the following:

- I asked myself a series of questions, such as: “What is going on here (e.g., issues, problems, concerns)? ...What is the relationship of one concept to another (i.e., how do they compare and relate at the property and dimensional levels)? ...What would happen if ...? How do events and actions change over time? What are the larger

structural issues here, and how do these events play into or affect what I am seeing or hearing?” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 77).

- I also sampled on the basis of emerging concepts, with the aim being to explore the dimensional range or varied conditions along which the properties of concepts vary (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 73), and compared, and contrasted, concepts and categories
- At the end of this process, when the categories seemed to have reached saturation point, I compared the data collected from the different informants in order to arrive at my final analysis.

The construction of these grids was a valuable step in my analysis process. Not only did I become even more familiar with the data, but the grids also aided me to further refine the categories I had identified, and detect, as well as confirm and question, the themes and issues that had emerged from the data. In short, they were both very useful in enabling me to understand the issues I had discovered, and in providing me with pertinent quotations that I could later use when writing the analysis chapters of my thesis.

As a result of the methods I employed during my analysis and interpretation of the data, theories began to emerge or crystallise (Richardson, 1997). According to Richardson (1994), the notion of a crystal

...combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionality, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, and alter, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities *and* refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends upon our angle of repose.

(Richardson, 1994: 522)

Depending on the different ‘angles of repose’, that is, interest and attention, I focused on my informants’ perceptions, first verbally, and then later, as I examined and re-examined the transcripts, first informant by informant, and then collectively, comparing and contrasting the different informant responses, the different facets of the crystal became more and more apparent. As a result, this process enabled me to understand more clearly, though arguably not completely (Richardson, 1994) the interrelated and dynamic nature of

the issues encapsulated in my informants' responses. This subsequently led me to re-examine my data from the point of view of Complexity Theory as defined in Chapter Two, section 1.

In order to identify, examine and confirm the constituents of the social system that collectively interacted and affected the change process both in our educational institution and in ourselves as teachers, individually, and as an emergent small culture, I employed the notion of 'change frames' (Hargreaves et al. 1997; Fink, 2000; Moore & Shaw, 2000; Retallick & Fink, 2000). By 'change frames' I am referring to the "multiple foci or lens for understanding the dynamic and interrelated nature of the change process" (Hoban, 2002: 35). The main thing to remember when examining educational change processes is that these frames do not act individually, but as Hoban (2002) suggests, they act collectively. As a result

...educational change behaves as a *complex system* with multiple frames or elements acting together as a *system* to produce non-linear interactions. Furthermore, these interactions are *complex*, meaning that the system can respond with an inertia to resist change and stay the same, or dynamically self-adjust to a new order or balance.

(Hoban, 2002: 36 [italics in the original])

Thus, by means of examining the interconnectivity of the 'change frames' I had discovered in the context of my inquiry I achieved a deeper understanding of the complexity of educational change.

4. Limitations

My inquiry, exploratory in nature, was based on both my intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to understand how I, and a number of teachers within a higher educational context, had responded to change. Owing to the data that was emerging during my inquiry, I also began to be interested in exploring how being involved in a change process had changed us as individuals, and influenced the nature of our interrelationships as colleagues. However, although, after examining the research literature in Chapter Two, I am aware that there is scant research that focuses on these issues, the aim of my inquiry is *not* centred on the generalization of my findings based on a number of teachers' perceptions. This is because I

agree with Sikes (2000), that the social world cannot be put neatly into a box, and labelled, because the social world is not so easily defined. Instead, my aim is to provide “illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations” (Hoepfl, (1997) in Golafshani, 2003: 600) regarding the complexities of teachers’ responses to change in a university context, in the hope that this may lead to developing “theoretical ideas about social processes and cultural forms that have relevance beyond [these] data themselves” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996: 163). Thus, although I fully acknowledge, as mentioned in section 1.1, that my inquiry is limited by its capacity to uncover the complexity of this social world, and as such other interpretations, meanings and understandings are possible; I believe that my findings, to a greater or lesser extent, will resonate for other people, in other educational contexts, who accept the trustworthiness of my findings.

4.1 Trustworthiness

In positivist research, the value of an inquiry is based on the validity and reliability of the measures used, and the data acquired, as well as the generalisability of the findings. However, in this inquiry, owing to its interpretative nature, these terms are inappropriate and so need “redefinition” (Straus & Corbin, 1990: 250) in order “to reflect interpretivist [qualitative] conceptions” (Seale, 1999:465). Thus, in order to evaluate the quality of my inquiry, I prefer to adopt the notion of trustworthiness as posited by Lincoln and Guba (1985), given that, in contrast with positivist research, I was not only the main research instrument in this inquiry, but I was also relying on my informants’ memory to generate data. As such, these two factors had an undeniable impact on my research process.

4.1.1 My Dual Role in this Inquiry: Limitations and Advantages

Many authors (e.g. Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al. 1993; Mehra, 2002) recommend “prolonged engagement” in the research context, and between the researcher and his/her informants, in order to gain understanding, and establish a relationship of trust which, in turn, enables the construction of a trustworthy account. In my case, I was, in some ways, fortunate in that I was researching a context of which I had been a member for many years prior to my inquiry, for example, I already had a relationship of trust with my informants. However, owing to this, my dual role, not only as a researcher, but also as a complete participant of this context, as detailed in section 2.2, will undoubtedly lead to questions of

“bias, credibility and truthlessness” (Yow, 1994:177), concerning my findings, especially as

Everything we say, and the way we say it, is affected by our relationship with the people we’re talking to, the circumstances in which we speak, relevant past experiences, things we might already have said, and so on.

(Richards, 2003: 87)

Consequently, even though I was aware of these issues, and I continually engaged in a great deal of critical personal reflexivity and “close scrutiny” (Mason, 2002:7) during my research process as pointed out in section 2.2, I am aware that it was impossible to separate myself totally from my research process. In my inquiry, past and present come together as both I, and my informants, experienced the changes, and have carried forward the effects, to a lesser or greater extent, into our present lives. Consequently, I acknowledge that the nature of my relationship with my informants may have provided me with a distorted and partial view of the categories and themes that were emerging. However, conversely, as Straus and Corbin (1998) state, this also facilitated my analysis, as: “It is by using what we bring to the data in a systematic and aware way that we become sensitive to meaning without **forcing** our explanations on data” (Straus & Corbin, 1998:47[their emphasis]). During my inquiry, it enabled me to identify, and understand issues, from my informants’ perceptions that otherwise I may have missed.

Although my dual role as a researcher, and as a complete participant, has its limitations, it also has its advantages. In order to be allowed access to people’s perceptions “Empathy between researcher and subject is...an essential ingredient...as a result of the highly collaborative nature of the activity itself” (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995: 188). In addition, as Woods (1985) affirmed, conversations with teachers need “to be informal, where teachers feel sufficiently free and relaxed to be “themselves” (Woods, 1985: 14). Therefore, as Carspecken (1996) states, researchers who have rapport, and connect with, their informants on a personal level, and who succeed to establish an interrelationship of mutual trust and respect, are more likely to be given access to informants’ perceptions than those researchers who have no personal ties with the informants.

Nevertheless, I am highlighting my dual role as a researcher, and as a complete participant, in this context, as I am fully aware that even though I took the utmost care to understand, and reflect on, how my informants construe their reality (Kelly, 1955), and I empathized, and tried to walk in their shoes, I am ultimately a human being myself who in the end will only be able to achieve an informed resemblance of the informants' reality. Therefore, my objectivity as a researcher may be questioned although, according to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), "objectivity is not an appropriate notion in life history work given that the researcher is part of the social world he/she is exploring" (p.208). In addition, "Life history work produces detailed personal subjective accounts because that is what it precisely aims to do" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995:208). Nonetheless, I may be accused of interpreting the data anyway I desire according to my own interests. Therefore, I need to establish "the fact that the data and interpretations of an inquiry were not merely figments of the inquirer's imagination" (Schwandt, 2001: 259) by linking "assertions, findings, and interpretations, and so on to the data themselves in readily discernible ways" (Schwandt, 1997: 164). This will be one of my main objectives in the following chapters where I present my findings (Chapters Four and Five), before offering an interpretation grounded in the data (Chapter Six).

4.1.2 Memory of Informants: Limitations and Procedures Adopted

Apart from the impact of my dual role, as I am relying on different types of interviews with my informants to generate knowledge, as detailed in section 3.3, issues of "bias, credibility and truthfulness" (Yow, 1994:177) will also be raised regarding my informants' responses during the research. It may be argued that retrospection and hindsight may have influenced my informants' responses. In addition, although I encouraged my informants' to be honest in their responses, I was aware, given that I was asking about their life histories, that their recollections depended on their ability to remember past events, and feelings that could have either faded, or were fallible, or had even been falsely interpreted, either then, or at present (Denzin, 1970; Scott & Usher, 1999). Furthermore, their responses could possibly be influenced by the images they wanted to project of themselves through what they decided to share with me. Consequently, this process is not completely flawless, as people's memories and senses can alter, modify or even change especially when looking back in retrospect (Yow, 1994). Moreover, as previously mentioned, interpretations may be altered

or misconstrued by the informers themselves either unintentionally or deliberately (Yow, 1994). In short,

Respondents are human, with all the defects of memory, conscious and unconscious motivations, social and interpersonal needs, and so on, that influence the ways in which reality might be represented.

(Richards, 2003: 92)

As a result, my findings can never fully replicate what or how my informants really thought and felt during that time. Nevertheless, as this inquiry accepts the existence of multiple perspectives, ‘the accuracy of the record of a person’s life is not the issue – it is whether the story is ‘trustworthy’’ (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998). Therefore, to ensure the trustworthiness of my findings, I adopted the following procedures:

a) The Use of Well-Established Methods

An inquiry cannot be trustworthy unless it is dependable. To achieve dependability, various authors (e.g. Yin, 1994; Shenton, 2004) state that both the methods of data generation and data analysis should be based on, or similar to, well tried methods. In my inquiry, in order to generate data, I used the well-established methods of semi-structured in-depth interviews, critical incident work and repertory grid techniques, in order to “attempt to secure an in-depth understanding" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003b:8). Furthermore, by means of conducting multiple interviews with the same informants, I was able to look for, and check, the ‘internal consistency’ (Atkinson, 1998: 60) of my informants’ testimonies. In addition, I also employed aspects of Grounded Theory that is a well-established approach to data analysis (Goodley et al., 2004). By means of this approach I not only hoped to generate theory from my data, but I also hoped to verify that my account is not one based on a desire to try and make the data fit any a priori assumptions, and preconceptions, before initiating this inquiry.

b) Triangulation and Member Checks

Another two methods I used to check for internal consistency and so eliminate bias while increasing the trustworthiness of my findings, was by employing triangulation, and member checks. Triangulation is defined as

...a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study.

(Creswell & Miller, 2000: 126)

I employed the following three kinds of triangulation: methods, data and informant triangulation. I used different methods to both generate and triangulate data: various semi-structured in-depth interviews as primary data generating methods, and critical incident work, as well as repertory grid techniques, as secondary data generating methods. By means of employing these different methods not only did I gain access to my informants' perceptions, but also, as Shenton (2004: 65) citing Guba (1981) and Brewer and Hunter (1989) mentions, the added advantage was that their use "in concert compensates for their individual limitations and exploits their respective benefits". In addition, "multiple methods enhance the validity of the findings" (Merriam, 2002: 117).

Furthermore, during the subsequent data analysis process, by means of 'veridical reading' (Kvale, 1996:223), that is, comparing and contrasting what my informants said during the different kinds of interviews and adopting a constant comparative method, I constantly checked, and triangulated, the categories and issues that were emerging, both within the various interview sessions with each informant, as well as across the data obtained from the different informants. By interviewing all the people who had embraced the change process, I was able to triangulate their viewpoints, and thus verify, as well as construct, a trustworthy account of their perceptions and experiences.

Another means I employed to not only check my data, but also my interpretation of the emerging categories and issues, was by adopting the procedure known as 'member checking' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is a procedure whereby the researcher shares his/her findings with the informants and inquires whether or not their points of view have been correctly interpreted, if the interpretation makes sense and/or if there are any errors of fact. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this is a decisive procedure in qualitative research for determining credibility.

The member check, whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from

whom the data were originally collected, is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility.

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 314)

In my inquiry, this included the following steps:

- 1) In order to check if my data was trustworthy, I checked with my informants whether or not I had understood what they were saying to me by summarising briefly during, and at the end of each interview session, what I had understood.
- 2) Later, I asked my informants to check the resulting transcripts to make sure I had successfully captured their words, and to check if they wanted to add or subtract anything.
- 3) I showed my informants the categories that were emerging and asked them for their opinions and if they had any further comments.
- 4) When I had finished my analysis, I returned to my informants and engaged in a process of communicative validation (Kelchtermans, 1994). That is, I presented them a list of my findings so that they could add to, subtract from, and/or comment on, the issues that had emerged from the data.

This procedure proved to be a valuable exercise as my informants' contributions enabled me to verify, and strengthen, the trustworthiness of my findings.

Summary

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of my research stance, which motivated me to adopt a qualitative interpretative approach to my inquiry and to include aspects of life history research. In addition, I highlighted the significance of my role as a complete participant. Following this, I gave a detailed account of my research procedure, and the data generation, and analysis processes I adopted, before discussing the limitations and trustworthiness of my research process. By this means, I have attempted to give as detailed a report of my research process as possible, in order to produce a sufficiently trustworthy account for my reader. However, I fully acknowledge that my findings, given the nature of my research, will be, as Crotty (1998) succinctly phrased,

...suggestive rather than conclusive. They will be plausible, perhaps even convincing ways of seeing things – and to be sure, helpful ways of seeing things – but certainly not any ‘one true way’ of seeing things”.

(Crotty, 1998:13)

In the following chapters (Four and Five), I shall present the findings that emerged in response to my four research sub-questions, before offering a summary of my interpretation of these findings in Chapter Six. At pertinent points during the course of both these chapters, I will offer a discussion of the main issues that have emerged from our retrospection, and reconstruction, of the past, in present time.

Chapter 4

Waking from Professional Slumber – Change and Professional Engagement

In this chapter I shall present the findings that emerged in response to my first two research sub-questions: *What was the nature of our professional lives prior to our engagement in the change process?* and *What were the issues involved in triggering and sustaining our response to change?* In the first section, I will discuss the main issues that influenced our professional lives in this particular educational context prior to 1990 resulting in what I refer to as our state of ‘*Professional Slumber*’. In the second section, I will identify and analyse the issues that were both influential and instrumental in ‘*awakening*’ us from this ‘*slumber*’ to become professionally engaged in the changes at both the *surface* level of the School, (changes in the curriculum and the opening of new courses) as well as the *deeper* changes in ourselves, namely, the transformation in our personal construal of our respective professional identities.

1. ‘Professional Slumber’

In order to understand our individual and collective response to change, as well as how our experience during the change process has subsequently affected us both personally and professionally, it is first necessary to know who we were before the change process began. I have coined the phrase ‘*professional slumber*’, to refer to the pre-1990 stage of our professional careers at the School of Languages, a period during which it seemed as if our professional lives just “chugged on” from one day to the next (BA90/Modesta/11/11/03) without any kind of change at all.

Although the School of Languages (U.V.) had evolved and was even physically moved to another location to accommodate a significant growth in student intake, there was little other movement or change in relation to what happened within its walls. It was as if the School: “was in slumber, we could even say it was asleep” (BA90/Rosaurio/15/10/03[translation]). The curriculum had not been revised or updated since 1976, and few demands were made of us, the teachers. In fact, our roles and responsibilities seemed to be clearly defined: they consisted of teaching classes, setting exams, and attending general school meetings. This is expressed by Isela below.

Before the nineties your work load seemed to be much more clean cut. You knew that you had to teach your class and that you had to give your exam and that you had to go to junta's académicas [general school meetings] and I suppose that *that was it*.

(BA90/Isela/05/05/04 [my explanation])

This extract shows that we knew exactly what was expected of us. We were not involved in any other activities at the School, such as curriculum design or any other kind of decision-making. Our roles as teachers were limited to the daily concerns of classroom teaching. Consequently, in retrospect, we remember this time as having been “very, very peaceful, very still” (BA90/María/13/10/03 [translation]).

Our professional activities, as defined by Isela, as well as the majority of my other informants, seem to fit in with the general, rather narrowly defined definition of teachers' roles before the 1990s, mentioned in Chapter Two, section 3. During that time, we principally played the role of content experts in our courses. However, my findings also corroborate Britzman's (1993) view, as well as other authors' work (e.g. MacLure, 1993; Day & Hadfield, 1996; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Day, 2002, 2007; Varghese et al., 2005; Day et al., 2006), that roles are not the only defining elements of a teacher's professional identity. Instead, identity is now considered as a complex “relational phenomenon” (Beijaard et al., 2004: 108) that “is continually being informed, formed, and reformed” (Cooper & Olson, 1996: 80) throughout a teacher's career cycle (Sikes et al., 1985; Fessler, 1985; Kugel, 1993; Huberman, 1989, 1993, 1995; Steffy et al., 2000) influenced by

...the dynamic and evolving outcome of a teacher's on-going interaction with the setting in which she works and the interactions she has with other participants in that setting.

(Keiko & Gaies, 2002: n.p.)

In particular, I discovered that not only our own personal construal of our identities as Beijaard et al. (2004) affirms, but also our collective '*professional slumber*' had been influenced by the importance we had placed on the following overlapping personal and external factors during this stage in our careers.

- Our individual biography

- Our conceptions about ourselves as teachers;
- The influence of our working context;
- The influence of our membership in a particular teaching culture.

1.1 Our Individual Biography

One of the salient issues that emerged in my findings is that most of us had little self-confidence in ourselves as teachers before the 1990s. Although half of us (Irma, Vero, Chela, Carlos, María, Raphael and myself) had had some prior, rather limited, experience in teaching the English language, our self-evaluation of ourselves as university teachers was rather poor. One of the reasons for this, as Lasky (2005) affirms, seems to have stemmed in part from our prior educational experiences. We believed that the majority of us had been ill-prepared for the role of English teachers.

In my case, I certainly had qualms about my ability as a teacher. However, owing to my learning experiences in England, I felt confident of my knowledge of English literature which was the main subject I was employed to teach, apart from a few classes in English as a foreign language. However, in contrast, several of my Mexican colleagues who had studied at the School felt that they had not learned much about any subject in particular as they had attended a range of rather superficial courses in literature, teaching and translation during their BA studies. Irma commented on this in the following extract.

After having studied languages [BA at the School of Languages], *I felt an emptiness due to the curriculum we followed*. We had a taste of this, a taste of that, but nothing specific. And I felt, well, I speak English, but it's like when I speak Spanish, I don't know anything.

(Prelim/Irma/30/03/04 [translation][my explanation to aid understanding])

More importantly, all my informants who had studied at the School prior to the 1990s believed that they had little idea of how to teach (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04) as their earlier learning experiences had not been “enough to make them competent teachers” (Prelim/Carlos/12/02/05[translation]). For example, Carmen, due to her lack of experience and training felt “insecure when giving classes” (Prelim/Carmen/21/02/05 [translation]) and

therefore nervous in her role as a teacher, even though she had been teaching for several years at the Language School.

...it's a little strange to talk about this when so many years had passed since we had finished the BA, but *the reality was I wasn't trained to be a teacher.*

(Prelim/Carmen/21/02/05[translation])

In addition, due to this lack of training, most of us felt that we were also unable to perform some of the other professional activities that were expected of us in our university context, such as syllabus design, very well. Carlos expressed these doubts:

It's easy for the university authorities to ask for a written syllabus that has objectives, methodology, theory and practice, coherence, method of evaluation, bibliography etc. And once you have been involved in professional development, once you have studied or have participated a lot, you have an idea of what it's all about. But until you have that experience you don't, and at that time we did not have any. *At that time, the only thing we knew was how to speak and write in English.*

(BA90/Carlos/12/02/05[translation])

Furthermore, some of my informants expressed that the gaps in their knowledge about teaching, as well as how to carry out the functions that he or she was expected to perform (Goodson & Cole, 1994; Volkmann & Anderson, 1998), were further accentuated by the fact that they also felt that they lacked sufficient proficiency in the English language itself. As Maria noted:

It was very difficult for me to speak in English. I spoke it in my classes but I would get very nervous because I felt that the students were criticising me, that they knew that I didn't know. *I thought the BA curriculum I had studied was to blame.*

(LH/María/25/03/04 [translation])

In short, most of my Mexican informants attributed their lack of knowledge regarding teaching and their lack of confidence in their own language proficiency to what they considered to be “the faulty design of the BA curriculum” (BA90/María/13/10/03 [translation]) prior to the 1990s. This may indeed have been the case, as at the beginning, there were few qualified people with experience in languages to run the School

(BA90/Modesta/11/11/03). However, my informants' perceptions may also be influenced by the fact that in Mexico, especially during that time, both teachers and schools were still considered to be the sole agents responsible for students' learning (PL/25/03/04). In addition, their feelings about their lack of proficiency in the English language may also be attributed to the fact that they are not native speakers. According to Tang (1997), many non-native language teachers often feel they lack sufficient proficiency when teaching the target language. Furthermore, as Feiman-Nemser (2001) argues, "new teachers have two jobs—they have to teach and they have to learn to teach" (2001: 1026). Whatever the reason, however, as María mentions above, this perceived lack of competence in English led her to feel anxious, insecure and afraid "of seeming inept" (Goleman, 2004: 71) when teaching. This was a significant issue for most of us, given that, as Nias (1989) states:

...it matters to teachers themselves...who and what they are. Their self-image is more important to them as practitioners than is the case in occupations where the person can easily be separated from the craft.
(Nias, 1989: 202-203)

In sum, therefore, it would appear that for the majority of my informants, our prior educational experiences constituted a significant proportion of the 'biographical baggage' (Chapter Two, section, 3.1) that influenced us in the process of making sense of our practices, and of ourselves as teachers. In other words, in agreement with the findings of prior inquiries (e.g. Goodson & Cole, 1994; Carter & Doyle, 1996; Potts, 1997; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Hockings et al., 2007), it influenced the way in which we individually construed our professional identities. Quite simply, we generally lacked confidence in our abilities as teachers, as individuals and as a group.

1.2 The Influence of Our Working Context

Another important factor that overlapped with and had considerable influence on our low self-evaluation as teachers was the lack of resources for both our teaching, as well as our development within our working context. This lack meant that we did not have the opportunity to learn and by so doing improve our practices, as there was little access to either reference books or teaching materials. As Isela noted:

It was terribly chaotic and terribly difficult because we were really ... I feel that we were rather uninformed, *we only had our own traditional ways and we couldn't see new things because, you know, where would we get them from?*

(BA90/Isela/05/05/04)

By 'traditional ways', Isela is referring to both the prior education that she and Chela had had in the area of teacher training, as well as 'the traditional ways', that had been employed when we had all studied languages. For example, Rosaurio, who had studied the BA at the School of Languages from 1969-73, remembered that all her classes had been teacher-centred.

...when I began at the School, our classes...*the teacher taught everything*. All we did was go in, sit down and try to pick up things. But there was no participation there was no opportunity to practice the language.

(BA90/Rosaurio/15/10/03[translation])

As Isela points out in the previous extract, these prior learning experiences were the only source of knowledge on which we could base our teaching. Without access to books, we felt we could neither further our knowledge, nor find new ideas that could have enabled us to improve our teaching practices. In short, '*we were rather uniformed*' (BA90/Isela/05/05/04).

The campus where the School of Languages was situated had a very small library that only housed books in Spanish. However, among these, there were very few books focused on teaching and these "were already very old" (BA90/María/I3/10/03 [translation]). Furthermore, in the city itself, none of the shops sold books in English at the time. In order to get books for our classes, both for ourselves, and for our students, we had to save up our own money and travel to Mexico City by coach, in those days still implying a far from comfortable six hour journey. However, even if we did make the effort, more often than not, the only books we could find were English text books that had not necessarily been written with foreign speakers in mind (BA90/Isela/05/05/04). In fact, we did not start having access to any other kinds of books until the late 1980s. Consequently, as María remembered, we:

...felt *restricted* [our teaching practices were limited by our circumstances] because there were no materials', although in those days,

students ‘would conform to what you could give them, even though it wasn’t much.

(BA90/María/13/10/03 [translation] [my explanation])

In this extract, although Maria’s phrase ‘even though it wasn’t much’, on one level refers to the lack of teaching materials, she is also implicitly expressing her lack of confidence in both the extent of her knowledge, as well as of her teaching ability.

In addition, apart from the very basic lack of books, we had few other tools of our trade either. Some of us remember that in the very early days there were a few large spool tape recorders and one slide projector, but this was only used occasionally, when somebody managed to acquire slides either from the British Council or National Geographic (BA90/Isela/05/05/04). Later on, the situation improved somewhat, when the School of Languages was given a language laboratory that could be used for listening and repeating drills and vocabulary. However, this soon fell into disuse as it was expensive to keep in good working order. Eventually, it was damaged beyond repair due to a flood and there were no funds available to replace the equipment. This meant that teachers then had to find the money to buy their own tape recorders and cassettes, if they wanted to use them in their classes (PL/25/03/04).

Furthermore, we had neither books, nor the use of a photocopier to duplicate materials either for the general English language courses or for many of the other more specific courses we taught across the curriculum. Any handouts, and even the exams that we needed to give to the students, were laboriously typed out onto stencils using large old typewriters. These stencils were difficult to produce, and we would subsequently keep them in drawers, where they would often stick together and soon produce a pungent musty smell. This, plus the fact that there was only one stencil machine on the entire campus, understandably discouraged us to use them. If the machine operator got backed up with too much printing or if the machine broke down or ran out of ink, our only option was simply to write everything on the blackboard (PL/05/05/04).

In sum, even though some of us may have felt a desire to improve the quality of our teaching (Prelim/Carlos/12/02/05; LH/Isela/05/05/04; Prelim/Vero/02/03/05), the lack of

resources such as reference books and teaching materials, made it difficult, if not impossible to do so (CritInc/Rosaurio/03/12/03). As a result, this aspect of our working context had a generally negative effect on our professional lives as teachers as it “played a key role...in hindering [our] professional learning and development” (Flores & Day, 2006: 230). In addition, according to my data, it appears to be one of the elements that not only contributed to our low self-evaluation of ourselves as teachers, which in turn influenced the personal construal of our individual professional identities as teachers (e.g. Reynolds, 1996; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Flores & Day, 2006; Parkinson, 2008; Smit & Fritz, 2008), but it also contributed significantly to our not necessarily willing state of ‘*professional slumber*’.

1.3 Our Conceptions of Ourselves as Teachers

Another overlapping factor which seems to have played an important role in our respective concepts of ourselves as teachers was the shared conception of a lack of any kind of recognition for our work on the one hand or for ourselves as teachers on the other. This, we believe, was crucial as, according to Tsui (2007), “The lived experiences of reifying oneself and having oneself reified as a member of a community, constitute an important aspect of identification” (p.678). My inquiry appears to corroborate this claim given that a number of the prominent issues which emerged from my data, included statements about my informants’ perceptions of their low “status, standing, regard and levels of professional reward” (Hargreaves, 2000a: 152) in our shared working context.

A clear example of this is the fact that all my informants had began their working lives at the School as ‘maestros por asignatura’ as explained in Chapter One, section 2.6, that is, they were employed only on an hourly basis. Thus, when they were first employed by the School, they had neither job security, nor the right to receive any fringe benefits. This is referred to by Raphael below.

...the role we were playing was kind of a role that could disappear at any moment *there was no security in this work.*

(Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03)

The disparity in wages between the wages of teachers who taught on an hourly basis and those of their colleagues with full-time positions, who received almost double the wages

per hour of teaching time, was also very noticeable. Consequently, as Rafael commented “it was really hard for a temporary teacher; it was really hard to survive” (Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03). Also María remarked the following:

The salary of a teacher isn't very good as a teacher employed on an hourly basis, but *as a full-time teacher, well you can defend yourself given that you can live better, much better.*

(Prelim/María/14/07/03[translation])

In addition, most of us felt we had no real standing at the School at all, that is our ideas and opinions were rarely taken into serious consideration (PL/05/05/04), even though many of my informants would often put in the same number of hours of work or more as a teacher with a full-time position. This was noticed by Raphael.

...so to a certain extent we could say that we were playing roles which were a little bit depressing maybe *because we were not recognised, accepted as teachers.*

(Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03)

Not surprisingly, therefore, they felt that they were being treated unfairly. Maria, for example, noted:

Being a teacher employed on an hourly basis, you feel that it is unfair that you do the same work as a full-time teacher, you work the same or more hours but you're not *recognised* for it.

(BA90/María/ 13/10/03 [translation])

This feeling was further compounded by the fact that most of my informants could not aspire to the highly desired category of a full-time teacher with tenure, simply because there were very few full-time positions available at this time. Full-time teaching status is a highly recognized, much sought after position in this context, as it brings with it: honour, prestige, and the right to become fully involved in the academic decision-taking process, as well as providing job security and a higher standard of living.

To make matters worse, we felt that we had no status at all at our own School or in our wider university community in general. The School itself had a poor reputation. As the

majority of the students at that time were young females, the School was often jokingly referred to as the School of “*M.M.C. – mientras me caso*” (Just here until I get married) and so neither we, nor our students, were taken very seriously by the academic community. We were in many ways considered “the ugly ducklings” (FP/Aide/01/04/04 [translation]) of the University, because the study of languages was not considered to be a serious academic discipline or science in its own right and therefore not worthy of any respect. We were very much “treated as nobodies who had no research interest and no academic interest” (FP/Aide/01/04/04[translation]).

My data seems to confirm Reeves’ (2009) claim therefore that ‘identity is co-constructed with interested others’ (p. 34). That is, by a relational, socially negotiated process (Goldstein, 2003; Harklau, 2000; Johnson, 2006; Lasky, 2005; Marsh, 2002; Morgan, 2004; Soreide, 2006; Toohey, 2000; Watson, 2006) with our peers, students and educational authorities. Our perceptions that we were neither valued nor recognised in our educational context, combined with other perceptions related to our biography and the influence of our context appear to have contributed significantly to our low self-evaluation at this time, and to prolong our ‘*professional slumber*’. Unfortunately, however, our lack of standing before the 1990s was probably not unusual among language teachers in other parts of the world. For example, McKnight (1992) states that the findings of his study, based on graduate TESOL informants in Australia, affirm the common assertion that

...ESL teachers suffer from low morale and low status, lack opportunities for study leave...frequently lack a power base within their institution, and may be treated as an underclass by colleagues and superiors.

(McKnight, 1992: 30)

This point of view is also underlined by Johnston (1997) who asked the question: Do EFL Teachers Have Careers? He asserts that “The occupation of EFL/ESL teaching as a whole lacks the status of the established professions such as medicine and law” (1997: 682).

1.4 The Influence of our Membership in a Particular Teaching Culture

Finally, in agreement with Flores and Day (2006), our teaching culture, which was characterised by isolation and individualism, was another aspect that emerged as one of the key “mediating influences” (p. 230) not only on our personal construal of our individual

professional identities, but also on our state of '*professional slumber*'. We were not only isolated within our own specific context, but also within the wider language teaching community in Mexico and abroad.

According to Hargreaves (1994), individualism has been

...associated with diffidence, defensiveness and anxiety; with flaws and failures in teachers that are partly "natural" and partly a result of the uncertainties of their work.

(Hargreaves, 1994: 167)

Given that the "uncertainties of our work" that stemmed from our low self-evaluation as teachers have already been discussed, I will concentrate here on the issue of our isolation.

1.4.1 Our Isolation in the Classroom

In general, there was little either social or professional communication among the teaching staff, beyond momentary greetings outside classrooms, joint attendance at meetings and annual graduation supper dances. One possible reason for this, as both Lortie (1975) and Hargreaves (1994) suggest in their work, were the "situational constraints" (Hargreaves, 1994: 172) that contributed to the lack of communication among the teaching staff within our context, as noted by Isela below.

There was a time where we were, or at least **I** was very worried, about how to contact other people. I felt that this faculty, I think to these days since it's very big it's very open, we have classrooms in different buildings...*it was very easy not to see or not to meet any other person* [other teachers]

(BA90/Isela/05/05/04 (bold informant's emphasis))

The School of Languages was then, and still is today, situated on the other side of the city from the main campus, on a smaller separate campus, together with six other Schools. Another factor was the lack of a staff room where we could have relaxed and possibly commented on our classes during our free periods, and only very few of the teaching staff had the luxury of an office. The only place where we could possibly meet to talk and perhaps share our work then was a sparsely furnished, noisy café that catered to all the

students and teachers on the campus, and that was always very busy (PL/05/05/04). This, as Isela mentioned, further hindered or communication.

If you had to tell people that there was going to be a meeting at such and such a place, such and such a time, for example, I thought that it was terribly complicated because you had to go to the classrooms of everybody. You had to know what times so and so was in such and such a room, and you had to go and knock on their door and tell them you know, ‘there was going to be a meeting’, *because there was no central place where they would go.*

(BA90/Isela/05/05/04)

We generally felt reticent about sharing our work or developing what Fullan (2001: 118) refers to as “a common technical culture” based on sharing. Our reluctance to share was perhaps influenced by the fact that in our working context in general, teacher autonomy was both highly regarded and respected, and therefore, sharing was not considered a priority. Little (1990) defines teacher autonomy as

...freedom from scrutiny and the largely unexamined right to exercise personal preference; teachers acknowledge and tolerate the individual preferences or styles of others. Independent trial and error serves as the principal route to competence.

(Little, 1990: 513)

In our context, this meant, for example, that when we were asked to write syllabuses, instead of getting together with the other people who were teaching the same subject, we would write them on our own. There was no pooling of ideas or discussion. This was noted by Isela.

I think at some point we were asked to do programmes and things, but then *everybody would do their programme individually*. So you would have different programmes between the different teachers of the same subject at the same level.

(BA90/Isela/05/05/04)

Nevertheless, teacher autonomy was generally viewed in a positive light by most of the teachers because it afforded us the freedom to choose for ourselves the content of our courses and the ways in which we would teach. This was very apparent at the Juntas Académicas (general School meetings) where teachers would vehemently argue for their

right to autonomy to be respected (PL/07/05/04). However, it also had its disadvantages, in that it meant teachers, in general, could work as much, or as little, as they wanted as noted by Chela in the following extract:

People could work or not work depending on their own, I guess, job satisfaction or things that they had to do or wanted to do. There was no control that I remember, *everybody was self-sufficient*.

(BA90/Chela/18/09/03)

Before the 1990s, there was no system allowing those in authority to monitor whether or not teachers were actually complying with their roles and responsibilities as defined by the institution. Consequently, whether or not teachers even tried to improve their teaching, tended to depend very much on each individual teacher's own levels of personal initiative and their own individual sense of moral purpose or concern for their students' academic welfare.

In addition, our widely appreciated teacher autonomy, coupled with our respective lack of confidence in ourselves as teachers, may have contributed, at least in part, to our mutual lack of trust *in each other* (BA90/María/13/10/03). Certainly it is true to say that we were customarily rather reserved when talking about our teaching with other teachers (PL/07/05/04). Although we knew we had the right to teach the content of our choice and use any methodology and materials we favoured to do so, we were often somewhat defensive (Hargreaves, 1994) and perhaps fearful "of seeming inept" (Goleman, 2004: 71) before our colleagues. This lack of trust is referred to by María in the following extract:

...I can't tell you much about the School because really before the nineties there was not much contact with the other teachers. With one or two ... we said hello to everybody, but *there was no **trust*** to talk about what was going on at school. But thanks to the fact I did a historical study on the School's BA curriculum, because I thought that the curriculum we used then didn't work very well, I found out about some things

(BA90/María/13/10/03 [translation][bold informant's emphasis])

In other words, as María implies in the above extract, we were reluctant to possibly "jeopardize [our] self-esteem and professional standing" (Little, 1990: 516) any further by

sharing our experiences with our peers, because there was not yet any foundation of trust between ourselves and our colleagues.

Our isolation from our colleagues is nothing new, as traditionally the culture of individualism has been the most common form of teacher culture in educational institutions. Isolation within the confines of the classroom, as previously within our context, affords the teacher not only a level of autonomy, but also a level of protection from outside interference (Hargreaves, 1992, 1994). Accordingly, this is precisely where the teacher may feel more in control, and therefore safe enough either to experiment with innovation on a small scale or to conserve his or her world as it is. However, although isolation can defend the teacher from outside criticism and judgement, it can also prevent the teacher from receiving valuable positive input, such as “praise and support [and] adult feedback on their value, worth and competence” (Hargreaves, 1992: 220). In other words, isolation may limit the number of positive “experiences of reifying oneself and having oneself reified as a member of a community” (Tsui, 2007: 678) that, in turn, may influence, as in our context, not only the personal construal of professional identity, but also our state of being. My data shows that this was precisely the state of affairs in the context of the study during our period of ‘*professional slumber*’.

1.4.2 Our Isolation within our University Context

Apart from our isolation from our colleagues within the Language School, there was little communication between the University authorities and ourselves, the teachers, either. Consequently, even though there may well have been opportunities for financial support or information available about opportunities for professional growth, we, and possibly even the Dean at that time himself, apparently had no knowledge of them (BA90/Aide/01/04/03). This was remembered by Rosaurio:

We didn't know that we could ask for help to attend training workshops, the 'powers that be' at the time never said to you, 'would you like to attend a training event? There is money available to help you'. This money existed, but we were never told about it.

(BA90/Rosaurio/151003 [translation])

We were never informed that funding to attend workshops actually existed. This lack of communication was an important omission by the University authorities, as if we had known there may have been a possibility of funding, we would perhaps have taken advantage of such opportunities for professional development. For example, Isela noted:

I think there were fewer opportunities for the teachers to grow before the nineties precisely because *everybody was working in isolation* and you could only grow if you, if you really, you know, decided that you would do that for yourself but there was no incentive.

(BA90/Isela/05/05/04)

In short, as Isela mentions above, this lack of communication with our University authorities meant that apart from our own intrinsic motivation to grow professionally, we had little opportunity to improve and develop as teachers through support from our institution.

1.4.3 Our Isolation from Other Language Teaching Communities

We did not, at that time, communicate with the wider language teaching community outside our own immediate context in any way that could possibly have enabled us to further understand, and improve the quality of our teaching. As Isela mentioned:

I think the only conference I went to was FEULE which was very very late 80s and the MEXTESOL convention in Puebla which was '89. Before that I don't think I'd ever been to a conference anywhere because I think there hardly were conferences for our area and if there were, *we certainly didn't know about them or we thought that they certainly were not for us.*

(BA90/Isela/05/05/04)

As Isela affirms, we hardly went to any conferences. This is at least partly because before the 1990s, not many conferences about language teaching were held in Mexico at all. Hence, there was little way of knowing what was happening in the TEFL world outside our context, such as the new ideas that were being tried and tested elsewhere. We did not often hear about the ones that *were* taking place or if we did, we assumed that they were not for us, perhaps because we felt we were not sufficiently specialized in our field to attend. As a

result, this situation led us all to feel that we were very much in an academic and professional backwater as expressed by Rosaurio.

We didn't attend events where there were publishers that had books focused purely on teacher development or text books *we were really cut off from this world.*

(BA90/Rosaurio/15/10/03 [translation])

Our failure to attend professional events meant that we were neither able to get new ideas by attending conferences, nor able to access recent publications that would help us to develop professionally, as at that time these kinds of more specialized books could only be found at publishers' stands at conventions.

The only contact we had, in fact, with the 'outside TEFL world' was either when publishing companies occasionally came to the university to promote their latest text book or when visiting academics from other national or international universities came to the city. Rosaurio mentioned this in the following extract.

Student teachers doing their teaching practice came or students who were doing their masters in the States would come here and so their supervisors, who were academics in the States, would come and there was a certain amount of contact between them and the School and so we would manage to arrange a few small workshops for the teachers here at School. *They were the only contacts we had really.*

(BA90/Rosaurio/15/10/03[translation])

However, this contact was rather sparse and random from one year to the next.

1.5 Discussion – 'Professional Slumber'

These particular tensions that we had to contend with in our teaching practices before the 1990s do not seem to be very dissimilar to the picture of teachers and their work that has been portrayed in various other studies in English speaking countries (e.g. Lortie, 1975, Goodlad, 1984, Flinders, 1988, Rosenholtz, 1989, Hargreaves, 1994, Fullan, 2001). However, as shown from the extracts and my personal memories above, in our specific context, our shared perceptions seem to indicate that before the 1990s the *nature of our professional lives prior to our engagement in the change process* was indeed characterised

by a state to which I am referring as ‘*professional slumber*’. Our relative professional inactivity, during this time, seems to have stemmed from a combination of factors and circumstances that all together had an impact on “two important (and interwoven) domains” (Kelchtermans, 1994: 95):

- the origins of how we construed our professional identities
- the nature of our teaching culture in this context

1.5.1 The Formation of our Personal Construal of our Professional Identities

To a certain extent, my findings appear to corroborate other research findings (e.g. Goodson & Cole, 1994; Carter & Doyle, 1996; Potts, 1997; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Hockings et al., 2007) which demonstrate that personal biographies house key mediating influences that together may have a great impact on the formation of teacher identities. For example, prior to the 1990s, it would appear that our prior inadequate learning experiences (e.g. Lasky, 2005) indeed contributed to our low self-evaluation as teachers, thereby influencing what both Ottensen’s (2007) and Cardelle-Elawar et al. (2007) refer to as our self-image as teachers.

In addition, to a certain extent, my findings concerning this stage in our careers also appear to match the induction stage of a teachers’ career cycle, as reported and described in the work of previous experts such as Sikes et al., (1985), Fessler (1985) and Huberman (1989). Similar to other novice teachers as reported by Warford and Reeves (2003), we all taught our classes as best as we could “by trial and error” (Asaf et al., 2008: n. p.) and by often relying on a combination of our limited knowledge of “orthodox doctrines and [our] own past experiences as students when developing [our] own styles and strategies of teaching” (Lortie, 1975: 210 [my emphasis]). Nevertheless, our approach to teaching was largely “*uninformed*” (BA90/Isela/05/05/04), except perhaps, by what Lortie (1975) refers to as ‘apprenticeships of observation’, although I have no data to confirm or disconfirm this.

However, in contrast to other novice teachers who, according to Borg (2004), “may fail to realise that the aspects of teaching which they perceived as students represented only a partial view of the teachers’ job” (Borg, 2004: 274), we, as a group, were well aware that

something was missing from our teaching practices (BA/Carmen/21/02/05). Nonetheless, similar to the student teachers in Johnson's (1994) study, we felt "powerless to change due to a lack of alternatives, and hence [we] found ourselves reverting to these earlier models" (Borg, 2004: 275). That is, due to the constraints in our context (Beijaard et al. 2004), there was little we felt we could do to enhance our development. The lack of provision of an efficient School library, the difficulty of obtaining books and materials, the lack of information about, and support for, attending conferences and courses, in short, our lack of contact with the outside TEFL world in general, appear to have been both key influences on our personal construal of our teacher identities, prior to the 1990s, as well as determining factors of our '*professional slumber*'.

1.5.2 The Nature of our Teaching Culture in this Context

The formation of our personal construal of our professional identities also appears to have been strengthened by the teaching culture at the school, and, at the same time, to exert an influence on that culture. Prior to the 1990s, our culture seems to have been based on what has been defined in the literature (e.g. Hargreaves, 1994, Fullan, 2001) as a culture of teacher isolation and individualism. Whether or not our individualism had evolved due to choice and preference, habit, lack of opportunities or conformity with a set way of working, as Hargreaves (1992) affirms, the results were the same. We never seriously entertained either teacher development or educational change.

Nevertheless, according to Hargreaves (1994: 183), not "all teacher individualism is iniquitous": it can help spur autonomy and creativity. For example, Isela persistently tried to improve her teaching practices by experimenting with various text books and different means of evaluation in her classrooms (LH/Isela/05/05/04). However, in general, most of us shared the perception that our individualism and isolation, prior to the 1990s, meant that there was little available, during that period, to arouse us from our '*slumber*'. These tensions were for us "a permanent state of affairs for [our] teaching" (Hargreaves, 1994: 180). As a result, while we had little opportunity or incentive to enhance our knowledge and so improve; our '*professional slumber*' consisted in "just letting things go on as they had gone on before" (BA90/Chela/18/09/03).

2. 'The Awakening'

Here, I am using the metaphor '*The Awakening*', to refer to the *nature of our response to change* that began at the end of the 1980s, and continued throughout the 1990s. This metaphor was inspired by Rosaurio's comment below.

I believe that this change that began in '89, more or less '88 was an *awakening...but not only institutionally, but rather an awakening of those who were involved working at the School* and who said well, we have been working here for 5 or 6 or 10 years. And it's always been very calm but **now** is time for the School to develop.

(BA90/Rosaurio/15/10/03[translation] [bold informant's emphasis])

Here, by employing the word 'awakening', Rosaurio is implying that we had had the desire to change, but this had been 'dormant' until certain factors in our institutional context changed in such a way as to arouse us from our '*professional slumber*'. In addition, by her use of the word 'rather', she seems to be suggesting that not only the education authorities were recognising the need for change, but, more importantly, the teachers who were working at this School. In other words, she appears, to some extent at least, to be echoing Fullan's (1996) prior statement that "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and as complex as that" (Fullan, 1996:117).

Regarding the complexity to which Fullan (1996) refers, my findings appear to support Goodson's (2001b) argument that change entails not only the successful interaction of external factors (e.g. national educational policies and support) with the existence of internal conditions (e.g. change agents), but more importantly, it also includes a dynamic interaction of these with the personal and professional concerns of the members of the teaching cultures within each context. In our context, during the 1990s, a number of both organisational and personal factors interacted and resulted in our receptivity to change. My findings, therefore, to a large extent, corroborate Mellencamp's (1992) report which also identified these factors as influencing teacher receptivity to change. However, I would tend to place more emphasis on the overlapping and dynamic nature of these factors rather than pinpointing the teachers' voice as the bridging factor between the organisational and personal factors (Mellencamp, 1992). This is because my findings show clearly that educational change does not depend on only making changes to one or a number of separate elements, even though they may appear to be vital for change. Nevertheless, my

findings appear to contribute empirical data that helps confirm Huy's (1999) view that without a certain degree of receptivity, an individual will not engage in change.

In order to demonstrate the interplay of the organizational and personal factors that motivated and sustained our receptivity to change, I will adopt the three following conditions that Mellencamp (1992), Zimmerman (2006) and Barnes (2005) suggest are essential in understanding how teachers may be encouraged to be more receptive to change. These are:

- “Basic conditions and support” (Mellencamp, 1992: 8);
- Opportunities and support for professional development (Zimmerman, 2006);
- A supportive school environment (Barnes, 2005).

2.1 Basic Conditions and Support

One of the main organisational factors that appear to have strongly influenced our receptivity of change was the emergence of an effective change leader within our context. My findings here clearly confirm prior research (e.g. Eaker & Gonzalez, 2006; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Stoll et al. 2006; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006; Huffman et al., 2007; Printy, 2008) and my argument in Chapter Two, section 5.2.1, that effective, supportive and shared leadership is one of the fundamental required characteristics for both educational change, and the development of teachers' professional learning communities.

In 1988, the long-standing Dean who had been in office for almost twenty years, stepped down and was replaced by a new Dean, who had been democratically elected by the Junta Académica (Chapter One, section 2.3). Although Aide had not received have any prior training to guide her in performing her role as Director of our School, she did seem to be more knowledgeable about the general call for reform in higher education. Isela mentioned this in the following extract.

...she had quite a *clear vision* of where she wanted to go which is one of the good characteristics that I can find in a leader...she was also *aware* of the general policies, the educational policies, and the tendencies in education within the country so she knew where to *coincide or not* ... She

knew where she was going, she had the support of the rector [Chancellor], she knew about you know? How things were changing within the country.

(Prelim/Isela/05/05/04 [my explanation])

As Isela mentions, not only did Aide know what was happening in higher education in the rest of the country, but she also had “a clear vision” (Prelim/Isela/05/05/04), that is, a set of concrete objectives for the School. She wanted, in broad terms, to improve both the School, and the status of its teachers (FP/Aide/01/04/04). Moreover, as Isela affirms, she had the backing of the Chancellor of the University which was essential in our context, if there were to be significant changes.

In addition, she was more interested in modernizing the BA curriculum of the School than the previous Dean, who we all perceived to have been “dragging his feet” (BA90/Aide/01/04/03 [translation]). According to Aide herself, this interest may have been triggered by the interaction between the change that was being recommended by the national educational authorities, a generally perceived need for change, as well as the new and very tangible possibility of State funding. This can be seen in the extract which follows:

In the eighties there was a recommendation from México to modify, change or bring up-to-date BAs and BScs...There were those who acted on this, there were others who didn't do anything, but...there was like a need for change....There had been no movement or revisions, especially of degree programmes and curricula. So when they told me that perhaps there may be a possibility of getting some, or perhaps a lot of, money from the S.E.P to support change, I thought well O.K. Let's begin to change the curriculum and all that.

(BA90/Aide/01/04/03[translation])

Moreover, having been both a student and a teacher in our very same context, Aide was also very aware of the need for change at the School and the growing demands of the teachers, by then clearly manifested in our comments at Juntas Académicas (general School meetings) (BA90/Isela/05/05/04). Thus, she felt that she had taken on an enormous responsibility, as she was aware that the teachers, in general, expected her to bring about change (Prelim/Aide/23/04/04) in the School. This may be observed in the extract below.

*I had a lot of worries, a lot of fears...and I realised that my main worry was that it was a huge responsibility because *the only critics I had were you*. The university authorities were on top of me, more for what I achieved numerically than regarding quality... I never worried about what they would say, I never felt the pressure of a boss ... my bosses were you all. In other words, the criticism came from you. *You were the ones who demanded things, who pushed me.**

(Prelim/Aide/23/04/04[translation])

She also realized that she could not achieve substantial change by working alone; she needed the involvement and support of the teachers (BA90/Aide/01/04/03). To this end, during the early stages of her period in office, she recalls that she employed a number of strategies:

- The organization of a School forum where both teachers, and students, could air their views about the present curriculum and ideas for the future;
- The use of credible well thought out arguments that anticipated the teachers' possible questions and doubts;
- The identification of key teachers who could play a strong role in the implementation of change.

(FP/Aide/01/04/04[translation])

By these means, and based on her native intuition rather than on training, the Dean began to promote what Zimmerman (2006) refers to as *teachers' readiness to change*.

2.1.1 The Organization of a School Forum

Soon after taking office, on the advice of one of the more experienced teachers at the School, Aide, organised a forum with the aim of eliciting and more fully comprehending what the students, teachers, and she herself perceived as warranting change (Prelim/Aide/01/04/03). This forum, the first of its kind, provided both teachers and students a welcome opportunity to voice their complaints, expectations and ideas as Isela remembered in the following extract:

It was Aide who organized the forum and...any student or any teacher could go and talk about a particular aspect of our School, of our work from a teacher's or a student's perspective...that they thought went well or didn't go well...a lot of people started to air their grouses... and...you know, they took note of all these things, and...from there on they got this

idea that *it was terribly necessary to have a big change at the School* and that's how they started with this idea of a curriculum change.

(Prelim/Isela/05/05/04)

A group of teachers helped Aide to collect all this information, and classify it in terms of the most mentioned issues (BA90/Isela/05/05/04). The two main issues mentioned were: (1) the need to change the BA curriculum, and (2) the desire for professional development (BA90/Isela/05/05/04). In short, as a result of holding this forum, Aide recalls that she not only gained a number of ideas that enabled her to write a change proposal for the School to submit to the university authorities, but that she also managed to attract people's attention to the need for change (Prelim/Aide/01/04/03).

2.1.2 The Use of Credible Well Thought Out Arguments

Aide knew intuitively that merely attracting people's attention and writing a change proposal would not be sufficient. She believed she also had to convince the teaching staff that they both *wanted* change, and were *willing to participate* in the change process (Prelim/Aide/01/04/03). Her view, then, appears to agree with Tierney's (1988) as argued in Chapter Two, section 1 that how, and to what extent change will be taken on board by the organisation, will depend on the organisation itself, as organisations are composed of people.

Moreover, Aide was also aware that

...people don't like change. In general, we perceive change as something negative. It always makes us feel afraid as we always believe that change will attack our personal self and our stability. I think that emotionally we are interested in stability. When things don't move we feel safe. So when there is a change we feel attacked, we immediately feel violated and that is why we are resistant to change.

(Prelim/A/23/04/04)

Thus, she realized that convincing people would not be an easy task, given that "*you don't have control over people's minds. You can't force them to change*" (FP/Aide/01/04/04 [translation]). Therefore, Aide thought carefully about how she was going to present the proposal for change in order to motivate us, the teachers, to participate. Her strategies

included “*imagining the possible questions, doubts and looking for answers that would convince them*” (FP/Aide/01/04/04 [translation]), that is, the teachers. In other words, she adopted what may be defined as “cognitive strategies (enabling individuals to reflect on and evaluate what they are doing and engaging with attitudes and beliefs)” (Kennedy, 1999: vii). Thus, instead of in any way coercing or obliging, she presented convincing and well thought out credible arguments, by enabling us to see how change fitted in, and was beneficial for our local context, rather than due to a simple desire to keep up with trends (CritInc/Irma/16/02/05). In short, she helped us to perceive the changes as “meaningful” (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005: 962). This can be appreciated by the following extract, taken from one of the interviews with Rosaurio.

I base my idea on whether to participate or not depending on how the idea for change has been arrived at and what the objectives are...of that change...so you can realise if it's going to be something good or it's going to be possible to achieve...We have to be convinced. We have to be critical and analyse if what is being done is for the best or at least conscious of what are the strong points and the weak points of the change that is to be implemented.

(Prelim/Rosaurio/16/04/04 [translation])

This extract also affords an interesting insight into what is needed for individuals to be persuaded to engage in change. As Rosaurio affirms, in order to agree to participate in the changes, we first had to understand (a) the ideas the changes were based on, (b) what the goals and objectives were, and (c) consider carefully all the possible advantages and disadvantages (Prelim/Carlos/12/02/05; BA90/Isela/05/05/04). This would then enable us to arrive at an informed and shared decision, and be fully convinced of the feasibility of the changes. This is also confirmed by Chela below.

If it's well thought out and if there's reasons for it, and if people on board convince instead of just railroading it, I'm for change.

(Chela/CritInc/10/12/04)

Here Chela is clearly echoing Rosaurio's statement. Teachers' receptivity to change will be better promoted if convincing arguments and reasons are used first instead of imposing change top-down with no satisfactory explanation. This would seem to indicate that if teachers are taken more into consideration during proposed changes, instead of being

treated like “pawns” as Hoffman (1998: 108) describes, they may be more motivated to become active participants

In addition, the Dean also always tried to provide a positive picture of change, as she believed that people are often de-motivated by a leader who first begins introducing the notion of change by using talking negatively about change. Thus, she always tried to begin with the positive aspects of the change, in order to trigger a positive response from the teachers, although later on potential problems would also have to be addressed. This viewpoint is found in the following extract when Aide noted

I felt that I had to always look for positive things that would answer the teachers, never negative things. I perceive and I feel that a lot of people when you ask them something will always say no at the beginning although afterwards they may say ‘we can do that’. And I feel that that de-motivates people. *You have to look for a strong yes we can do it, although later on we have to see the possible problems and the like.*

(FP/Aide/01/04/04 [translation])

This appears to be a crucial factor that motivated us to continue participating in the proposed changes, for as Modesta noted.

I think a lot depends on the director [Dean] and their assistants, the people around them to push it, but *if the director [Dean] doesn’t show interest in the change I think the rest of us just lose interest too*, and I think that Aide did show interest.

(BA90/Modesta/11/10/03 [my explanation])

As Modesta comments above, Aide’s own sincere display of unfailing interest in the change process was both important, and necessary. If she had not continually supported the changes so strongly, the teaching staff might not have responded so positively themselves.

2.1.3 The Identification of Key Teachers

The third main strategy Aide employed to encourage the teaching staff to engage in the changes in the curriculum was her identification of certain teachers who “*if convinced, could drag all the others*” (FP/Aide/01/04/04).

What I think I thought about carefully, and what took me a lot, well it took a lot of time to reflect upon, was *to identify the leaders, to identify the people, who had presence and who could participate in the general School meetings*. If those teachers were convinced of the change then I wouldn't have anything more to do, I wouldn't have to worry about the rest, they would bring the rest and that was perhaps the most delicate part because I had my work cut out for me.

(FP/Aide/01/04/04 [translation])

In other words, Aide said she had spent a considerable amount of time thinking about, and identifying those teachers who had acquired a certain standing at the School. She believed that if she could win their support, she would not have to worry further about general staff participation in the changes, as these natural 'leaders' would influence, and possibly even persuade the other teachers to participate. In the English department, the teachers she identified included the majority of my informants (just two of the male informants were still BA students at the School rather than teachers, at this stage). She believed that we shared a number of qualities and attributes, which I will go on to describe.

Firstly, she knew that we were both restless for, and aware of, the fact, that change was necessary (BA90/Aide/01/04/03). That is, we not only recognized the existing flaws in the curriculum and other problems at the School, but we were also aware of our own limitations and so were keen to change and improve (Prelim/Aide/23/04/04). Secondly, as we were "*academically ambitious*" (BA90/Aide/01/04/03[translation]), that is, given that we had the desire to improve and develop professionally, we would respond positively, especially if we thought that our working conditions would change for the better through our active participation in the change process (FP/Aide/01/04/04). Thirdly, we were all equally committed to our work or, as she says, we were "*academically honest*" (FP/Aide/01/04/04 [translation]).

By "*academically honest*" Aide meant as she explained during one of our interview sessions (FP/Aide/01/04/04), that we conscientiously prepared our classes, we did not miss classes and we made time for our students whenever they needed more help after normal class times. These parameters might at first seem strange, as they arguably no more than describe the characteristics universally expected of a professional teacher. However, in Mexico, especially at that time, many of the people who held a teaching position in higher

education did not display all of these characteristics. In fact, there were some teachers at the U.V. known as “*aviadores*” (fliers) - teachers who did not turn up for their classes, but who would collect their pay cheques the same as everybody else, nevertheless; and “*barcos*” (ships) - the teachers who did not worry about the quality of their teaching practices at all, knowing that if they passed all their students there would be no complaints and their personal boats would not be rocked in any way.

Perhaps more importantly, two further qualities identified by Aide were that we were not only respected by both students and fellow staff (FP/Aide/01/04/04), but that we also had been developing our own ideas regarding potential changes. This was perhaps due to the fact that we had all studied abroad at some time and so had had the experience of different elements that we wanted to incorporate into the activities of the School of Languages (BA90/Aide/01/04/03). In addition, a few of us were native English speakers who, during the 1980s, had already been expressing our interest in achieving a certain minimum level of quality in the School, as manifested in our comments at Juntas Académicas (general School meetings) (BA90/Aide/01/04/03).

Owing to Aide’s use of credible arguments and her own enthusiasm, when she singled us out as potential strong participants in change, we all agreed to become involved in the initial change. This was the evaluation and subsequent modification of the BA curriculum. As Isela mentioned:

There was quite a bit of enthusiasm for the meetings that the committee had, I mean there were many people there and we worked on many occasions for long hours and people didn’t disappear, I mean *people kept on going and worked on this which showed that they were enthusiastic about creating something new.*

(BA90/Isela/05/05/04)

As a result, we not only carefully evaluated and subsequently modified the BA curriculum, but we also continued and implemented a further series of changes (Table 1). This would seem to confirm, at least to some extent, that much will depend on either the fit (Keup et al., 2001) or “creative tension” (Senge, 1990: 142) that ensues between change, and the

beliefs, desires, goals and values of the members of the organisational culture of the institution, as argued in Chapter Two, section one.

Finally, through the combination of all these strategies, Aide not only fostered and increased our motivation to engage in change, but she also promoted one of the conditions that according to Hargreaves and Fink (2003) is needed in order to sustain change initiatives. That is, she did not step down from her role as a change leader until the changes were being implemented effectively, and, perhaps even more importantly, a *cadre* of teachers who could replace her as future change leaders owing to their engagement in professional development had been formed. Aide mentioned this specifically in the extract below.

I felt that the people and the things were now established and I could go. It was obvious that the *people who decided to develop professionally began to stand out as leaders* and it was when I said to myself whoever succeeds me is going to do it well and so my worries were over.

(Prelim/Aide/23/04/04 [translation])

In short, my findings appear to indicate that one of the basic conditions for change within our context was the emergence of an effective change leader. Her effectiveness may be evaluated not only as Fullan (2005) states by “how many leaders he or she leaves behind who can go even further” (Fullan, 2005:31); but also as Barnes (2005) also discovered in his inquiry, by her style of leadership that was one comprising several crucial triggers that both prompted our receptivity to change, and led to a state of sustained change in our context.

2.2 Opportunities and Support for Professional Development

One of the biggest problems encountered in the implementation of change, especially at the beginning of our change process, was the lack of resources for development within our working context. A vital challenge, therefore, was how to secure finance for the proposed changes, in order to remedy this situation. The School had a very limited budget, and although the University authorities agreed in principle with the need to change the curriculum, they were initially reticent in providing the financial support for the other changes which would be entailed, namely, the creation of new study areas, the acquisition

of books, as well as substantial funding for the professional development of the teachers involved (BA90/Aide/01/04/03). Therefore, at first it was necessary to both develop ways in which the School itself could increase its budget, as well as to look elsewhere to obtain the urgently needed additional financial backing.

2.2.1 Initial Internal Funding

Initially, internal funding was obtained by “the hard work” (FP/Aide/01/04/04) and altruistic actions of a small number of teachers (Prelim/Aide/23/04/04). Once we, the teachers, had become convinced that we sincerely wanted to be involved in change and had understood that we had first to help ourselves to change and develop as there was no other source of funding available, we began to participate actively in fund-raising initiatives.

According to Aide (FP/Aide/01/04/04) much of the necessary financial support for books, courses, materials, technical equipment and teachers’ travelling expenses to enable them to go to professional conferences was secured by Irma’s hard work. Due to her efficient coordination, The Department of Foreign Languages began to grow in numbers (from 1988 to 1997, the student population rose from 764 to 2,093). This had a significant impact on the School’s budget during the 1990s, as by means of the money obtained from students’ registration fees this department was able to provide much of the vital funding required. Another source of finance for the changes was the innovation of a summer school (1988). During the early years of the summer school, several of my colleagues and I gave free classes throughout our vacations in order to help raise money to pay for magazine subscriptions, to buy books and tape-recorders to help with the development of a Resource Center, and later to provide money to help furnish the Self-Access Centre which was opened in 1994 (Prelim/Aide/23/04/04). In addition, during the course of 1991, each and every one of the teaching staff at the school voluntarily contributed a percentage of their own salaries for the purchase of books (BA90/Aide/01/04/03).

2.2.2 Securing External Funding

Although we managed to raise some money for both books and equipment which would help us to begin to improve the quality of our teaching practices, we still did not feel that

we were sufficiently formally qualified to conceive of, or to bring about, the changes in curriculum design. As Aide noted

The teachers were intelligent enough, they had read and they perceived that change was necessary, but *when they had to implement the change they weren't prepared so they couldn't do it*. We perceived that independent from the change, we had to prepare a project for the academic development of the teachers.

(BA90/Aide/01/04/03 [translation])

The extract above seems to suggest that Aide realised, as Mitchell and Sackney (2001) and later Hulley (2004) affirmed that teacher learning is as important as student learning for the well-being of an educational institution. We lacked the professional expertise either to design or to implement a new curriculum and therefore we needed to further our studies in order to compare professional ideas and make better informed decisions. This seems to coincide with Hughes' and Kritsonis' (2006) stand, also referred to in Chapter Two, section 5.2) that "each individual member of an organization must continue to learn. Without individual growth, the organization will stand still" (p.2), that is, institutional change will be greatly hindered.

An effective change leader, therefore, according to Huffman et al., (2001) and Bolam et al. (2005), needs to facilitate the necessary conditions teachers need in order to engage in continuous learning and inquiry. Aide went to Mexico City in 1989, accompanied by a group of five teachers, to seek support and secure backing for our professional development from a number of different foreign institutions: the American, Canadian, French, German and Swiss embassies and the British Council (Chapter One, section 2.4). As a result, as Modesta remembers below, it was the British Council, in particular, that began to take notice of, and interest in, the School of Languages for the very first time.

The British Council began to take notice of us. *They began to learn that we existed* because nobody knew about the Facultad de Idiomas [School of Languages]. They knew about the Facultad de Idiomas in Puebla and in many other places, but this one was non-existent.

(BA90/Modesta/11/10/03 [my explanation])

This new situation presented a marked contrast to earlier days when we were so isolated that it seemed to us that no one outside our city recognized, or had even heard of, our School's existence or activities.

Firstly, after reading the Dean's initial change proposal, the British Council offered to send in a consultant from the University of York who Aide accepted as a heartily welcomed 'gift' (BA90/Aide/01/04/03 [translation]). This consultant worked intensively with both the Dean and the teachers, during one weekly visit a year, over a four year period (1989-93). His role appears to have been vital, for as Aide recalled below.

Each time he came, he would ask me, *'Now that you did that, why did you do it? What did you do it for? How do you think you are going to manage that? Why this, why that? Isn't something missing?'* And I remember that at times, he worked a lot with the teachers on the curriculum and with me and in the afternoons we would get together, and talk, walk and talk.
(BA90/Aide/01/04/03 [translation])

This extract affords an interesting insight into what is needed if individuals are to successfully engage in change. Again, instead of merely imposing change, it would seem to be more beneficial for educational authorities to provide people with time and guidance to reflect on all of the aspects involved in order to engage them more reflectively and intelligently in the process. This would seem to coincide with Grounds (2007) findings focused on the sustainability of change in another Mexican educational context. She discovered that

It took time to induce people to believe in the possible benefits of a more egalitarian and collegiate way of working and a totally flat system of management may not have survived in this context.
(Grounds, 2007:35)

Secondly, from this moment onwards, the external aid we received from the British Council played an extremely important role in our personal and professional change processes. Not only did our engagement with the BC provide both financial aid and counselling, it also liberated us from our prior feeling of isolation. In addition to paying for an external consultant, the BC was instrumental both in providing opportunities and in obtaining financial support for our professional development by acting as a liaison on our behalf with

both English universities and national grant authorities. In 1989, it also began to invite us regularly to a series of seminars on a range of professional topics given by international speakers. Furthermore, it subsequently began to organize national conferences and actively encouraged us to hold our own convention at the School of Languages in 1990 (Prelim/Aide/23/04/04). All these activities led us to begin to meet, talk and seek further advice from representatives from different language institutions from all over the country (BA90/Isela/05/05/04).

In 1990, the British Council also began to offer us scholarships for extended professional development. These led three of my colleagues (Isela, María and Jorge), at different times, to take professional development courses in England. Later on, in 1991, the Council arranged for four teachers (Carmen, María, Modesta and Rosaurio) to be given grants to study the TEFL postgraduate diploma in Mérida, in the south east of Mexico. Meanwhile, in 1992/3, it negotiated funding for the setting up of the Self-Access Centre (S.A.C) on our campus, and provided the necessary training for the teachers (Carmen and Rosaurio) entrusted with its development. Later, in 1994, the Council again negotiated grants for four of us (Carmen, María, Isela and Veronica) to study a Masters degree in TEFL, taught at a distance from Aston University in England.

In short, the provision of outside financial backing, as well as study opportunities, not only resulted in positive changes in our working conditions, but was also powerful in creating appropriate incentives to motivate us both to learn, and to update our existing knowledge by continuing our own professional studies as Rosaurio mentioned in the following extract:

...it was as if *we began to awaken*, and those of us that had a bit of interest in learning, in transforming, well *it sparked off our motivation and we began to explore*.

(Prelim/Rosaurio/16/04/04 [translation])

In this extract, Rosaurio is once again employing the image of ‘awakening’, thus illustrating graphically the nature of our response to change. Once there were opportunities for further study, those of us who were already interested in ‘transforming’, that is, in reshaping our personal construal of our professional identities as teachers, were motivated to go on to engage in further degrees.

The financial backing that became available during the 1990s was undoubtedly a powerful incentive. Jorge noted:

Something which motivated me to do the TEFL diploma and the Masters degree is that I didn't have to pay **anything**. I mean *nowhere else could I get those chances of getting a Masters for free*.

(LH/Jorge/13/03/04 [bold informant's emphasis])

The fact that we did not have to find the money to pay for our further studies ourselves was a strong motivating force that encouraged us to engage in professional development. None of us would have been able to afford either the time to study or the payment of postgraduate fees ourselves. Furthermore, as Raphael expressed, we felt that:

There was no choice because if I didn't take the opportunity, I was sure that maybe I wouldn't have this opportunity again.

(Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03 [translation])

Here, what Raphael is alluding to is that, as the concept of outside aid for further studies was new to us in this context and, more importantly, as we did not know if this funding would continue to be available in the future, we were highly motivated to take advantage of the grants while they lasted.

Thirdly, significant further funding for the changes also began to become available within our context from 1992 onwards. Our University authorities, influenced, to a large extent, by both the interest of foreign institutions, as well as our own interest and participation in the change process, began to contribute financially too and to provide us with yet further incentives to continue our professional development. These included: support for the setting up of the in-house TEFL postgraduate diploma in 1992; grants for several of us (including Chela, Carlos, Irma, Jorge, Raphael and myself), in 1995, to study the MSc at distance with the LSU (Language Studies Unit) at Aston University; financial backing for three of us (Isela, Veronica and myself) to carry out research (1999-2003); and, for teachers, in general, to attend in-country professional courses and conferences. Furthermore, the University authorities also granted us partial leaves of absence from classes so that we also had the time and energy to contribute more significantly to several of the changes (e.g. the

design and implementation of the in-house MA in TEFL (1995-7), and the design of a distance BA in TEFL (2002-3) as well as to study effectively while taking courses.

My findings in this respect appear to corroborate Krecic and Grmek's (2008) claims that "a positive school climate" (p.61) that includes encouragement and support "at **every** stage of the professional development process" (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002: 962 [my emphasis]), is necessary in order to promote more effective professional development. However, as my findings further show, they are also key issues in understanding how teachers may be encouraged to be more receptive to change. Apart from the Dean's leadership style as mentioned in section 2.1, the provision of funding, as well as support and opportunities for further study, were two of the other organisational factors that further stimulated our '*awakening*', and led us to embark on a change process from this time onwards (Prelim/Rosaurio/16/03/04).

2.3 A Supportive School Environment

Although the abovementioned organizational factors were all apparently significant in triggering and strengthening our receptivity to change, they were by no means the only ones. Our continual engagement in the change process also had much to do with the interplay between these and, as I argued in Chapter Two, section 1, other more personal factors. That is, our own individual positive attitudes to change, as well as our sense of growing commitment, both individually and as a group. All these factors strongly interacted and resulted in developing a supportive school environment for change, as I will now go on to show.

2.3.1 Our Own Positive Attitude to Change

One of the personal factors that seem to have influenced our engagement in the changes was our positive individual attitude, fuelled by our ever-increasing awareness that change was necessary. Firstly, by the end of the 1980s, we were '*ripe*' (BA90/Modesta/11/11/03) for change. We were becoming bored with our routines (BA90/Isela/05/05/04), dissatisfied with our teaching practices (Prelim/Carmen/21/02/05) and the content and format of the BA curriculum, as well as with the lack of resources for development (BA90/Carmen/21/02/05). In short, the lack of change in our practices and working

context, were beginning to acquire ‘a negative sense’ amongst various teachers, as Isela expressed in the following extract.

I do think that the general feeling at the Faculty [School of Languages] was one of, you know, nothing’s happening. It’s sort of peace and quiet but, too, I can’t really express this very well, *peace and quiet but in a negative sense*. I mean nothing is happening, it’s always the same, we’re dragging our feet and we’re always doing the same thing.

(BA90/Isela/05/05/04 [my explanation])

According to Greenberg and Baron (2000), habit and a sense of security with the *status quo* may hinder change initiatives if teachers are fearful of losing their standing by engaging in change. However, part of the ‘negative sense’ Isela refers to in this extract was compounded by precisely the fact that, we did not have any sense of security within the apparent status quo (this Chapter, section 1.3). In fact, in our case, this appears to have been one of the strong factors that influenced our receptivity to change.

The majority of us had no job security, nor did we receive any kind of recognition for our work from either the University authorities or the other teachers (this chapter, section 1.3). We were also keenly aware of many of our own flaws and limitations as teachers (this chapter, section 1.1). As Carmen noted:

You realise that what you are doing no longer works, what you know no longer works well and that something is incomplete, something is missing, and that’s when you say you need to change.

(BA/Carmen/21/02/05 [translation])

Individually, and as a group, we had become aware of the fact that, ethically and professionally speaking, we just could not keep on repeating exactly the same things in our teaching practices, as we had realised that they were often neither useful nor effective. However, we did not have either sufficient knowledge or the skills required to make the necessary changes. Consequently, we had arrived at the conclusion that we ourselves also needed to change, in the sense of becoming more competent, if improvements were to be made in the students’ achievements (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04). In short, in contrast to many other teachers reported in the literature (e.g. Greenberg & Baron, 2000), we were indeed

starting to realise the need for change. That is, we had arrived at “the stage where mostly everybody agreed that *something had to be done*” (BA90/Isela/05/05/04).

In addition, as there had been no movement, nor change in School life at any level for so long, we were individually and collectively becoming very bored with our routines. Isela explained this.

I really think, you know, *people get bored if it is always the same*. I think a lot of people get bored because of routine and so if they see that there is an opportunity for something new it is very often a synonym of ‘interesting’ or of ‘fun’ or ‘something exciting’, you know? Then they will get in.

(Prelim/Isela/05/05/04)

In this extract, Isela is once again emphasizing that teachers may become bored with their profession if there are no changes in their academic lives. Perhaps for this reason, we found the prospect of something new, for example, the proposed change in the BA curriculum, as ‘*exciting*’, ‘*interesting*’ and ‘*fun*’. It was the “*fun factor*” that made us eager to participate in the change. We also perceived the idea of change as ‘*exciting*’, because we saw it as potentially providing opportunities for us to grow professionally. By being directly involved in the change projects, not only would we learn something new (Prelim/Veronica/02/03/05), but we would also be able to use the knowledge we had acquired in our studies to improve our teaching and therefore the quality of our students’ learning experiences. As Irma commented:

You feel excited because, well, it’s something new that you are going to be a part of, in which you are going to leave something of your knowledge, *something that is going to help you grow more*.

(CritInc/Irma/16/02/05 [translation])

Here Irma is echoing, as well as extending, both Isela’s and Veronica’s ideas. Thus, it would appear that a virtuous circle was becoming established during the change process which would go on to become an inherent and iterative part of that same process (Fig. 14).

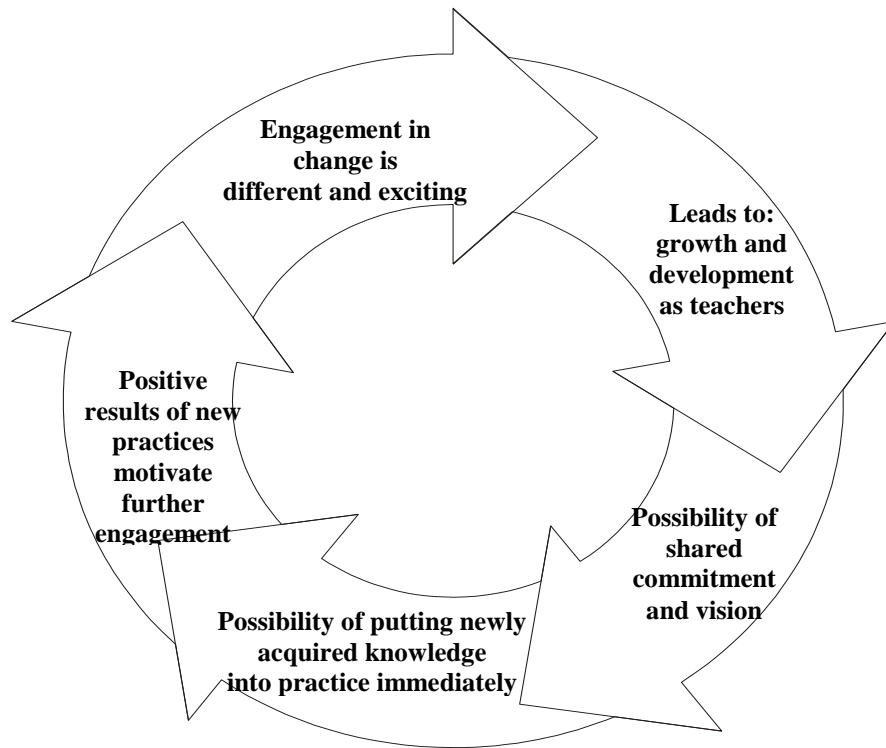


Fig. 14: Virtuous circle of inherent and iterative change process

A vital link in this circle appears to have been our shared individual commitment (Prelim/Chela/01/05/04) and vision (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04). These were two of the main ingredients that promoted our engagement in, as well as implementation of change. However, I mention these only briefly here, since I will explore them in greater detail in Chapter 5, section 2, where I will argue that they are also key elements in the process of our emergence as a small collaborative culture.

Another link in this virtuous circle that also appears to have sustained our positive attitude towards the entire proposed change projects was that we were conscious that would be putting our newly acquired knowledge immediately into practice. As Carmen stated:

On finishing the diploma I felt that *I could find a niche* in the new curriculum so they were two things that coincided and that happened. They [the change projects] allowed me to develop my work, my tasks as a teacher, because if the BA curriculum hadn't happened for example, then my postgraduate diploma studies and those of my colleagues would have been like something sterile. Because where would that have been used? So, how these two situations concurred was important for me as a person and as a teacher in this university

(BA90/Carmen/21/02/05 [translation] [my explanation])

Here Carmen is echoing Irma's previous comment. Once qualified, we urgently needed a context in which we could usefully apply our new-found knowledge; otherwise we would have felt that our studies had been of no real value. As it happened, these factors interacted dynamically one with the other. In order to participate in change, we needed to engage in further studies, which in turn, owing to our shared commitment and vision, and shared commitment to implement our knowledge in the innovations, progressively promoted further changes in our institutional context (RGCH/Chela/18/09/03).

A further link in the virtuous circle I am using to represent the iterative process as I perceive it (Fig. 14) was that we were immediately able to see the positive effects of our new techniques (Prelim/María/14/07/03). This helped to sustain our active engagement in change. Veronica explained how in the following extract.

If the results are what we were expecting to achieve, you feel satisfied and you feel happy, and you say well it was worth all the hours and all the effort, you even spend your own money in some of the projects.

(CritInc/Veronica/02/03/05:

This finding, therefore, supports Kennedy and Kennedy's (1996) statement that "A successful implementation of change will strengthen the likelihood of re-occurrence" (p.357).

Perhaps, more importantly, all this made us want to engage yet again in further training (Prelim/Jorge/14/06/03) in an on-going cycle of improvement – perhaps even better described as an upward spiral of professional development (This last issue will be further discussed in the following chapter). In other words, each of these elements was influenced by, while at the same time having an influence on, the other.

In short, my findings seem to provide substantial empirical data that to some extent at least supports one of the premises of Giacquinta's (1975, 2005) 'Status-Risk Theory of Receptivity'. That is, that teachers' receptivity to change "is a direct outcome of what people think would be the probable benefits...were they to embrace the innovation" (Giacquinta, 2005: 161). However, in contrast to the basis of this theory, the benefits we hoped for were not entirely "in terms of status-related perquisites" (Giacquinta, 2005: 161).

Instead, they were based mainly on our desire to grow and develop as teachers, in other words, our desire to transform our personal construal of professional identity from amateur to professional teachers and by doing so improve our effectiveness in the classroom, as well as in the change initiatives.

2.3.2. Our Commitment

Finally, our growing sense of individual as well as collective commitment was another overlapping personal factor. This commitment, manifested by the long hours we worked on the changes seems to have been motivated by

- A. Our concern for the educational welfare of our students;
- B. Our growing sense of indebtedness to both the School and the University.

A. Our Concern for the Educational Welfare of our Students

Firstly, equally aware of the flaws in the BA curriculum (Prelim/Jorge/14/06/03), as well as our own subsequent shortcomings as teachers as detailed in section 1.1, we were all committed to improving both our teaching, as well as the curriculum, in order to make the School a better learning and working environment for all concerned (Prelim/Chela/01/05/04). This was especially the case of my colleagues, whose desire for improvement, stemmed from the ways in which they had themselves been taught while they had been on the BA course at the School (Prelim/María/14/07/03). Carlos, for example, claims that his desire to improve the quality of his teaching was a direct reaction to the inefficient way he had been taught to translate.

The teacher would arrive and he gave us a piece of paper and we would all start to supposedly translate. There were five lines to translate in the hour class...fifteen minutes before the end, someone would go to the blackboard and write their version and then the teacher would talk and say this is wrong and he would change it...the only thing we had to do was to copy the teacher's version and this is how it went on all semester. [When I became a teacher] *I couldn't do this. So I began to read to learn how to do it better...and that's how we began to work.* (Prelim/Carlos/12/02/05 [translation] [my addition to aid understanding])

According to Huebner's (2009) review of recent studies on teacher learning, the individual and the interpersonal realms are two of the main realms in which teacher learning may occur. In these realms, "teachers gain knowledge about content and pedagogy, agree or disagree with this knowledge, and make decisions regarding implementation and change" (p.88). In the extract above, the decision Carlos came to due to his own experience as a student appears to be an example of this. His particular teacher apparently did little to enable his students' learning process. In fact, the only thing he seems to have done was to give his students a very short text, and at the end of the class, write a correct version of the translation on the board. As this rather traditional methodological approach was far from satisfying for himself as a student, when Carlos became a teacher, he decided he would not imitate this teacher's practices. Instead, he tried to find ways to discover a more appropriate methodology that would facilitate his students learning more effectively.

However, before the 1990s, our desire for improvement was very much limited to the confines of our own classrooms where, like Carlos, we would individually tinker with the contents of our syllabuses and our own teaching methods (BA90/Isela/05/05/04). It was not until the beginning of the institutional change process, when Aide included us in the decision-making regarding the new curriculum, that we could really act on this desire and make more large scale improvements so that future students would be better trained (Prelim/Jorge/14/06/03).

Our concern for our students and our desire to improve their educational welfare were manifested in the changes that were effected, for example, the innovation of standardised examinations each semester in 1992 to evaluate students' proficiency in the English Language, (Table 1). Prior to the 1990s, each teacher had customarily written and marked his or her own examinations. As a result, both the examinations, and the marking of these, had traditionally been very subjective, as they had depended on a particular teacher's criteria, and more to the point, on whether or not the teacher was 'generous' or 'strict' (CritInc/Jorge/26/11/03). Thus, we considered standardised examinations to be a much fairer way of evaluating the students (CritInc/Veronica/26/11/03). This was also mentioned by Jorge in the following extract:

I think one thing that I really like was the innovation of the standardised exams...I think that was *also positive for students, or at least fairer than the old system*. Yeah, more fair

(CritInc/Jorge/26/11/03)

Jorge, in this extract, echoes Veronica's comment regarding the major innovation of standardised examinations. We all agreed with the implementation of this system as we believed it was a better and more objective way, of evaluating our students.

It would appear that this first centre of commitment is not that unusual, given that a recognised core part of teachers' professional practices (Nias, 1981; Bilken, 1995; Tyree, 1996; Yong, 1999) is "wanting, more than anything, to make a difference in the learning lives of students" (Day & Saunders, 2006: 266). However, the "difference" we wanted to make "more than anything" appears initially to have stemmed from our dissatisfaction with our own prior learning experiences, which we perceived to have been insufficient to prepare us effectively for our professional working lives as language teachers (this chapter, section 1.1). Perhaps more importantly, we were all committed to trying to make a difference so that "students would become even more prepared than the current intake - the people who are still at the school" (Prelim/Jorge/14/06/03).

B. Our Growing Sense of Indebtedness to both the School and the University

Secondly, our commitment to the change process was also influenced by the growing sense of indebtedness that we felt to the School for their support of our on-going professional education, and in some cases, even our continuing employment. This was especially the case of the longer-standing members of our group who had completed their BA studies at the School, since they felt a strong emotional attachment to their *alma mater*. For example, Rosaurio mentioned this in the following extract:

I believe that what also influenced a lot is that *you love your institution*. For example, in my case I believe it is the institution where I was *educated*. Well then, *I owe it something. That is what I believe moved me [to participate]*.

(BA90/Rosaurio/15/10/03 [translation] [my addition to aid understanding])

In fact, in the absence of any other kinds of incentives, it had been our feelings for the School that had, in part, motivated us to participate in the changes at the outset (BA90/María/13/10/03). As well as my colleagues' affection for their *alma mater*, our commitment was also based on the fact that the School had become the source of our sense of professional and personal pride (Prelim/María/04/07/03; BA90/Rosaurio/15/10/03). The School not only gave us a source of making a living, but the reputation it had acquired, by association, influenced our status and standing as professionals locally and among our peers at other universities in the country (Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03). Consequently, it is true to say that our motivation to improve the BA curriculum and be able to offer higher degrees, was in part, not only due to the fact that the School and students would benefit, but because our own standing as teachers would benefit too, as noted by María below.

I believe that why we were interested in things like the Masters was that *it would give status to the School while at the same time give status to the people* who were designing and implementing the programmes.

(Prelim/María/14/07/03 [translation])

Apart from our feelings of gratitude and affection towards the School, our sense of indebtedness was also motivated by the fact that, for various reasons, we were grateful to the University for giving us employment as teachers. For example, for non-Mexicans, working at the School enabled us to secure the status of immigrants (rather than visitors) as the University was one of the few institutions that were accepted as *bona-fide* sponsors for our work visas. Furthermore, we were all grateful that the University had employed us and given us a living despite the fact that at the time we were first employed we had little experience or qualifications (Prelim/María/14/07/03). In addition, at the time when we all began our teaching career, our university had been the only university in the city and, given the lack of industry, one of the most keenly competed for and best paid jobs to be had. Even more, the fact that we could say we worked at the University gave us a highly reputable standing among the wider local community (Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03).

This feeling of gratitude and the sense that we owed the School of Languages a lot for having employed us in the first place can be discerned from several of my colleagues' comments. For example, Jorge stated "I'm grateful because they gave me an opportunity to work at the School of Languages" (Prelim/Jorge/14/06/03). This is also echoed by

Rosaurio: “I felt that I had to repay all those years that I had been working to collaborate in what I could” (Prelim/Rosaurio/16/04/04[translation]). In short, for all these reasons, both the School and the University had become a highly important part of our lives on which we depended in many ways: “It’s my University. I mean that it’s my **life**” (Prelim/Chela/01/05/04 [bold informant’s emphasis]). This is also echoed by Modesta.

I have this *obligation to the School* because it’s part of your life. You depend on the School, so you have to give as much as you can to make it function. That’s my personal obligation.

(Prelim/Modesta/12/01/05)

Our sense of indebtedness to the University grew progressively as we began to receive partial leaves of absence and substantial financial support to continue our studies. This was especially true of my own case and of that of all the younger members of our group. For example, Raphael states that “the money they had invested, those things, made me very conscious of how much the University...was giving me” (Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03), and Jorge mentions, that he felt “this sense of commitment, or obligation because of University support” (Prelim/Jorge/14/06/03). Veronica also voiced this in the following extract.

We feel committed to the University that in the end has given us the opportunity to work and also continue learning and you are grateful for the opportunities that you have been given.

(Prelim/Veronica/02/03/05)

This extract shows that even though we felt that we had not been “treated fairly and respectfully” (Goleman, 2004: 119) by the university authorities before the 1990s (this chapter, section 1.3), we nevertheless felt ‘*emotionally attached*’ (Goleman, 2004: 119) to the School. We perceived the School and the University as an important part of our lives that we depended upon, perhaps even to the point that we viewed ourselves as “shareholders” (Goleman, 2004: 119) in our working context. Thus, we were committed to making an all-out effort including personal sacrifices, for example, working for free during the holidays when needed. Furthermore, our commitment to our organization was further enhanced and sustained owing to the amount of support we received from our University during the extended change process that enabled us to grow as professionals, that is

transform our sense of professional identity. As a result, therefore, of our growing sense of indebtedness for these opportunities we wanted to repay the School by engaging in the institutional changes.

2.4 Discussion – ‘The Awakening’

On one level, it may be argued that our ‘*awakening*’ from ‘*professional slumber*’ to become professionally engaged in change seems to concur, though I would argue rather superficially, with the elements of a very technicist and thus, in my opinion, limited formula for change as suggested by Clark (1994). In his formula:

$$C = (ABD) > X$$

[where C = change, A = dissatisfaction with the status quo, B = the desirability of the proposed change, D = its practicability and X = the cost of the change]

(Clark, 1994, in Forrester, 1999: 5)

All these elements played an important role to mobilise us to participate in change. There was dissatisfaction with the status quo in that several of us in the English department were becoming bored with our routines and dissatisfied with the BA curriculum, our teaching practices, as well as our working conditions. (B) We were aware of the need for change and perceived the proposed changes as a means to both improve our working lives and benefit the educational welfare of our students. (D) Once we were convinced by the Dean, and we perceived that change was a viable option we were enthusiastic and eager to become involved. Furthermore, funding and opportunities (X) in order to implement the changes became more and more available to us and facilitated the changes, as well as fuelled our commitment owing to our growing sense of indebtedness to both the School and the University.

However, although this formula possibly identifies the surface issues involved in triggering change, I contend that this formula is seriously lacking in that it does not take into consideration the underlying complexities entailed in a change process (Forrester, 1999). That is, it does not take into consideration as my findings demonstrate that it is only when all the external factors, internal conditions and personal concerns are “integrated and harmonized” (Goodson, 2001b: 46) that positive and constructive change may take place.

Change as revealed by my informants' testimonies in response to my final two research sub-questions, among possibly other things, also involves shifts in people's beliefs, attitudes and behaviour, as well as the nature of their relationships with significant others. As these issues are complex and overlap with the findings explored in this chapter, they will be presented and explored in the chapter that follows.

Summary

In this, the first of two chapters devoted to presenting my findings that emerged in response to my first two research sub-questions, I discussed the characteristics that determined our state of '*professional slumber*' before 1990. This was followed by an account of what we perceived to have triggered our '*awakening*', that is, the organisational factors: the strategies the Dean used to convince us to embrace change and the funding and opportunities for professional development that became available to us during the 1990s; as well as personal factors: our positive attitude towards the change process, as well as our growing sense of commitment. I ended by also presenting a formula that, on one level, appears to identify, to some extent these same conditions that prompted our engagement in change. However, this technicist formula alone does not account for the complexity of a change process that also includes the changes in ourselves, as well as the nature of our developing relationship with each other during the change process. In the following chapter, therefore, these issues will be explored.

Chapter 5

How Change Changed Us, the Teachers

In this chapter I shall present my findings that emerged in response to my other two research sub-questions: *How did the change process affect us as individuals?* and *What was the nature of our relationship with each other during the change process?* In the first section, *Changes in Professional Self*, I will focus my discussion on how we seemed to change as individuals: the shifts in our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour. In the second section, I will continue by examining the nature of our emergent relationship with each other during this change process, grounded in what I refer to as ‘*emotional glue*’, that is, our collective trust, respect and pride.

1. Changes in Professional Self

In Chapter Four, I made reference to the underlying complexities entailed in the change process in our educational context during the 1990s. Significant contributing factors to this complexity were the deeper changes in the teachers themselves. These changes not only contributed to the achievement of more tangible changes in our educational institution, such as the design and implementation of new curricula; but they also influenced both our receptivity to change, and resulted in a radical change in the personal construal of our individual professional identities. They would thus appear to support Goodson’s (2001b) argument that “the embrace of change only happens with an inner change in people’s beliefs and plans” (Goodson, 2001b: 46). In this section, therefore, I will explore various important facets of this “inner world” (Bogler & Kremer-Hayon, 1999), by identifying and analysing the emergent changes in our beliefs, attitudes and behaviour as *we ourselves narrated them*.

1.1 Belief in Ourselves as Teachers

Prior to the 1990s, as reported in Chapter Four, section 1, although we worked as teachers, we appear to have had what Day et al. (2006: 601) refer to as rather “unstable” concepts of our professional identities. In contrast, during the course of our engagement in the extended change process in the years that followed, the most salient individual change that

emerged from my data was that we now finally came to *believe* that we really were teachers! This was confirmed by Jorge in the following extract.

It's been reflected in my teaching, right? I feel more secure now then obviously when I started teaching. *I **now** believe I am a teacher.* At the beginning I was just, I didn't believe, I didn't think of myself as a teacher. Now, I can say I'm a teacher and obviously this has come with the idea of the full-time position I now have.

(CritInc/Jorge/26/11/03 [bold emphasis in the original])

According to my findings, including what Jorge suggests in the extract above, this refining of our beliefs was triggered by two major overlapping and interacting factors:

- Our increased sense of our self-efficacy
- Recognition by significant others;

1.1.1. Our Increased Sense of our Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy, as Cardelle-Elawar et al. (2007) argue, is “a central element to the development of the “self” ” (p. 571) given that it is based on the teacher's beliefs about their values and competencies (Rots et al, 2007). Furthermore, according to the work by (2001), “efficacy beliefs affect adaptation and change” thereby influencing “whether people think pessimistically or optimistically and in ways that are self-enhancing or self-hindering” (p.10). In other words,

It is partly on the basis of efficacy beliefs that people choose what challenges to undertake, how much effort to expend in the endeavour, how long to persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, and whether failures are motivating or demoralizing.

(Bandura, 2001:10)

Of particular relevance to my inquiry, is the fact that one of the ways in which Bandura (2001) claims that our personal self-efficacy beliefs may be enhanced is by the “mastery of knowledge and skills attainable only through long hours of arduous work” (Bandura, 2001: 13). My findings would appear to support this standpoint, given that our sense of self-efficacy seems to have been improved as a direct result of engaging in professional development over extended periods of time. Having been very insecure about our

knowledge and teaching methods before the opportunities arose, after successfully completing postgraduate studies we all perceived a notable improvement in the quality of our teaching, both individually and as a group, and because of this, became more self-confident as teachers. This was mentioned by María.

When you finish you realise that ah yes, I learned and I have learned a lot. For example, now when I check a final paper, I can check it quickly and I can find the things that are not correct that before I didn't realise or I didn't know what was right or wrong.

(Prelim/María/14/07/03[translation])

In this extract, María's assessment of her competencies appears to match to some extent with Beijaard et al.'s (2000) claim that a teacher's personal construal of their professional identity is framed by the evaluation of themselves as "subject matter experts, pedagogical experts and didactical experts" (p.749). Here María is giving an example of how she became aware that her studies had enabled her, not only to reframe her evaluation of herself as a teacher, but also as a non-native user of English, as quoted in an earlier extract in Chapter Four, section 1.1.

My findings also appear to be consistent with Goleman's (2004) definition that self-efficacy is "the positive judgment of one's own capacity to perform...our *belief* about what we can do with the skills we have" (P. 70 [emphasis in the original]). Regarding my informants and I, the fact that we successfully completed a first level of studies fuelled our belief in our sense of self-efficacy which, in turn, spurred us on to aspire to, and engage in, further professional learning and growth (Prelim/Jorge/14/06/03; Prelim/María/14/07/0; PL/14/06/03). Jorge affirmed this in the following extract.

Because you have proven that you are capable of doing things, you start going for higher goals, like O.K. I'll do the TEFL diploma, and I realised I could do it with some problems and then I say well, the Masters O.K. let's do the Masters just to prove to myself I can carry on.

(Prelim/Jorge/14/06/03)

Perhaps even more importantly, and as Jorge suggests at the end of this extract, our intrinsic motivation to continue investing "time, effort, and resources in self-renewal" (Bandura, 2001: 13) was possibly due to our desire "to prove to myself I can carry on"; in

other words, our desire to sustain our increased sense of self-efficacy. This would, then, seem to corroborate Bandura's (2001) theory that "Efficacy beliefs also play a key role in shaping the courses lives take by influencing the types of activities and environments people choose to get into" (p.10).

Finally, our sense of self-efficacy and, in turn, our personal construal of our professional identities improved owing to *our shared perception* that by engaging in change, we had become more capable of implementing other changes in the future. Irma made clear reference to this in the following extract.

Perhaps this sounds vain, but I believe that if I said 'let's get together...and restructure X' we would propose and lead other changes...*we don't need someone to tell us what to do*. Not all teachers have the initiative...but we do.

(Prelim/Irma/30/03/04)

Nowadays, as Day and Leitch (2007) have pointed out, teachers' perceptions of whether or not they have "the capacities to manage [change]...to become and remain effective" (p.707) will also influence the perception they have of their professional identity. My findings therefore appear to support this view given that by engaging in change our sense of self-efficacy was greatly increased, so much so, that we appear to have gone on to believe, as Irma suggested, that we were now capable of performing a more dynamic and proactive role in change.

1.1.2 Recognition by Significant Others

A further, overlapping element, that appears to some extent to have influenced the positive shift in both our personal and professional belief in ourselves as teachers, was *our* perception of the changing opinion of those who Heikkinen (2003) refers to as 'significant others' (p.1). As reported in Chapter Four, section 1.3 prior to the 1990s, we were very much "treated as nobodies who had no research interest and no academic interest" (FP/Aide/01/04/04[translation]). It would appear therefore, that when some of my informants (Isela, María, Modesta and Veronica) were singled out and offered grants to study an MSc in TEFL at a distance in 1994, they perceived this as proof that there were people who believed in their ability to succeed. For example, María remembered,

What most motivated me was my self-esteem because I was officially invited by the British Council. Well, that made me want to study. Because I said, *'well if The British Council feels that I can do it, I can do it'*. So I applied for the Masters and I was accepted.

(BA90/María/13/10/03[translation])

This extract affords a clear example of how teachers' beliefs about their competencies may be influenced by *their* perception of the opinions of 'significant others' Heikkinen (2003:1). In addition, it appears to be an example that yet again corroborates Bandura's (2001) view that efficacy beliefs may influence the choices we make. The fact that an institution such as The British Council, that we all respected (PL/13/10/03), had taken interest, and had contacted María, was a motivating force for her to enrol in postgraduate studies. More specifically, María seems to have interpreted the BC's 'invitation' as *their* recognition of the fact that she was capable of obtaining an MSc. These beliefs not only motivated María's receptivity to continue studying, but they also appear to have influenced her own evaluation of her professional self.

Another factor that was emphatically reiterated in the data was the way in which my colleagues' self-confidence as teachers also grew, because they could now achieve the status, standing and recognition that they had always desired. Firstly, within our context, by having obtained further degrees, they were now also officially awarded first degree status, and so became eligible for full-time, tenured teaching positions, giving them complete job security.

I was **happy** because, well, as I say, it helped me to get degree status. In other words, we could say that it was a radical change because I had been working as a teacher employed by the hour. So *on finishing the TEFL diploma I could get degree status and then I could put in for a full-time position.*

(CritInc/Rosaurio/05/12/03[translation] [bold informant's emphasis])

As Rosaurio remembered, studying a further degree and subsequently achieving first degree status made her "happy" because she now achieved access to significantly greater financial security and secured a highly coveted full-time tenured position. This situation appears to corroborate Hargreaves' (1998c) view that "When our status increases, we feel happiness, satisfaction and contentment along with pride" (p.326). In other words, as a full-time

position in our context meant honour, prestige, and the right to be involved in the academic decision-taking process, it would appear that her sense of professional self-esteem was enhanced by this achievement. Professional self-esteem is regarded by many (e.g. Honneth, 1995b; Huttunen & Heikkinen, 2002, Heikkinen, 2003) as the highest level of recognition that may be attained. This, therefore, helps us to understand why Rosaurio emphasised so strongly that she felt “happy”. For her, obtaining a full-time position symbolised that her ability and accomplishments had been fully recognised by her employers (Honneth, 1995b), the University authorities who constituted her particular “value community” (Heikkinen, 2003:4).

In fact, my colleagues’ ambition to gain full-time tenured positions seems to have been another of the motivating forces that initially encouraged several of my informants to study first the TEFL postgraduate diploma and then the MSc in TEFL. For example, María commented:

The only possibility that I had of gaining a full-time position was by having a Masters.

(Prelim/María/14/07/03[translation])

This comment also provides an insight into one of the possible implications of educational change. Before the nineties, teachers were often employed without having completed a first degree in their own or any other subject area. During the 1990s, however, it became a requisite that all new in-coming teachers, even those employed by the hour without tenure, should have at least a first degree. Moreover, to gain full-time teaching status, a Masters degree now became a requirement. Thus, the criteria for employment at the School were becoming increasingly demanding.

Secondly, our status and standing improved through the recognition we gained both within the University itself, and among similar institutions elsewhere. The other Schools on our campus now seemed to respect us more, thanks not only to our evident academic achievements, but also to the changes we had effected, including the relationships that we had developed with the educational world outside our immediate context (FP/Aide/01/04/04). Even more impressively, other educational institutions in the country

also began to generally recognise our institution as a ‘good’ School. Rosaurio mentioned the following:

The School began to have a name in the Republic. So different states in the Republic began to call for people, because they said, ‘well, they have a solid education. It is a School that has a name’. And so we can now find our graduates in the entire Republic.

(BA90/Rosaurio/15/10/03[translation])

Due to this recognition, both we ourselves, and graduates of our courses, began to receive invitations to participate in programmes run by other institutions and to advise on their proposed curricula changes (Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03). Consequently, at the present time, we often find ourselves coming across our ex-students, and peers to whom we have given consultancy services, when we attend conferences at other institutions in many other parts of Mexico (BA90/Rosaurio/15/10/03). Thus, it would appear as Raphael mentioned, that

...working at the University of Veracruz and being involved in these projects has given us a lot of **prestige**.

(Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03[bold informant’s emphasis])

Raphael’s emphasis of the word ‘prestige’ implies the importance we had placed on being reified as professionals (Tsui, 2007). In contrast to the pre-1990s, we no longer felt completely isolated, but rather felt we had now achieved wide recognition. This new turn of events obviously contributed to the strengthening and transformation of our personal construal of our professional identities. My findings, therefore, seem to concur with various experts (e.g. Honneth, 1995b; Huttunen & Heikkinen, 2002, Heikkinen, 2003) that professional self-esteem is based principally on the acknowledgement of your abilities and accomplishments at work (Honneth, 1995b) by “significant others” (Heikkinen, 2003:1).

Finally, owing to our engagement in further studies and change initiatives it would appear that we had gained not only an increased sense of self-efficacy, but also substantial recognition from both our university authorities and institutions outside our immediate context. As a result, we could now as Beijgaard et al. (2004: 123) state “make sense” of our practices, that is identity ourselves, and so truly believe, that we really were professional teachers. My findings, therefore, seem to concur with Tsui’s (2007) conclusions that an

EFL teacher's identity formation, is "highly complex...relational as well as experiential, reificative as well as participative, and individual as well as social" (Tsui, 2007: 678).

1.2 Change in our Attitudes

In Chapter 4, section 2.3.1, I argued that our individual, as well as collective receptive attitude to change seems to have stemmed from the interaction of a number of issues, as a result of which, as María pointed in the following extract.

...everybody began to feel that *they needed the changes and **wanted** to participate in them.*

(Prelim/María/14/07/03 [translation] [bold informant's emphasis])

I further suggested that a virtuous circle (Fig. 14), which would go on to become an inherent and iterative part of an on-going, dynamic process in the future, gradually became established during our early experiences of the change process. However, this circle can only partly reflect the full complexity of the change process. For example, it does not fully demonstrate how by engaging in change, our initial positive attitude to change was sustained. The findings presented in this current section, will, therefore contribute significantly to the filling of this gap.

It appears that one of the elements that may have sustained our receptive attitude to change was that some of us may have realised it was necessary to continue studying higher degrees in order to assure continued job security. Rosaurio explained why in the following extract:

There was the political change in education and so that led us to say 'well, if there are these opportunities *why am I going to wait for some other person who is better educated to take my place* if I can do it, if I have the strength and the interest.'

(BA90/Rosaurio/15/10/03 [translation])

Here Rosaurio is referring to the fact that, as mentioned in section 1.1.2 (this chapter) during the 1990s, the criteria for employment at the School were becoming more demanding. This situation was possibly influenced by the proposals for national educational reforms, which as mentioned in Chapter One, section 1.2.3, encouraged the professionalisation of academic staff as a direct means of improving standards and results

in higher education. Teachers could now take advantage of the opportunities for further study that were becoming increasingly available. As a result, in contrast to when my informants and I began to work at the School, there was a greater likelihood that other people from outside our group could also become better qualified and thus more eligible to apply for the much sought after full-time teaching positions in the School. Consequently, it would appear that the need to maintain our job-security had an influence on some of the teachers' attitudes to change. In this extract, Rosaurio, by the use of the phrase "if I have the strength and the interest" gave a clear indication of what she was willing to do to compete and thereby as Raphael mentioned, 'survive' (Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03), in this changing context. She was willing to change the nature of her 'self' (Cardelle-Elawar et al., 2007: 571) by engaging in further studies. My findings would then appear to support, in part, an aspect of Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour. Ajzen (1991) places emphasis on behavioural intentions, instead of attitudes, as the key factor in influencing behaviour. Behavioural intentions "comprise indications of how hard someone is willing to try to do something and what effort they are willing to put into the behaviour" (Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996:354).

Another reason, however, is that we soon realised that in order to effect substantive change in our particular institution, we needed to continue our studies and develop professionally at the same time as the changes were happening. Otherwise, we would not have had the necessary knowledge or skills to either initiate or implement change. This was noted by Irma.

Everything came at the same time and, well, that's the way it had to be. Because how *would we initiate or support changes or propose new methods if we didn't have theoretical bases, if we weren't professionally developed*, that is, it was necessary to get up to date and improve and it's still necessary. The TEFL diploma, the Masters, the PhD are necessary.

(Prelim/Irma/30/03/04 [translation])

As Irma remembered, there was a dynamic interaction between both the institutional changes and the changes in ourselves as teachers. This extract appears then to partly confirm the opinion of experts such as Fullan (1991), Borko et al. (2002) and Reio (2005)

that one of the ways teachers cope with, and adjust to change, is by means of their engagement in professional development.

A third, and perhaps even more important reason that emerged from my data, is that our positive attitude to change was apparently sustained by our own heightened awareness of the nature of change itself. That is, our perception that, once change is initiated, it is an ongoing process. This awareness seems, to a large extent, to have been due to the content and nature of our studies and the contacts we had made with peers working at similar institutions. We became '*awakened*' to the fact that we were living in a world of change, particularly in the field of education (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04). This given, we realised that we could not be satisfied with merely 'getting ourselves up-to-date', rather, we now wanted to continue studying *ad infinitum*, so as never to be 'left behind' again (Prelim/María/14/07/03 [translation]). That is, we did not want to return to the academic and professional backwater or state of '*slumber*' of the pre-1990s period. This was noted by Rosaurio in the following extract.

If this is now my place of work, well I can't stagnate I always have to look forward. *In education one is never up-to-date, things are always changing and, well, one should be up to, up-to-date.*

(BA90/Rosaurio/15/10/03 [translation])

In this extract, Rosaurio acknowledges her realization that in the field of education there are constant changes. Consequently, as a teacher she cannot ignore these changes, nor, as she, and other informants mentioned (e.g., Prelim/Carlos/12/02/05), can she 'stagnate' in her profession. Instead she had become aware that she had to continually find ways to keep abreast of change.

Once the process had begun, not only did we want to keep up with the changes, but we now also felt that we needed to stay ahead of them. This perception was concisely put into words by María.

It's always good not to get left behind, but *to continue studying in order to stay ahead* of the students, although they will be better than you some day, but, meanwhile, well, try to not get left behind.

Here María is reiterating Rosaurio's view that during the change process, we realised that the knowledge we had was not sufficient; "*to stay ahead*" in the field of education we needed to engage in a continuous process of professional development and/or lifelong learning.

Moreover, this awareness appears to comprise yet another element that also interacted with, and had an impact on, our personal construal of our professional identities. María's particular intrinsic motivation to '*stay ahead*' is possibly also a reaction to her lack of confidence at the beginning of her professional career as reported in Chapter Four, section 1.1. María realised that she needed to continue furthering her studies in order to feel more confident as a teacher, in other words, maintain a more "stable" (Day et al., 2006: 601) professional identity. This extract, therefore, appears to corroborate James-Wilson's (2001) view referred to in Chapter Two, section 3.2, that the way in which teachers make sense of their professional identity is due, in part, to where they "position or situate themselves in relation to their students" (James-Wilson, 2001: 29), as well as to how they evaluate themselves as teachers. According to María's evaluation, she believed that she always needed to be more knowledgeable than her students, although she was also aware that one day they would surpass her.

1.3 Changes in our Behaviour

The changes in both our evaluation of our professional selves, as well as our attitudes towards change were also reflected in the changes in our behaviour. My findings show that in contrast to the pre-1990s, as reported in Chapter Four, section 1.4, when we appeared to be secluded in our context, we now took advantage of the opportunities that were becoming available to us. We took courses and attended conferences offered by other institutions, and constantly looked for books and new methods in order to get ideas to both improve both the quality of our teaching (BA90/María/13/10/03), and also to implement changes in our context, based on our research. Even more impressively, owing to our growing self-confidence, we not only attended conferences as visitors, but we also began to participate as speakers at these events on subjects such as methodology which was a significant change of behaviour in itself. This is reflected in Isela's comment below.

We've organized conferences, we've gone to conferences, we've presented at conferences, so conferences seem sort of like, it has become routine. Now, at least for me, you even start to become choosy.

(BA90/Isela/05/05/04)

In addition to participating at conferences, we also began to organize our *own* conferences at the university. A significant change that emerged from all of this is that, in stark contrast to our state of '*slumber*' before the 1990s, when we rarely had the opportunity even to attend conferences, during the 1990s we began to feel that we were now in the position to *select* the conferences we would go to instead of attending them all. This was because we had become more sensitive to the specific areas of our profession in which we needed to extend our understanding.

Even more importantly, perhaps, a major shift in our behaviour was that we no longer worked totally alone, isolated within the walls of our classrooms. Thus, with the benefit of hindsight, we then appear to have been leaving what Hargreaves (2000a) refers to as the "The Age of the Autonomous Professional" (p.158) and entering "The Age of the Collegial Professional" (p.162). At the beginning of the change process, when we were singled out by Aide to participate in the changes, we began to collaborate with each other. For example, we attended meetings to plan and design the new BA curriculum together. Then, when it was up and running, we would meet and work together voluntarily, sharing our ideas and materials in order to implement suggested changes in the curriculum and help to implement the changes, as well as engage in an on-going process of evaluation. In addition, more or less at the same time as this, many of my colleagues shared the experience of studying the postgraduate TEFL Diploma together. Later on, when the first intake of students who were following the new syllabus was approaching the end of their BA, we all (except Modesta and Rosaurio) went on to take an MSc in TEFL. This subsequently led to our joint participation, though to differing degrees, in the design and implementation of, first, an in-house MA in TEFL, and later, the syllabus of, and materials design for, a BA in TEFL at distance (PL/06/07/04).

In other words, whenever there was an opportunity to attend conferences, contribute to changes or engage in professional development, we collaborated as a group. Moreover, we

began to realise that we seemed to be the people who were not only always called upon for support with innovations, but, more importantly, that we were the group who always responded positively to the challenge (Prelim/María/14/07/03). Moreover, in contrast to the period preceding the 1990s, when we rarely communicated with each other at all, because of our shared engagement in and commitment to effecting change, we came to spend a great deal of time together: talking, studying and sharing our ideas and skills, as well as our emotional responses to all our respective experiences. As a result, we developed strong both professional and social relationships with each other that seem to have enabled us to face the ever new challenges and demands (PL/06/07/04). The more precise nature of our growing relationship will be explored in more detail in the following section

2. ‘Emotional Glue’

The nature of our emergent relationship with each other during this change process was, according to my findings, grounded in what I will refer to as ‘*emotional glue*’. This metaphor was inspired by the sense of “group cohesiveness” (Kelly & Spoor, 2005: 3) that emerged strongly from the data. In other words,

...the affective ties that bind a group together, or to a sense of solidarity or esprit de corp that may develop over the course of group interaction (Hogg, 1992).

(Kelly & Spoor, 2005: 3)

This section will explore the vital ingredients of which this ‘*emotional glue*’ seems to have been composed and which appear to have been vital in fostering, shaping and sustaining ‘*the affective ties*’ that bound us together while engaging in this extended change process together. These ingredients included our growing sense of *mutual trust* and *respect*, as well as our shared sense of *collective pride*.

2.1 Our Growing Sense of Mutual Trust and Respect

As it emerged from my findings, our growing sense of mutual trust and respect seems to have been based on the following:

- Our growing “positive interpersonal attraction” (Kelly & Spoor, 2005: 4) for each other;
- The developing norms of our interrelationship;
- Our growing sense of camaraderie.

2.1.1 “Positive Interpersonal Attraction”

Regarding our emerging relationship during the 1990s, what Kelly and Spoor (2005) refer to as “positive interpersonal attraction” (p.4) seems to have developed through our evolving perceptions of each others’ personal and professional integrity. This included our recognition of each others’:

- Strong work ethic;
- Honesty and reliability;
- Commitment.

• Strong Work Ethic

Our (conscious or unconscious) evaluation of each others’ strong work ethic is evident from the different terms we used when describing each other. At the same time, these descriptions revealed the characteristics we valued, both in ourselves, as well as in others. We identified each other as ‘hard workers’ (Prelim/Veronica/02/03/05), as ‘people who do not give up easily’ (Prelim/Rosaurio/16/04/04), and who do not ‘fall asleep’ on the job (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04). Instead, we saw ourselves as people who willingly devote our time to our students, colleagues, and the School (CritInc/Carmen/30/08/05). We cared about our students (CritInc/Chela/10/12/04) and what we, as teachers, were doing, not for personal gain (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04), but because for us, teaching was more than just a job. This was overtly stated by Chela.

These are the people that still care. These are the people that do make an effort. These are the people that are involved in things that seem to be for the good of others rather than for themselves. These are the people who don’t just take teaching as a pay check. I mean they’re into it.

(CritInc/Chela/10/12/04)

In this extract, Chela succinctly summarised the characteristics already mentioned above. In addition, she seemed to be suggesting that we were in some ways different from the other teachers at the School. The main difference was that, according to Chela, we ‘still’ had a strong sense of moral purpose. That is to say, as argued in Chapter Four, section 2.3.2A, our first priority was the educational welfare of our students. Consequently, we did everything within our power to improve the standards of learning and teaching at the School, for example, the design and implementation of standardised examinations

• Our Honesty and Reliability

My findings also appear to be consistent with Rotter’s (1967) definition in that

Interpersonal trust is an expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon.

(Rotter, 1967: 651)

A vital element of our interrelationship is that we do seem to have identified each other as people who were honest and reliable (CritInc/Raphael/27/11/03): “I feel I can count on them” (Ver/Irma/23/02/06 [translation]). These conceptions of each others’ trustworthiness were grounded in the types of behaviour we had witnessed during our experiences together. Carlos provided an example of such behaviours in the following extract.

I know that she is honest. They are the people you’re always going to be with you. I know that once they get involved with you, with the project, they are going to be there, they are going to participate until they finish it. And you can’t find that in other people.

(Prelim/Carlos/12/02/05 [translation])

It may be argued that Carlos was not talking about only one of my informants, since he changes subject pronouns from ‘she’ to ‘they’, suggesting that he was thinking about the other members of the group too. He revealed that one of the characteristics that he valued in us, the teachers with whom he collaborated, was our honesty. From the experience of working with the informant whom he gave as an example, he had learned that she would always give an honest answer. She did not just say “Yes” and then fail to follow through. Instead, when she agreed to do something, she could be depended upon to continue participating until the work was finished.

Jorge also referred to other aspects regarding why he felt he could rely on each of the other informants.

I knew they were bright people with brilliant ideas and so I liked working with them because I knew that they would work and they would pull you to work at the same pace.

(Prelim/Jorge/14/06/03)

Here Jorge appears to be referring to a sense of trust that emerged from the recognition of each other's worth that I am labelling as *competence*. This *competence* that we perceived in each other, was not only based on our identification of each other "as bright people with brilliant ideas", but also, as Jorge implies here, echoing the previous extract, that it was further influenced by our perceptions that we were all equally reliable. According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000), the definition of reliability, "combines a sense of predictability with benevolence" (p.556). That is, according to Jorge, he was not only certain that we would work hard, but also that we had the *competence* to sustain one another's involvement in the changes. Thus, it would appear that we evaluated each other as trustworthy colleagues based on our observations of each other's behaviour while engaging in "joint enterprises" (Wenger, 1998: 78) during the change process.

• **Our Commitment**

A further vital characteristic that bound us together was the fact that we recognised and valued each others' sense of commitment. Teachers' commitment has been defined as an emotional response triggered by their experiences within their working context (Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). Depending on this response, teachers will make either conscious or subconscious decisions concerning their willingness to invest both personally and professionally in their context, as well as with others. Understanding teacher commitment, therefore, has been recognised as crucial as it is an instrumental factor in teachers' engagement in educational change (Nias, 1981; Kushman, 1992; Huberman, 1993). Some of the more deeply researched dimensions of teacher commitment that have been identified and explored in the literature include the following, commitment to:

- the school or organisation (Graham, 1996; Louis, 1998; Huber, 1999; Tsui & Cheng, 1999);

- students (Nias, 1981; Bilken, 1995; Tyree, 1996; Yong, 1999);
 - career continuance (Nias, 1981; Tyree, 1996; Yong, 1999);
 - professional knowledge base (Nias, 1981; Tyree, 1996);
 - the teaching profession (Tyree, 1996; Day, 2000, 2004).
- (Crosswell & Elliott, 2004: 3)

However, although these dimensions of teacher commitment have been examined in the literature, none of the writers seem to have emphasised the way in which shared commitment may create a bond among teachers in a particular working context. In contrast, my findings, apart from echoing some of these dimensions of teacher commitment in Chapter Four, section 2.3.2, also highlight that our shared commitment was one of the emotional bases that led, not only to our growing mutual trust and respect, but also to our overall cohesiveness as a group.

In particular, we recognised in each other a constant “task commitment” (Kelly & Spoor, 2005: 4) to our professional growth on the one hand, and the effective implementation of the institutional changes that we designed and implemented together, on the other. Our sense of commitment to the change projects never seemed to waver, even when our goals appeared to be difficult to achieve and when we were faced with obstacles, such as lack of time allotted to work on the projects, and the absence of adequate funding (Prelim/Chela/01/05/04) to finance them. We were ‘happy’ to participate because we wanted change (Prelim/María/14/07/03), and were convinced that it would produce positive outcomes (Prelim/Veronica/02/03/05). In addition, we realised that we were working with people who were equally committed because they shared this same belief in, and desire for, change. This was noted by Veronica in the following extract.

If they also believe in what you believe, you’ll be working with people who are really also committed. They really want to change. They are the ones that work hard, because sometimes you don’t get extra money. The higher authorities, they don’t even **meet** you to say thank you. So it’s something that you have to believe in and you have to have the right people, the people who also believe in what you believe. *I mean to be successful comes from the people involved who are committed to being successful themselves.*

(Prelim/Veronica/02/03/05 [bold informant’s emphasis])

This extract also appears to offer in itself a definition of both the importance and role of commitment during a change process. According to my findings, our commitment was one of the main elements that motivated us to continually engage in the change process even when we did not receive any form of recognition for this from the university authorities. This is strongly emphasized by Veronica emphasising the word “meet”. Here she is recalling a specific critical incident when the University authorities rejected our external consultant’s invitation to review our curriculum design for the in-house MA in TEFL, and congratulate us for our hard work (PL/02/03/05). Thus, Veronica seems to be suggesting that in order to achieve change, it is vital for a number of people to share the same kind of commitment to their own personal and professional growth and development.

Finally, my findings appear to corroborate Jarzabkowski’s (2002) stand that

The sharing of lives involves the sharing of emotions, and people come to understand others more deeply and develop reciprocal, trusting relationships.

(Jarzabkowski, 2002:5)

During our shared experience during the 1990s, we developed both trust in, and respect for, each other and these appear to have been significant ingredients of the ‘*emotional glue*’ that bound us tightly together, thereby influencing the strong, professional and social nature of our emerging relationship, during the change process. We identified each other as hard working, trustworthy and committed teachers who believed in change, and who were also intrinsically motivated (Prelim/Chela/01/05/04) by a shared set of values that we all respected.

2.2.1 Norms of Interrelationship Behaviour

Our regard and respect for one another, evidenced by the series of shared norms we developed during our interactions of working and studying together collaboratively and substantiated by my data, may be considered, according to Kelly and Spoor’s (2005) definition, as “both an antecedent and a consequence of [our] group interaction” (p.4). It would seem to be consistent with my findings to state that the respect with which we treated each other was a fundamental ingredient that fed our sense of mutual trust. Perhaps more importantly, as Irma (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04) suggested, without it there would not

have been the strong group cohesion I have described. In other words, as Manstead et al. (1995) propose, the property that “transforms an aggregate of unrelated individuals into a social group” (p.262) would not have developed. This mutual respect in our relationship seems to have been based, in part, on what I am identifying as the shared tacit norms that governed our interactions. That is, what Baron et al. (1992) define as “those behaviours, attitudes, and perceptions that are approved of by the group and expected (and, in fact, often demanded) of its members” (p.11).

Regarding our interrelationship, the most important norm appears to have been that we treated each other as equals (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04, Prelim/Veronica/02/03/05). Given this premise, we respected each others’ ways of thinking (Prelim/Rosaurio/16/04/04). Furthermore, largely on the basis of our observable shared responses while studying further degrees together, as well as engaging in the changes in our workplace, we felt we knew one another well (Ver/Irma/23/02/06). As a result, we were certain that, more often than not, we would have similar ways of thinking about the different issues which arose (CritInc/Carmen/30/08/05), “because I know you, I know that what you are going to think is similar” (Ver/Irma/23/02/06 [translation]). Irma emphasises this as an important aspect of our interrelationship. This, then, appears to support Jarzabkowski’s findings (2002) concerning ‘the social dimensions of teacher collegiality’, that “the building of personal relationships at work is something desirable and beneficial” (p. 16). By means of our growing shared knowledge regarding our commonalities (Donaldson, 2001), we developed a high level of mutual trust that not only strengthened our cohesiveness as a collaborative culture, but also, in part, enabled us to achieve change both in ourselves and the School.

Another shared norm that strongly influenced our interpersonal cohesion was the quality of our communication and co-operation (Baron et al., 1992). That is, we were honest (Prelim/Carlos/12/02/05), open and communicative with each other (CritInc/Carmen/30/08/05, Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03, Prelim/Rosaurio/16/04/04) in our interactions. Nevertheless, although we were communicative, we showed our mutual respect to one another by not attempting to get involved in each others’ private lives, unless clearly invited to do so (Prelim/Rosaurio/16/04/04). Perhaps even more importantly, as is

vital in any successful human relationship, we ‘tolerated’ each other when necessary (Ver/Raphael/02/03/06) as Rosaurio affirmed in the following extract:

We know how to tolerate, we know how to put up with those changes in character, because well, we are not always perfect little angels, are we? But we know how to show respect.

(Prelim/Rosaurio/16/04/04 [translation])

Here Rosaurio is echoing Raphael’s perception that we understood and accepted each other, especially on occasions when, for example, one of us demonstrated a lack of patience or were angry, because, for us, this was another way of showing our respect. This comment, then, appears to extend Irma’s previous comment that we knew one another well (Ver/Irma/23/02/06). As a result, and in a similar way to the teachers in Jarzabkowski’s (2002) study, we “could be more understanding with one another”, which is necessary “for good working relationships to be maintained” (p.16).

Furthermore, although we voiced our ideas and opinions in public (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04), we did not try to impose any individual whims or personal interests, on either the School in general, or on the other members of our group. Instead, as Rosaurio stated:

*...our idea was to share knowledge, have a friendly relationship **without** imposing our will.*

(Prelim/Rosaurio/16/04/04 [bold informant’s emphasis] [translation])

According to my informants (Prelim/Chela/01/05/04, Ver/Irma/23/02/06), this is probably because we shared similar aspirations and values, as well as a vision of improving the quality of our teaching and the School, and so our goals were directed to this end (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04). This, then, appears to support Senge’s (1990) view that the characteristic of shared values and vision is an essential ingredient of a change process because it will “foster genuine commitment and enrolment rather than compliance” (Senge, 1990: 9) that, in turn, will enable more productive results. If, on the contrary, we had tried to impose our ideas and opinions on the others then we would not have had a healthy relationship (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04). As it was, the respect we afforded one another in our day-to-day interactions promoted a sense of well-being. As Chela commented in the following extract, in representation of how we all still feel:

Well I admire them. I feel comfortable with them. I've certainly gotten to know them because these are the people that I spend most of my time with.

(Prelim/Chela/01/05/04)

In this extract, Chela is suggesting that owing to the amount of time we spent together, studying, as well as working on the change projects, we seem to have developed a “longstanding, close relationship” (Hargreaves, 2005: 968). We not only respected and trusted each other, but perhaps more importantly, we felt at ease with each other, given that we could ‘be ourselves’ (Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03) in one another’s presence. In other words, we could rely on our colleagues, as Rosaurio previously implied in a previous extract (p.203), to both accept, and respect, our personal and professional selves. This aspect of the social and emotional dimension of our relationships seems to have been fundamental, as if we had not felt accepted by the ‘significant others’ (Heikkinen, 2003:1) with whom we were working, then we may not have felt fully at ease when engaging in the changes. As it was, this sense of well-being not only helped us to define our personal and professional identities, but it also enabled them to be “socially legitimated” (Coldron & Smith, 1999: 711), given that we felt both accepted, and respected, by the other members of our emerging culture.

2.2.2 Camaraderie

As well as treating each other with respect, another important element that led to the development of our mutual trust was the apparent shared feeling of camaraderie that developed from the support we both received from, and gave to, one another (Prelim/Rosaurio/16/04/04). This then appears to confirm Donaldson’s (2001) perception when considering the conditions that may bond interpersonal relationships that

...at the root of many relationships is the need to share and enjoy time with others, the need to connect and befriend, and the need to seek professional assistance and camaraderie.

(Donaldson, 2001: 62)

Camaraderie is a quality that we all highly valued, and that we recognized as being constant under whatever circumstances throughout our relationship, that is, “in triumphs, in pain and in failure” (Ver/Irma/23/02/06[translation]). This valued aspect of our interrelationships

then would appear to corroborate Jarzabkowski's (2002) view, based on Nias' (1998) study, that

Particularly in times of frustration or despair, teachers need someone to listen and understand. In addition to valuing support in their low times, teachers want the opportunity to share their excitement and successes.
(Jarzabkowski, 2002:5)

Initially, our shared sense of camaraderie seems to have developed from our joint experience of studying together, for example, on the postgraduate TEFL diploma (Prelim/Modesta/12/01/05). It would appear that this was when some of my colleagues first began to grow closer to each other.

Camaraderie. Because for example, from the time of the TEFL diploma, it's as if for me, the bonds with these teachers grew. Before this time, the relationships were rather distant.
(CritInc/Carmen/30/08/05 [translation])

Here Carmen is precisely identifying the turning point in her relationship with my other informants. Prior to their studying together as mentioned in Chapter Four, section 1.4.1, they had not had a close relationship. In contrast, the experience they shared together while studying further degrees began to bind them together. In other words, by means of engaging together in situated learning, that is, by reciprocally building shared experience and knowledge in a shared context of application and use (Lieberman, 2008) it would appear that their sense of community with each other began to develop.

Another example of the above is that our spirit of camaraderie appears to have continued, and grown notably stronger when we went on to study the Master's degree together. Possibly owing to the fact that we had little face-to-face or virtual contact with our lecturers, we depended very much on each other for academic and emotional support and encouragement. We not only supported and motivated one another by studying together and reminding each other of deadlines (CritInc/Chela/10/12/04), but perhaps even more importantly, we also gradually became our own "support community" (CritInc/Carmen/30/08/05), our own "support network" (CritInc/Chela/10/12/04) by giving each other mutual emotional support. As Chela noted:

We sort of kept an eye on each other and when people felt blue or down or depressed or that they couldn't do it, we sort of animated each other. And yeah, I'd say we were our own *support network* at that point.

(CritInc/Chela/10/12/04)

In this extract, Chela is describing the nature of the mutual emotional support which we all made available to each other when needed. We demonstrated that we cared about each others' well-being by encouraging each other when we noticed that one of us was depressed, or lacked confidence in their abilities to succeed. This, then, appears to support Donaldson's (2001) notion, as well as Jarzabkowski's (2002) findings, that "healthy working relationships can be a buffer to...stress" (p.17). This is important, as not only may individual teachers gain the support they need, "but the organisation also receives the benefit of an emotionally healthy staff" (p.17). That is, in our context, we managed not only to cope with, but also to effect change, both in ourselves as professionals, as well as in the School.

Furthermore, during the extended change process, it would appear that we came to depend even more on each other, given that we did not always receive what we perceived as adequate support from the University authorities (Prelim/María/14/07/03, Prelim/Irma/30/03/04). In addition, our sense of camaraderie, the awareness that we understood each other (CritInc/María/03/12/03) and could depend on each for support, often seems to have reinforced and sustained our commitment to the change process. "We supported each other and that helped us to carry on" (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04 [translation]) and achieve our goals. For as María pointed out: "what one person can't do, another person can" (CritInc/María/3/12/03 [translation]). Carlos also added the following comment.

I see that there are people that support me and participate. And I know that we are doing the things well, so I continue. Because I know, I have realized, that this allows you to work in even adverse situations.

(Prelim/Carlos/12/02/05 [translation])

As Carlos mentioned in this extract, the support we received from each other was vital; not only did it give us confidence in what we were doing, but it also motivated us to keep on participating, even when we were confronted with problems. Perhaps even more importantly, we never permitted these problems or the 'adverse situations' that Carlos

refers to, to negatively affect our relationship. Even when there were things we disagreed about, we somehow always found ways to resolve our conflicts in order to prevent discord among us. This was confirmed by Carmen:

In a group, as in any relationship, there are highs and lows but when there have been lows we haven't allowed that that they break up the relationship.

(CritInc/Carmen/30/08/05 [translation])

Here Carmen is not only echoing Carlos' statement, but she is also clearly identifying us as a group. A social group can be defined as a number of individuals who perceive themselves as members of the same category or as having similar social identities. That is, according to Stets and Burke (2000) "being at one with a certain group, being like others in the group, and seeing things from the group's perspective" (p. 226). Furthermore, both Carmen's and Carlos' statements appear to provide a significant insight into small group relationships. That is, that people will often take steps to preserve their interpersonal relationships with others, when they perceive the benefits that may be gained. We not only valued each other's personal and professional integrity, but we had also learned from our mutual engagement in both institutional change and during our continuing studies that we could depend on each other for support.

In sum, it would appear from my findings that part of the reason why we were able to accept and engage in change was because we felt accepted, supported and well-treated by the other people who were participating with us in the changes. This was succinctly summarised by Raphael:

I feel very supported. And I feel like, as we say in Spanish, 'like a fish in a river'.

(Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03)

As a result, we wanted to respond by helping and participating in return. This was mentioned by Modesta.

Well yes, I thought, well, if they treat me well, I'll go along and help them out as much as I can, and that's what happened.

(Prelim/Modesta/12/01/05)

Furthermore, our sense of camaraderie and the support that we received from each other helped form a solid basis on which our relations grew even stronger.

The group of people who I can say, I can honestly say that we have seriously worked together, is *family*. Maybe because like you, people I considered my friends, are the ones I think became involved.

(Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03)

In this extract, Raphael is using the metaphor of a family to express his perception of the closeness of the relationship we built and shared by participating together in the various changes. It could be argued that owing to our sense of insecurity stemming from our lack of professional confidence and esteem before, and at the beginning, of the change process, we all felt ‘vulnerable’ (CritInc/Raphael/27/11/03) and, therefore, needed the help of ‘significant others’, in order ‘to carry on’ (Prelim/Irma/30/03/04 [translation]). In our case, as illustrated above, our ‘significant others’ at this stage in our career, proved to be, above all, one another.

Finally, the camaraderie and support we gave, and received from, each other, not only helped to foster and strengthen our collective cohesion, but also *sustained* our engagement in the change process in general and in the pursuit of our professional growth, in particular. This was confirmed by Irma:

Because *by these same people pulling each other*, we did the Masters, the TEFL diploma and all these types of things, and then the project for the in-house Masters.

(Prelim/Irma/30/03/04)

As Irma stated, one of the reasons we managed to achieve so much was thanks to the kinds of support and encouragement we gave to each other to improve our practices, not only by engaging in the change projects, but also by furthering our professional development (Prelim/Raphael/14/06/03). Rosaurio also corroborated this view in the following extract.

We have achieved change because we have worked together as a team. If we had not worked together as a team nothing would have been done. In

other words, even if we had had enough support [from the University authorities] it would not have been worth anything.

(Prelim/Rosaurio/16/04/04 [my addition to aid understanding])

This extract also contributes yet more evidence to corroborate experts' views that the development of an effective collaborative culture is an indispensable requisite in order to implement and sustain change, as without its presence, little may be accomplished (Hargreaves, 1997b; Peterson & Deal, 1998). Rosaurio, in a similar way to both Irma and Raphael, attributed our having achieved so many changes to the fact that we had accomplished our goals by supporting each other. If we had *not* supported each other in the ways described, she believes that *nothing* would have been achieved, even if we had had adequate material support from the University authorities. In other words, she is highlighting the importance and need for teacher collaboration.

2.2 Collective pride

According to Scheff (1990), pride is one of the 'primary social emotions' because it reflects 'the state of one's bonds to others' (Scheff, 1990: 18). Consistent with this view, our growing sense of collective pride seems to have been another of the most significant contributory ingredients which served not only to motivate and sustain our commitment to the change process, but also to solidify our collective cohesion as a collaborative 'small culture' (Holliday, 1999). In particular, my findings show that this bond, initially stemming from our human need both to identify ourselves, and to be recognised, as professionals in our context (Heikkinen, 2003), began to emerge once we perceived that we were successfully achieving the changes in ourselves, as well as in our institution. Thus, the evidence in this section clearly overlaps with and reinforces what was reported in section 1.1 (Belief in Ourselves as Teachers). However, instead of weakening my analysis, I believe it strengthens it. My findings reveal that our '*pride of achievement*' that included the '*recognition of 'significant' others*' was not only a significant dimension in the change in ourselves as individuals, but also a noteworthy dimension of our collective pride that enhanced the cohesion of our emerging culture.

2.2.1 Pride of Achievement

An issue that emerged iteratively from my findings is that both our individual and collective pride of achievement seems to have been based on what we perceived as the following overlapping triumphs:

- The overcoming of our fears
 - The achievement of recognition from others
 - Our continuing personal and professional growth
-
- **Alleviation of Fears and Uncertainty Associated with Change**

Due to the circumstances previously discussed in Chapter Four, section 1, before the 1990s, it has been made clear that we had felt little personal and professional pride in either our teaching careers or in the School where we worked. This seems to have been partly a result of our lack of self-confidence in our own professional abilities, which, in turn, had led to a feeling of insecurity, as well as a rather low evaluation in our personal construal as professional teachers. This helps in understanding some of my informants negative emotions such as anxiety, apprehension and fear (Prelim/María/14/07/03, CritInc/Raphael/27/11/03) that initially emerged in response to the change process after so many years of *'professional slumber'*.

The first reaction is sort of, 'oh yes that's interesting, that's something I want to do' but then maybe the second reaction is, 'oh my God, but I really don't know very much about that' *it's sort of anxiety about, you know? whether I can handle that or not.*

(Prelim/Isela/05/05/04)

This extract, appears to corroborate Huy's (1999) definition of teachers' receptivity to change, which he explains as including not only a cognitive, but also an emotional dimension. Our immediate reaction was one of willingness to engage in change because it appeared to be interesting. However, this was quickly followed by moments of intense self-doubt and fear, as we felt unsure of whether we could cope with handling all aspects of the changes. Nevertheless, these emotions seem to have been far outweighed by the combination of positive emotions we later experienced, even during the initial stage of the change process. Once we had *'awakened'* to change we welcomed and embraced it, so

much so that the fact that change was actually happening led us to feeling ‘tipsy’ with happiness’ as Isela herself commented.

I: During the nineties you see, the first thing that comes to mind for me, is this idea of what I call in Spanish, *efervescencia*...we were almost like slightly, how do you say that? When you’ve had just one drink, when you start to

R: dizzy?

I: We were all dizzy. That’s the word. We were all sort of happy, you know? Happily living in the clouds and believing, you know? Now we were going to change and everything was going to go fine. It was sort of like a very enthusiastic atmosphere.

(BA90/Isela/05/05/04)

In order to convey how we all felt at the beginning of the change process, Isela employs a common image, that of the effects of alcohol, to describe the sensation. Similar to the effects of drinking alcohol, the belief that finally we were going to be able to change and everything was going to improve at work made us feel happy, animated and enthusiastic. Consequently, we responded eagerly and positively towards change even though we still had to, in some cases, overcome our fears.

Our fears dispelled progressively, once we began to achieve our goals. By means of the changes we implemented, the School became recognised and respected as a *pioneer* of change. This was described by Irma.

We’ve been the *pioneers* of many changes not only inside the School but also within the University where we have set examples that have been adopted institutionally.

(Prelim/Irma/30/03/04 [translation])

By using the word, ‘pioneers’, Irma seems to emphasise, perhaps rather proudly, the fact that we had ventured into what was for us, unknown territory. In addition, we had undoubtedly been the first academic group in our University community to make such changes, and some of them were later adopted by the other University Schools in our institution. In short, we not only managed to overcome our fears of change, but we also emerged as change *leaders*.

- **Recognition by ‘significant others’**

Part of our pride of achievement was also related to the value that we placed on the recognition we received from ‘significant others’, as mentioned in section 1.1.2 (this chapter). As Irma affirmed:

All human beings, we need to be given a pat on the back, to be told that we’re doing well ...that kind of thing gives you strength.

(CritInc/Irma/16/02/05 [translation])

Here, my findings appear to confirm Heikkinen’s (2003) stance that a sign of recognition is an important emotional need for a person’s or a professional’s self-esteem and sense of pride given that as Honneth (1995a & b) affirm it can encourage and sustain a person’s morale. In this extract, Irma seems to be emphasising that what appears to be a simple ‘pat on the back’, a verbal confirmation by a ‘significant other’ that ‘we’re doing well’, is all that is needed to boost our self-confidence and sustain our engagement in what we are doing. It also corroborates Hargreaves’ (2002) view that a sign of recognition “reinforces teachers’ sense of purpose and is a source of positive and energizing emotion for them” (p, 14). In contrast, without recognition from others, people can feel undervalued and upset (Prelim/Isela/05/05/04). However, this was not our case, as, while participating in this professional and institutional change process we earned a certain standing and professional recognition, both within our own context and outside it, as reported in section 1.1.2 (this chapter).

- **Personal and Professional Growth**

Perhaps our most important achievement was our personal and professional growth. During our engagement in the change process we came to feel more confident and so less fearful of change. As María noted:

The pride that you have from having participated, is what I believe drives you to continue working like this.

(Prelim/María/14/07/03)

In other words, owing to our successful experiences in this change process, we realised that the fear and apprehension that we had felt at the beginning, although natural, was largely

unfounded, as we managed to effect substantial and tangible improvements in the School. María used a comparison in the following extract that explained this.

It's only a fear, a fear of crossing the river, but when you cross it, you say, there was nothing to fear, on the contrary, it was for improvement.
(CritInc/ María/03/12/03 [translation])

Here María compares our fear of change to the fear of crossing a river. A river could be interpreted as symbolising the boundary between our isolated existence in our working context and the rest of the TEFL world outside. Thus, crossing it was daunting as we did not know what we would find on the other side. In addition, we were unsure about our ability to cross it at all. However, as María concludes, once we had crossed it, we discovered that there had in fact been nothing to worry about, as our 'crossing the river', among other things, had resulted in personal and professional growth and improvement in the terms and conditions of our own work.

Furthermore, given the recognition and respect that we now received from the 'significant others' in our particular "value community" (Heikkinen, 2003:4), that is, our peers and students, the University authorities and the TEFL community in Mexico, we finally achieved self-respect. Irma mentioned this in the following extract.

I believe that I am stronger, I have grown, I have matured, I have learnt, I have experienced and well I believe that there is no better teaching than the one life gives you. And for me life in this School has been very rich and very very pleasurable. I feel that life has given me a lot . . . And in a way I feel satisfied, I feel honoured because I have the teachers' respect, I have the students' respect and that makes you feel strong. . . . I have the recognition of many people. And that for me is like a hug, an embrace that I receive from all of you.

(CritInc/Irma/16/02/05 [translation])

In this extract, Irma voices something that several of my informants referred to during the interviews. Our collective academic life during the 1990s had been both "rich" and "pleasurable". This then appears to corroborate, to a certain extent, Ashforth and Humphrey's (1995) statement that the

Mutual production of an intrinsically enjoyable activity fosters a shared memory of a rewarding experience, creates and affirms a sense of

“groupness”, and facilitates a richer appreciation of one’s peers as whole *persons* rather than as stereotypical *role occupants*.

(Ashforth & Humphrey 1995: 115 [emphasis in original])

Furthermore, we not only had a feeling of satisfaction, but pride regarding our professional growth and productive performance in our working context during the 1990s. This seems to support Nias’ (1996) view that, owing to our close contact with other people and the fact that our work had involved a significant investment in both our personal and professional practices, the school came to be “a main site for [our] self-esteem and fulfilment” (p. 297). This was especially the case, given that previously we had never even contemplated that these accomplishments such as being awarded further degrees and full-time status as English teachers at the School, were remotely possible. This point was affirmed by María:

They have been beneficial changes for the School and they’ve also been very good for me personally because I have achieved well, all sorts of things that I never thought I would be able to achieve...I never thought when I was studying the BA that I would be able to manage to begin a PhD like the one I’m in now...I never thought when I began to work here that I would achieve the status as a full-time teacher... That was a lot to ask for. So personally, *I feel that I have accomplished a lot.*

(Prelim/María/14/07/03 [translation])

As María summarises in this extract, her perception is that the changes were very positive, not only for the School, but especially for her personally, and, although she does not mention it directly, professionally. She feels she has achieved more than she ever thought possible. She had never entertained the idea that she would be capable of achieving higher degrees. This confirms her prior lack of confidence in her ability. In addition, at the beginning of her career at the School, she had never dreamt that she would achieve a full-time teaching position. Her comment that the latter “was a lot to ask for” apart from illustrating her own lack of self-confidence, also indicates how difficult it was to achieve this coveted position. This accounts for my informants’ pride when they were awarded this.

In conclusion, by engaging in, and achieving change, both within ourselves and within our working context together, we had thrived professionally. We considered that we had not only matured as human beings, but we also felt stronger professionally and personally and honoured at having won the respect and recognition of the ‘significant others’ in our

working life (Honneth, 1995b), from both our students and our peers alike. Consequently, in retrospect, we feel happy with that stage in our working life as it afforded us a strong sense of both personal and professional, collective pride.

2.3 Discussion: ‘Emotional Glue’

As evidenced by the extracts in this section, by means of our mutual engagement throughout the change process, we evolved from what was initially no more than a certain number of isolated teachers, with low self-esteem and fears of interacting into a small and effective collaborative culture. In particular, my findings appear to strongly support Jarzabkowski’s (2002) affirmation that

...successful and comfortable personal relationships are in fact *necessary* for genuine collaboration to take place.

(Jarzabkowski, 2002:16 [emphasis in the original])

This, in turn corroborates, to some extent, Hargreaves’ (1994) assertion that collaborative cultures cannot be coerced, but “emerge primarily from the teachers themselves as a social group” (p.192). In particular, our relationships appear to have been consolidated through the growth of our mutual trust and respect, as well as our collective sense of pride, both of which were fostered and enhanced by our “developing long-standing, close relationships” (Hargreaves, 2005: 968) with one another during this extended change process. My findings, therefore, also appear to corroborate other earlier research that has suggested that “emotional ties” may be perceived of as “a type of glue, which holds groups together” (Barsade & Gibson, 1998: 86).

As a final comment, it would appear that as a consequence of our on-going “group interaction” (Kelly & Spoor, 2005: 4) and cohesiveness, we developed what Putnam (2000) refers to as “social capital” (p. 19). In a similar vein to Coburn and Russell’s (2008) study regarding the effect of change policy on teachers’ social networks, my findings contribute to the scarce evidence available (Adler & Kwon, 2002) that educational change may foster the creation of social capital based on the emergent nature of teachers’ “emotional ties” (Barsade & Gibson, 1998: 86) and the “depth of [their] interaction” (Coburn & Russell, 2008: 204). By means of our mutual “stock of active connections...the trust, mutual

understanding, and shared values and behaviours” (Cohen & Prusak, 2001:4) that glued us together, we achieved outcomes that we all valued (Coleman, 1990; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Frank et al., 2004). In other words, the nature of our interrelationship enabled both the transformation of our personal construal of our professional identity; and, by means of all the changes, the improvement of our School. This seems to confirm, what has been previously referred to in the sociological literature regarding social capital (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995) that important benefits may be achieved, not only for individuals, but also for organizations, by developing trusting relationships (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Summary

In this, the second of two chapters devoted to the presentation of the main categories that emerged in response to my research sub-questions: *How did the change process affect us as individuals?* and *What was the nature of our relationship with each other during the change process?* I first explored how the change process affected us as individuals. This included the changes in our beliefs, attitude and behaviour. I then continued by examining what appears to have fostered, shaped and sustained ‘the affective ties’ that bound us together and led to our emergence as a small collaborative and collegial culture engaged in change. That is, our growing sense of mutual trust and respect, as well as our sense of collective pride that I characterised as ‘*emotional glue*’. In the following chapter, I will draw together and discuss my key findings, which were based on the interpretation of the data generated by the investigation and analysis of the possible answers to these questions.

Chapter Six

The Complex Nature of Educational Change: Discussion

The main aim of this inquiry has been to explore certain aspects of the nature of educational change, specifically by examining a small number of teachers' responses to change in the School of Languages at Veracruz University, Mexico, from 1989 – 2003. In particular, I wanted to discover the answer to this question: *How did a particular group of teachers within my higher education context respond to change?* With regard to the exploration of the responses to the four sub-questions that this question generated, in Chapter Four I first reported my exploration of the conditions that had resulted in the teachers' '*professional slumber*' before the 1990s. In the second section, I identified the issues that I had discovered to be instrumental and influential in '*awakening*' these teachers and myself to become engaged in both the changes at the School and in our own professional development. In Chapter Five, I continued by describing and evidencing the deeper changes that we had experienced in ourselves as a result of our participation in the change process in our context, namely, the change in the personal construal of our professional identities. I then examined the changing nature of our mutual relationships grounded in the emergent '*emotional glue*' that came to bond us together and led us to collaborate with each other and emerge as a small culture (Holliday, 1999) during the process of the changes. In this chapter of my inquiry, I will now draw together the key findings from the data that the investigation of these questions generated.

Table 8 shows my main research question together with the four research sub-questions, as well as the categories, subcategories and themes that emerged from the interpretation of my data. From this table it can be seen that the main themes that emerged in response to my questions were the following:

- Teachers' receptivity to change;
- The transformation of teachers' personal construal of their professional identities;
- Emotional understanding;
- The emergence of teachers' cultures/communities.

Main research question	Research sub-questions	Main categories		Sub-categories	Themes
How did a particular group of teachers within a higher educational context respond to change?	What was the nature of their professional lives prior to their engagement in the change process?	'Professional slumber'		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our individual biography; • The influence of our working context; • Our conceptions of ourselves as teachers; • The influence of our membership in a particular teaching culture. 	Teachers' personal construal of their professional identity (Pre-1990s)
	What were the issues involved in triggering and sustaining their response to change?	T H E A W A K E N I N G	Basic Conditions and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emergence of an effective change leader 	Teachers' receptivity to change
			Opportunities and Support for Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial internal funding • Securing external funding 	
			A Supportive School Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our own positive attitude to change • Our commitment 	
	How did the change process affect these teachers as individuals?	Changes in professional self		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in ourselves as teachers • Change in our attitudes • Changes in our behaviour 	Change in teachers' personal construal of their professional identities
	What was the nature of these teachers' relationship with each other during the change process?	'Emotional glue'		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Growing Sense of Mutual Trust and Respect • Collective pride 	Emotional understanding and the emergence of a small collaborative culture

Table 8: Summary of research questions, categories and emergent themes

However, it is my contention that these themes cannot be fully comprehended by viewing them as discrete and independent, but rather by understanding the dynamic and influential interrelationship among them, as well as with a number of other elements within the context which, in their entirety, reflect a final overarching theme - the complexity of educational change. In order to explore this premise, in this chapter, I will show how the findings of my inquiry extend existing knowledge about the nature of educational change,

given that they are an illustration grounded in empirical data, of the sort of process Hoban (2002) refers to regarding the complexity of educational change.

A crucial issue at the centre of complexity theory and, in this case, at the centre of my understanding of the nature of educational change, is the examination of the relationships among the constituents of the social system in a particular context. This is because *people* are at the very heart of change. Thus, in the following section, I will review the constituents of the social system of my inquiry and summarise the “new properties and behaviours” (Mason, 2008: 36) that emerged due to the interactions and interrelationships among these constituents.

1. The Complexity of Change at the School of Languages

In order to discuss the complex nature of educational change within this research context, I will present the main ‘change frames’ (Hargreaves et al. 1997; Fink, 2000; Moore & Shaw, 2000; Retallick & Fink, 2000) as referred to in Chapter Three, section 3.6 that represent the constituents of the social system within my inquiry. To this end, I will adopt Hoban’s (2002) metaphor of a spider web that he employs to demonstrate the interconnectivity of these ‘change frames’ in the complex system of educational change. The ‘change frames’ that Hoban (2002: 37) includes in his web to demonstrate ‘educational change as a complex system’, in no specific order, are the following:

- **politics:** both macro (country and state) and micro (within the school);
- **teacher learning:** “any infrastructure provided to support teachers to cope with new ideas and the process of educational change” (Hoban, 2002: 36);
- **teachers’ lives and their work:** both teachers’ ages and the number of years they have been teaching can have an impact on their receptivity to change given that over the years teachers can become disillusioned with, or tired of, teaching;
- **leadership:** “how principals can promote a shared vision for change as well as instigating and supporting the process” (Hoban, 2002: 35);
- **context:** all the elements that are found in a school, for example, people, organisations, subjects and departments as well as its lay out and location;
- **culture:** the different cultures and/or sub-cultures teachers may belong to within a school given that these will have an effect upon teachers’ responses to change initiatives;
- **structure:** the ramifications of change in the general organisation of a school

(Adapted from Hoban, 2002)

According to Hoban (2002), this metaphor of a spider web

...is consistent with complexity theory, because it acknowledges the connectedness and dynamic nature that can self-organize to a state of equilibrium.

(Hoban, 2002: 38)

In my view, this is a powerful metaphor, as a spider's web is an intricate network of numerous fine lines that interconnect in order to achieve a purpose. Separately these lines are fragile, but together they are strong, thus, the spider's web's efficacy can be compromised if any of these lines are damaged or broken. Similarly,

...educational change is dependent on the interrelationships among the elements...because these interrelationships may enhance each other to support change or undermine each other to block change.

(Hoban, 2002: 38)

Adapting the representation proposed by Hoban (2002: 37), Figure 15 highlights the particular main 'change frames' of the spider web that I discovered during my inquiry. Similar to the ones that Hoban (2002) proposes, these particular 'change frames' in this specific research context, did not act individually, but collectively, resulting in a dynamic self-adjustment "to a new order or balance" (Hoban, 2002: 36) in response to change. These include the following, in no specific order:

- **macro-context** (National politics)
- **micro-context** (School of Languages)
- **leadership**
- **teachers' receptivity to change**
- **teachers' personal construal of their professional identity**
- **emotional understanding**
- **teachers' cultures/community,**

It will be noted that the first three are similar to those mentioned by Hoban (2002), while the last four items are different, and will be discussed in greater depth given that they were the main themes that emerged from my own data. I did not find direct evidence of every

item mentioned by Hoban in my context of study. In addition, the complexity represented by the elements of my spider web includes overlap and interaction which I will discuss during the examination of the change frames that follows. This is due to the fact that within each larger ‘change frame’ represented in Fig. 15, yet another spider web of elements that dynamically interacted both with each other within each ‘change frame’, as well as with the larger ‘change frames’ may be drawn.

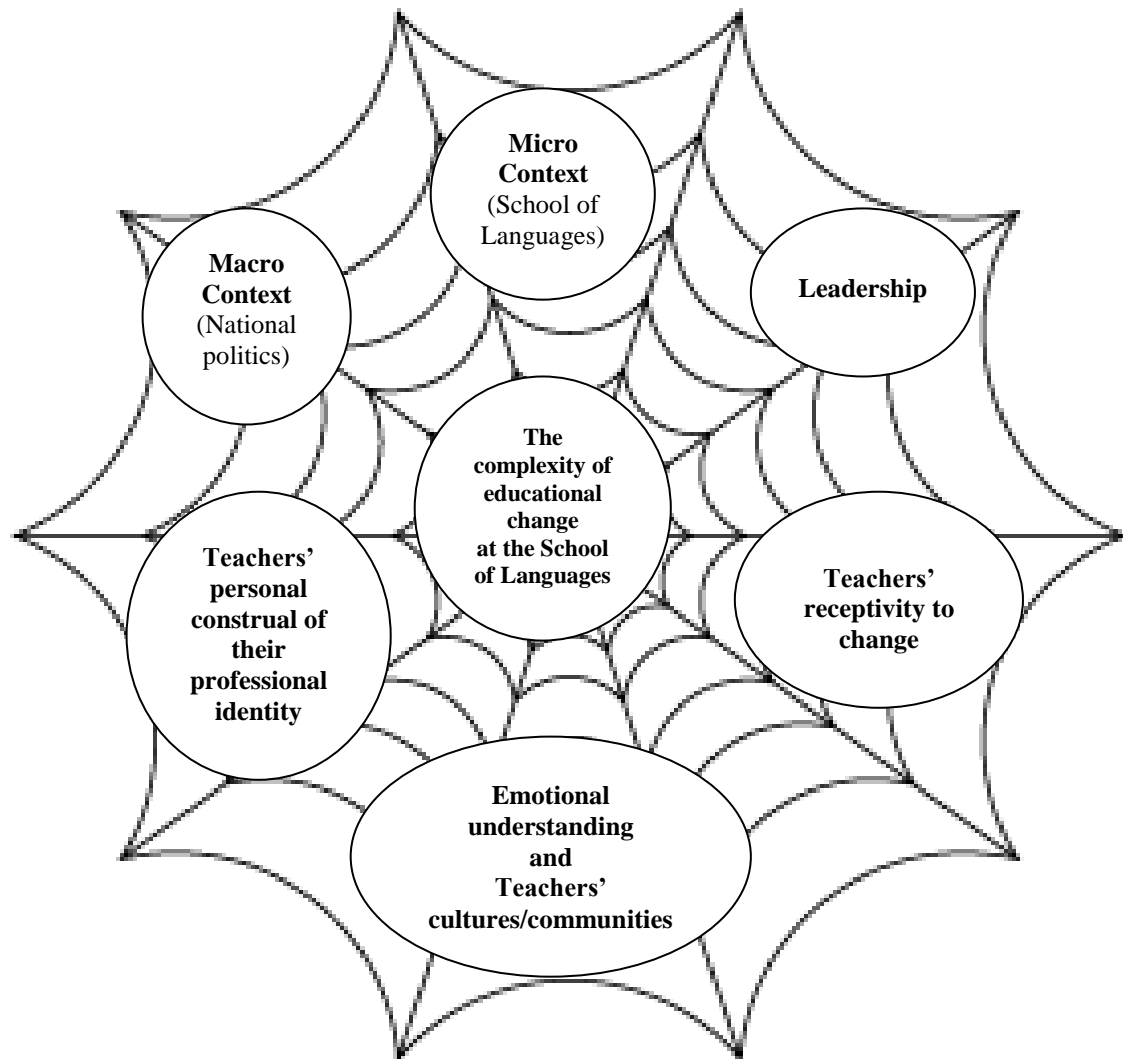


Fig. 15: A representation of the complexity of educational change at the School of Languages (after Hoban 2002)

2.1 Macro-Context (National politics)

Similar to Hoban’s (2002) proposal, one of the multiple factors that reinforced and enabled the change process at the School of Languages was the change in the contextual factors

within the wider national political setting. At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, as explained in Chapter One, section 1.2.3, in order to meet growing international demands for accessibility, efficiency and quality of education created by globalisation, the Mexican government began to focus on the need for programme evaluation and renewal, as well as the professionalisation of academic staff in order to improve higher education. As a result universities were requested to engage in curriculum reform in order to modernise and improve the quality of higher education and teachers were encouraged to engage in professional development. It was hoped that by improving the quality of its education it would be able to play a more effective role in the economic development of the country (Rodríguez-Gómez & Casanova-Cardiel, 2005).

The events and processes in this change frame, as reported in Chapter One, section 1, were important as without some kind of external stimulus and/or pressure, change in Higher Education would have been unlikely. As it was, these changes dynamically interacted with, and reinforced those in the other change frames identified in Figure 15. For instance, the funding that was set up to encourage teachers to participate in institutional change, as well as invest in their own professionalization enabled us to strengthen the personal construal of our individual professional identity by achieving higher degrees thereby influencing our receptivity to change.

More importantly, however, the main point that needs to be emphasised here, as mentioned in Chapter One, section 2.4, is that the change conditions, as well as certain of the contextual features in this national context during this time were rather unique. In contrast to other change contexts elsewhere, change was not obligatory. Some universities responded to the call for reform while others did not. Furthermore, in this particular research context, no top-down managerial model for reform was imposed. No assigned steering or management group was set up to control, guide or monitor the changes in the university curricula. Thus, unlike other teachers reported in the change literature, we had the freedom to decide *what* changes we would make, as well as *how* and *when* we would make them. Uncharacteristically, no official dead-lines were imposed on us even when we received outside funding from other institutions such as the British Council who instead of trying to control, actually facilitated, the change process. As a result, this led to the

emergence of “new properties and behaviours” (Mason, 2008: 36) in our culture. Instead of being a culture of teacher isolation and individualism, we emerged as a small collaborate culture. In addition, we developed a shared sense of empowerment and responsibility, as well as a sense of ownership of the changes which, in turn, greatly motivated and sustained our positive response to change. Thus, it may be argued that without these elements that dynamically interacted with the other elements in the other ‘change frames’ the changes in both our institution and in ourselves may not have occurred.

2.2 Micro-Context (The School of Languages)

As reported in Chapter Four, section 2.3.1, the political changes in the macro-context dynamically interacted with our unique set of circumstances in this particular educational setting. These included our growing discontent with our own teaching and the lack of resources available for our development. These were two of the multiple causes that acted in concert with the other change frames to influence the change process in both the institution, and in ourselves. Not only did they influence our receptivity towards change, but they were also two of the main motivating factors that encouraged us to study for higher degrees once there was the opportunity to do so, thanks to the funding that was made available in the macro-context. This, in turn, also had an impact on the personal construal of our individual professional identities. In addition, as a result of the local political unrest, as mentioned in Chapter One, section 2.3 that culminated in the change in administration of the School, a new Dean, whose style of leadership was to dynamically interact with the other change frames, was appointed.

2.3 Leadership

As both Hoban (2002) and others (e.g. Eaker & Gonzalez, 2006; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Stoll et al. 2006; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006; Huffman et al., 2007; Printy, 2008) have argued, strong, effective, supportive and shared leadership is one of the fundamental required characteristics for educational change. In the research context of this inquiry, as mentioned in Chapter Four, section 2.1, before the 1990s, the School of Languages appears to have lacked strong leadership in the sense that the long-standing Dean seems to have been more interested in maintaining the status quo than in change. However, his attitude, in hindsight, was probably influenced by the different

elements that dynamically interacted with his position at that time. In contrast, the presence of the new Dean's style of leadership represented a surge in energy that dynamically interacted with the other change frames identified in Figure 15 and triggered the emergence of "new properties and behaviours" (Mason, 2008: 36) in this complex educational system. These included the changes in the institution and in us, the teachers, thereby demonstrating the influence, as well as confirming the vital role that a change leader may play in a change process.

Regarding the role the Dean played, although she had had no previous formal training to prepare her for this position, by her actions she proved herself to have the characteristics that Fullan (2002) lists in his definition of a "Cultural Change Principal" (p.17).

Cultural Change Principals display palpable energy, enthusiasm, and hope. In addition, five essential components characterize leaders in the knowledge society: moral purpose, an understanding of the change process, the ability to improve relationships, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making.

(Fullan, 2002:17)

The following is a discussion of each of these characteristics that interacted and influenced Aide's emergence as an effective change leader in this context.

2.3.1 Palpable Energy, Enthusiasm, and Hope

Aide's "energy, enthusiasm, and hope" (Fullan, 2002:17) were evident throughout the change process. Not only did she tirelessly look for ways to effect the changes, but she also encouraged our participation through her constant eagerness and optimism. Her attitude was grounded in her desire for us all to gain respect for our professional identities as language teachers, in addition to her belief that the changes were worth achieving and, more importantly, that they could be achieved.

2.3.2 Moral Purpose

Moreover, part of her effectiveness as a leader was due to the strong sense of moral purpose that she openly expressed and demonstrated by her actions. According to Fullan (2002) "Moral purpose is social responsibility to others and the environment" (p.17); in

addition, it “means acting with the intention of making a positive difference” (2001:3) in both students’ and teachers’ lives. For example, in the knowledge that she had taken on a huge responsibility in accepting to be Dean she showed unfailing interest, both in improving the School and especially in our professional development as teachers. For instance, on various occasions, she sought the necessary help and funding from different institutions in order to facilitate our engagement in further studies.

2.3.3 Understanding, Coherence, Knowledge Creation and Sharing

It would also appear that Aide had a certain, perhaps intuitive, understanding of the change process. Not only did she know about the call for reform in both the macro and micro-contexts, but unlike many of the principals reported in the change literature, she was also aware that she could not bring about change by imposing it top-down. For change to take place at the School, the teachers had to play an active role in the process.

In order to convince us that we should participate, she involved us in the change process from the beginning. She achieved this by employing the following strategies as reported in Chapter Four, section 2.1.1.

- The organization of a School forum where both teachers and students could air their views about the present curriculum and ideas for the future;
- The use of credible well thought out arguments that anticipated the teachers’ possible questions and doubts;
- The identification of teachers who could play a strong role in the implementation of change.

(FP/Aide/01/04/04[translation])

These strategies were effective because had the Dean tried to impose change without taking so much into account the people who were to implement it, then the results would probably have been very different. However, by listening to our views and ideas, she not only focused our attention on the changes that were needed, but she also gained a broader perspective of what was going to be required in order to effect change. In addition, aware that people often respond to change negatively because of fear of the unknown, she first thought of ways she could allay our doubts and possible fears, as well as present a positive picture of change to us. By means of explaining and providing strong arguments instead of

obliging or coercing (Kennedy, 1999: vii), she managed to create an open and receptive environment for change and persuade us to embrace the change process. Moreover, by identifying teachers who could play a strong role in change she arguably triggered the change in our interrelationships. By working and studying together, in other words, spending considerable amounts of time together, talking to each other, getting to 'know' each others' attitudes, feelings, perceptions, values and beliefs, and realising that we had so much in common, we developed a stronger personal and professional relationship.

2.3.4 The Ability to Improve Relationships

As Aide herself acknowledged, one of

...the most difficult part of the change process was 'connecting' the School of Languages - the inside - with the University authorities and external institutions.

(Prelim/Aide/23/04/04)

However, it was here that she demonstrated another aspect of her strength as a leader. Aide built relationships both between the School and outside institutions and within the School itself. By means of the relationships she forged with both foreign and national institutions, she helped resolve several of the problems we had been experiencing in our working context before the 1990s, mentioned in Chapter Four, section 1. Thus, not only did the resources for our development increase, but our morale also improved exponentially, due to our having successfully completed specialized and postgraduate courses that strengthened the personal construal of our professional identities. These were influential activities in arousing us from our '*professional slumber*'. Therefore, this seems to corroborate Fullan's (2002) view that in order "to mobilize teachers, we must improve teachers' working conditions and morale" (p.17). Furthermore, by singling out my colleagues and I to work together on the initial changes, she arguably triggered the beginning of our relationship with each other. This was a vital factor given that as Fullan (2002) asserts "Well-established relationships are the resource that keeps on giving" (p. 18). We were no longer a number of isolated teachers working alone in our classrooms. Instead, we were beginning to work and study together in order to sustain positive change in both the institution and in ourselves. In fact, in contrast to other teachers in the School, we were always the ones who readily engaged in the change projects.

2.3.5 Effectiveness in Creating a Culture of Sustained Change

Finally, another important characteristic of Aide's strength as a change leader was her "effectiveness in creating a culture of sustained change" (Fullan, 2002: 20). She did not step down from her office until she was certain that there were teachers who, because of their professional development, could successfully replace her as future change leaders. By constantly being involved in change and further studies, we became capable of leading change ourselves. This was manifested by the leadership roles we each played as required over a range of different change projects. Consequently, when Aide stepped down as Dean, she was succeeded first by Irma (1995-9), and then by Raphael (1999-2003); both of these new Deans contributed by sustaining the change process. In addition, we all continued to play prominent roles in the subsequent change projects, such as working together on the design and implementation of new curricula. Furthermore, we continued to take advantage of the further opportunities for professional development. My findings therefore, appear to contribute empirical data that supports Fullan's (2005) following definition of an effective principal.

The main mark of an effective principal is not just his or her impact on the bottom line of student achievement, but also on how many leaders he or she leaves behind who can go even further.

(Fullan, 2005:31)

In conclusion, the continuing interaction of the various characteristics described above led to Aide's emergence as an effective change leader. Furthermore, Aide's role as a change leader was yet another of the many factors that dynamically interacted with the other change frames that together led to the emergence of change in this context. For example, her role was influenced by the changes in both the macro and micro-contexts. In addition, not only did she influence our receptivity to change and trigger a new stage in our relationships, but she was also instrumental in fostering our professionalisation and thus in the transformation of the personal construal of our professional identities as teachers.

2.4 Teachers' Receptivity to Change

A fundamental 'change frame', different to the ones that Hoban (2002) proposes that I am identifying as part of the complexity of the process of educational change, was our receptivity to change. This was an overarching theme that emerged from the exploration

and reflexive interpretation of the categories that led to our ‘*awakening*’ from ‘*professional slumber*’ to become engaged in change as reported in Chapter 4, section 2. Here I am understanding receptivity to mean the:

...ability to receive ideas, impressions and suggestions and a wish to do that. Ability to receive is based on physical and mental factors, or competence, whereas a wish to adopt ideas derives from motivation and circumstances. When talking about receptivity to innovations, we have in mind not bare openness to every innovation, but an inclination to the reasonable and rational ones.

(Zinkeviciene, 2003: n.p.)

As highlighted in Chapter Two, section 2, the majority of studies focused on teachers’ receptivity to change *per se* to date appear to have been quantative studies, based very much on a modified version of Waugh and Punch’s (1985, 1987) model of teacher receptivity to a system-wide change. However, although valuable in themselves, these studies do not seem to go into any detail about whether or not at the same time as accepting institutional change, teachers are also willing to embrace possible corresponding changes in their professional identities (van Veen et al., 2001).

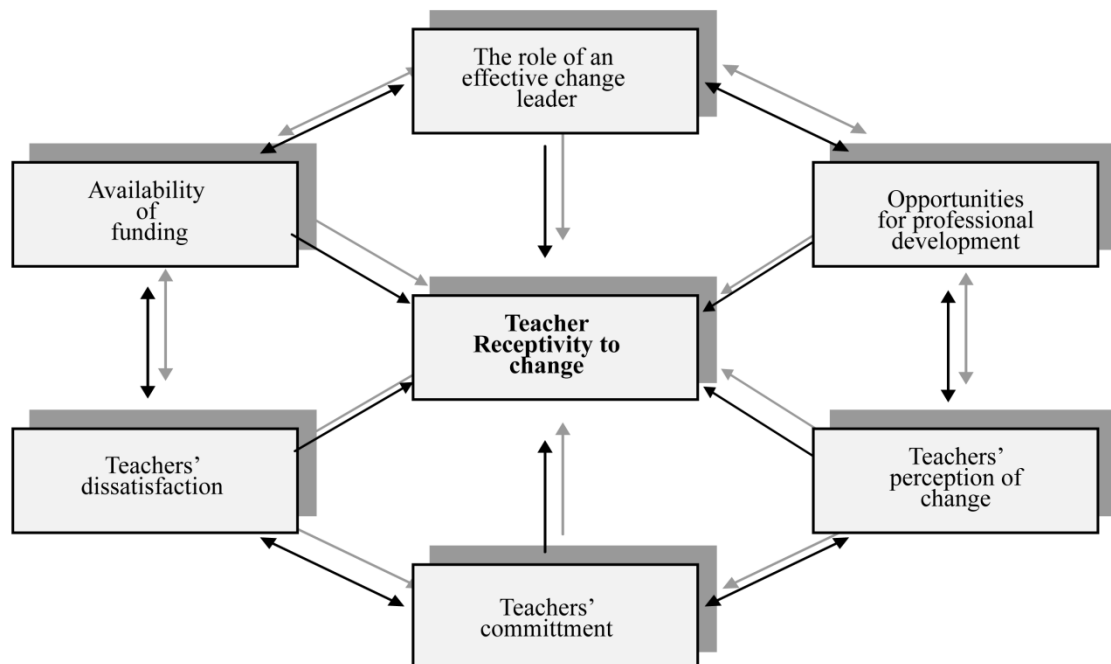


Fig. 16: Mediating factors that dynamically interacted and led to our receptivity to change

In contrast, my inquiry, qualitative in nature, contributes new knowledge in this respect. Within this ‘change frame’ in my suggested spider web (Fig. 15), I discovered yet another complex ‘spider web’ of six interacting factors (Fig. 16), three organisational and three personal, that dynamically interacted and reinforced our receptivity to change not only in the institution, but also to welcome changes in our professional identity as teachers.

2.4.1 The Role of an Effective Change Leader

One of the main organisational factors that influenced our receptivity of change was the appearance of an effective change leader, as reported in Chapter Four, section 2.1. In hindsight, apart from displaying the characteristics of a “Cultural Change Principal” (Fullan 2002:17), as mentioned in the previous ‘change frame’ (2.3 Leadership), she also seemed instinctively to know about and put into practice, to some degree, five of the six interacting secrets that Fullan (2008) proposed should be kept in mind and internalised during change processes. The secrets that Fullan (2008) believes should be “pursue[d] in concert” (p. 121), are as follows:

Secret One: Love your employees

Change that only focuses on potential results without taking into consideration the people who are to implement the change will be difficult to sustain. More will be achieved by “enabling employees to learn continuously and to find meaning in their work and in their relationship to co-workers and to the company as a whole” (Fullan, 2008: 12).

Secret Two: Connect peers with a purpose

One of the challenges of a change process is how to achieve the necessary cohesion and focus among co-workers as well as with their institution. Change leaders need to “provide good direction while pursuing its [change] implementation through purposeful peer interaction and learning in relation to results” (Fullan, 2008: 12).

Secret Three: Capacity building prevails

Part of loving employees is by identifying their potential and providing the necessary conditions for their continuous development. Capacity building includes:

- the development of knowledge and skills;
- the intelligent use of resources (ideas, expertise and money);
- “...putting in the energy to get important things done *collectively* and *continuously* (ever learning)” (Fullan, 2008: 57).

Secret Four: Learning is the work

Learning in workshops and on short courses is useful but it needs to match learning in the working context otherwise there will be no impact. According to Fullan, “The secret behind “learning is the work” lies in our integration of the precision needed for consistent performance (using what we already know) with the new learning required for continuous improvement” (2008:76).

Secret Five: Transparency rules

By ‘transparency’, Fullan is referring to the “...clear and continuous display of results, and clear and continuous access to practice (what is being done to get the results)” (2008: 14). It is only by this secret acting in concert with the other secrets that improvement is possible.

Secret Six: Systems learn

As a result of the interaction among the prior five secrets, both knowledge and commitment are developed, thus enabling a system to learn from itself.

Aide, through her actions, improved both our working context and our morale (Secret One). For example, realising that we needed to become involved in professional development in order to be able to effect change, she looked for, and acquired, the means by which we could further our studies. As a result, we seemed to have found:

...meaning, increased skill development and personal satisfaction in making contributions that *simultaneously* fulfil[ed] [our] own goals and the goals of the organization.

(Fullan, 2008:25, italics in the original)

Not only did we pioneer changes in our context, but the personal construal of our professional identities was also transformed - both of which gave us great satisfaction. In addition, by obtaining the necessary conditions (Secret Three) for our professional development within our working context at the same time as we were designing and implementing the changes, Aide arguably enabled the emergence of “cultures of learning every day that [we were] on the job” (Fullan, 2008: 89 [my emphasis]). This was vital, as learning and working at the same time, in the same context, leads to more productive results than the learning that takes place in another setting outside the workplace (Senge, 1990; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Fullan (2008) refers to this type of learning as Secret Four.

If people are not learning in the specific context in which the work is being done, they are inevitably learning superficially. Deep learning that is embedded in the culture of the workplace is the essence of Secret Four.

(Fullan, 2008: 89)

In fact, it is my belief that by her action of singling us out (Secret Three) as teachers who could play a strong role in the change process, she triggered our emergence as a small collaborative culture. That is, a culture populated by peers who were connected to a

purpose (Secret Two), to improve both the School and themselves - ‘prosocial’ peers who were “not passive do-gooders”, but who were “committed” (CritInc/Chela/10/12/04) “to getting important things done” (Fullan, 2008: 52). Thus, when Aide finally resigned from her position as Dean, she did so in the knowledge that she had cultivated teachers who had the potential of being future leaders who would enhance “the continuity and good direction” (Fullan, 2008: 111) of the School (Secret Six).

2.4.2 Availability of Funding and Opportunities for Professional Development

The other two organisational factors that promoted our receptivity to change were the funding to improve our context and the opportunities for professional development that became available during the 1990s, in the macro-context (Change Frame 2.1). Before this time, reform in this university, as in many other universities in the country, had been greatly stunted by a lack of government funding (Kent, 1998). Owing to the call for modernization in the macro-context, this situation gradually began to change during the 1990s. However, in order to obtain this funding, each university had to first gain approval for their project proposals, as well as find other ways to increase their income on their own, for example, by increasing student fees and by entering into contracts with other institutions (Kent, 1998). Consequently, the School of Languages first increased income on its own by means of the hard work and altruistic actions of a number of teachers. For example, apart from some of my informants working for free during the summer holidays, teachers also donated the money that had been set aside for their yearly celebrations. Aide gave an example of this in the following extract.

I remember that we had a junta académica [general School meeting] and we had money for the teachers’ day dinner or Christmas dinner and we decided instead to spend this money on buying books.

(Prelim/Aide/23/04/04[translation])

However, the most significant aid and support which helped to sustain the change process was provided by outside institutions. In particular, The British Council was highly instrumental in improving the conditions in our context and providing opportunities, as well as acquiring financial support for our professional development. Furthermore, their interest in the School was influential in persuading the University authorities also to contribute to the funding and provide us with incentives, such as partial leaves of absence from our

classes, as well as grants for the continuation of our professional development, as reported in detail in Chapter 4, section 2.2.2. In short, funding and opportunities for professional development were indispensable in order to effect and sustain the change process, both in our context, and in ourselves as teachers, as without them little would have been accomplished.

Funding and the professional development of teachers are two organisational conditions that have been identified in the literature as necessary requirements for change. However, what was rather unusual in this context, as mentioned in 2.1 (Macro-context), is that although we received aid, no dead-lines were imposed on us, nor did the British Council or the University insist in being involved in the decision-making process. These are significant issues, as if we had felt like pawns in imposed top-down change, then possibly we would not have engaged in change so willingly. Furthermore, we would not have developed a sense of empowerment and responsibility for the changes that greatly motivated us to maintain our commitment to the change process.

2.4.3 Teachers' Dissatisfaction with the Prevailing Status Quo

One of the personal factors that influenced our receptivity to change was our dissatisfaction with the prevailing status quo. According to a rather deficit view of change (e.g. Kelly, 1980; Schein, 1995), in order for people to be willing or to have the wish to become involved in change, they must first experience some form of dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs. This dissatisfaction is related to the lack of fulfilment of their hopes, desires or expectations in their context. This was certainly the case in our workplace, as our engagement in the change process was initially motivated by our underlying dissatisfaction with the prevailing *status quo* that led us to believe that change was necessary. As Nawawi et al. (2005) note, the dissatisfaction that we felt may be defined in the following terms

...emotional discomfort that results from perceiving a current situation as problematic, inefficient or ineffective. It is an emotion that calls for a need of improvement.

(Nawawi et al., 2005: 89)

Our “emotional discomfort” that “call[ed] for a need of improvement” (Nawawi et al., 2005: 89) was a result of our lack of confidence in our teaching, further aggravated by the

lack of resources in our context. This seriously restricted any possibility of our informal or formal professional development, as pointed out in Chapter Four, section 1.2. For example, even though many of us sincerely wanted to improve our teaching skills and develop the programmes offered by the School, we had limited means and support, as well as little incentive to do so. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1980s we had all reached the conclusion that something had to be done. Thanks to this outcome, we were receptive to the changes that began to be introduced at the beginning of the 1990s.

2.4.4 Teachers' Perception of Change

Another personal factor which influenced our receptive attitude to change was our positive perception of change during the initiation and implementation stages of the change process. Summarising my findings, this positive perception seems to have been based on four of the five main criteria that Rogers (1995) defines as (1) the relative advantage, (2) compatibility, (3) complexity and (4) triability, and (5) observability" (in Zinkeviciene & Janiunaite, 2006: 75) of change. We were aware of the *relative advantage of change*. Given that we recognised the flaws in the BA curriculum which had not been changed or updated since its inception in 1976, we were receptive to the idea of designing a new and improved course. Furthermore, we considered the idea of creating something new and different to be exciting, enjoyable and interesting. The idea of change was also *compatible* or *consistent* with our needs. We realised that we needed to improve our teaching as our classes were becoming stale, boring and probably ineffective. In addition, we perceived that by engaging in change initiatives and further studies we would achieve access to opportunities to grow professionally. Furthermore, to some extent, we understood intuitively the *complexity* of the change process. We realised that in order to make changes in our teaching, as well as to effect the change initiatives, we would have to continue our studies at the same time as the changes were happening; otherwise, we would not have the necessary knowledge or skills to either initiate or implement the changes.

Our positive attitude to change was further sustained during the course of the change process through our perceiving of the *observable* impact which change had on both our institution and on ourselves as professionals. Apart from the improvement in the resources for our professional development, our School became recognized and respected, both

within our university context, and among other institutions elsewhere in the country. Furthermore, the personal construal of our professional identities was strengthened and so transformed. From being a number of teachers insecure about our abilities, we now became more confident as we perceived that we were capable of designing and implementing change. In addition, our interest in change was further energized by our growing awareness that the world of education was continually changing. Thus, as reported in Chapter Five, section 1.2, we not only wanted to keep up with the changes, but we also wanted to stay ahead of them in order to avoid returning to the academic and professional backwater or '*slumber*' of the pre-1990s period.

2.4.5 Teachers' Commitment

My findings in Chapter Five, section 2.1.1 also revealed that another indispensable personal factor was our sense of personal and professional commitment that motivated our receptivity to change, and fired our subsequent willing engagement in the change process. Convinced that the changes would bring positive outcomes and working with, and supported by people who shared the same belief in and desire for change, our commitment remained strong even when the changes appeared to be difficult to achieve. Our shared commitment was grounded in a concern for the educational welfare of our students, as well as a growing sense of indebtedness to both the School and the University.

Firstly, our commitment was based on our shared sense of moral purpose, in that our students' educational welfare was our agreed main priority. This was important as, although it is expected of a teacher, as Talbert and McLaughlin (1996) argue it "cannot be taken for granted" (p.130). In our case, the majority of the teachers, having themselves studied their BA at the School, were aware of the drawbacks of the curriculum and wanted to make improvements for the good of their own students. This subsequently necessitated a commitment to the development of our professional knowledge base, by studying for higher degrees.

Secondly, a strong motivating force that fuelled our commitment during the change process was our growing sense of indebtedness to both the School and the University. Some of the teachers felt indebted to the School that had provided them with an education, a career and

an income. This sense of indebtedness grew even stronger when we were given opportunities and funding for further studies while working at the School. We also felt indebted to the School and University for our employment, especially as the School not only gave us a living, but the reputation it had, by association, influenced our status and standing as professionals both locally and nationally. In short, the School was an important part of our lives that we depended upon; consequently, we felt committed and obliged to improve it.

In sum, our receptivity to change seems to corroborate Huy's (1999) argument that teacher receptivity is of crucial importance in order for change to occur. Furthermore, it would appear, at least to a certain extent, to show that the randomness and unpredictability of the complexity of change was reduced owing to the people we were, in the setting we were in. Three organizational factors in this particular setting and three personal factors of the teachers involved interacted and were simultaneously reinforced by the influential interaction of the other change frames that dynamically interacted with this change frame and led to our heightened receptivity to change. The three organizational factors that influenced our receptivity were: *the appearance of an effective change leader* and the *funding*, as well as *opportunities for our professional development*. In addition, our receptivity was also intrinsically motivated by three personal factors: our *dissatisfaction with the prevailing status quo* before the 1990s, our *positive perception of change*, and our *commitment to our students and the School* supported by other teachers with whom we shared much in common.

2.5 Teachers' Professional Identity

Another integral 'change frame' in the complexity of educational change at the School of Languages that emerged from my findings reported in Chapter Five, section 1.1 was the transformation in our own, and others' perceptions regarding our professional identities as teachers. One of the issues that most stands out from the examination of the data explored is the manner in which this transformation was grounded in an increased sense of security and empowerment in our professional practices that simultaneously fostered and sustained our motivation to engage in the change process during the 1990s. This sense of empowerment consisted of the following dimensions that have also recurred in other

research focused on defining teacher empowerment (e.g. Short, 1994; Maeroff, 1988a, b; Boglera & Somech, 2004):

- Increased knowledge and professional growth owing to our participation in further studies that not only improved our sense of self-efficacy, but also our capacity to handle change,
- Improved status and standing owing to the participation in institutional change and professional development that led to the reification of our identity as professionals both by ourselves and by relevant others within, and outside, our immediate context,
- Access to the decision-making process that had an impact on the changes - in particular, those of curriculum development which afforded us with a feeling of ownership regarding these changes.

For the discussion of the nature of this ‘change frame’, therefore, I am adopting the view that a teacher’s personal construal of her or his professional identity is not only defined by the roles and functions teachers are expected to play and perform, but also as Beijaard et al. (2004) state, by the importance the teacher assigns to a number of factors during his or her career. Thus this formation is influenced by the dynamic interrelationship he or she has with others, and the elements in his or her context while answering the questions “Who am I at this moment” and “Who do I want to become” (Beijaard et al., 2004: 122). The answers to these questions the teacher discovers in accordance with Day et al. (2006) will have a decisive impact on his or her “sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness” (p. 601). In addition, as Beijaard et al. (2000) affirm, they will have an impact on his or her response to change as exemplified in this inquiry.

In particular, my findings in Chapters Four and Five have shed light on five mediating factors (Fig. 17) that dynamically interacted both with each other, as well as with the elements of the other ‘change frames’, to influence our response to change, as well as transform the personal construal of our professional identities as teachers while engaging in change.

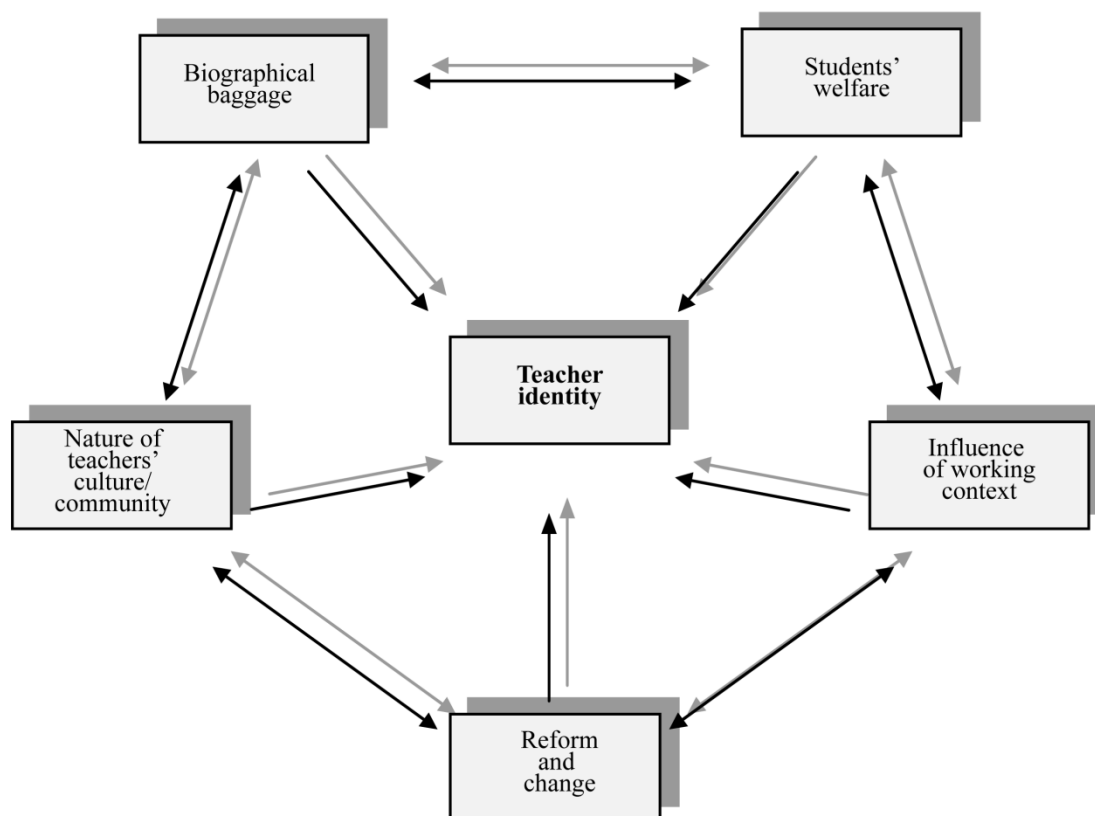


Fig. 17: Mediating factors in the transformation of our professional identity as teachers

2.5.1 Biographical Baggage

As argued in Chapter Two, section 3.1, teachers carry with them ‘biographical baggage’ comprising of their previous personal and academic experiences (Collison, 2004). According to Beijard et al. (2004), this “baggage” aids them in the process of making sense of their practices and themselves as teachers, thereby influencing the personal construal of their professional identities. In our case, owing in part to this ‘biographical baggage’, before the 1990s, as mentioned in Chapter Four, section 1.1 we had little confidence in ourselves as teachers. While the majority of us had studied degree courses, these had not included any teacher training. In addition, the Mexican teachers who had all studied their degree at the School of Languages felt that their education had been lacking due to the ‘flawed’ curricula that had been in place when they studied at the School. For example, a few of my informants questioned their ability to express themselves fluently in English. Perhaps even more importantly, many of these teachers had not managed to write their final paper in order to gain full graduate status. Consequently, we appear to have had rather a low evaluation of our self-efficacy as teachers, as highlighted by my findings presented in

Chapter Four, section 1.1. Teaching as it were without direction, we did not perceive ourselves as professionals, but as “virtually amateur” (Hargreaves, 2000a: 156) teachers who had learned to teach by “individual trial-and-error” (Hargreaves, 2000a: 156) within our classrooms.

During the 1990s, as revealed by my findings in Chapter Five, section 1.1.1 our belief in ourselves as teachers was greatly strengthened and transformed. An influential factor in this transformation was our involvement in higher studies. As a result of my colleagues being given the opportunity to study a postgraduate diploma in TEFL, they not only obtained full graduate status, but they also felt more competent as teachers. In addition, this restored a sense of our own competence in handling the knowledge and skills involved in our professional work which was further reinforced by our subsequent participation in an MSc in TEFL (Prelim/María/14/07/03). Thus corroborating to a large extent, Bandura’s (2001) theory, that personal self-efficacy beliefs may be enhanced by a “mastery of knowledge and skills attainable...through long hours of arduous work” (p. 13). In short, our sense of self-efficacy as teachers was boosted as we felt that we had been professionally legitimated by our studies. As a result, we not only felt less vulnerable and thus more secure and empowered as teachers, but also progressively more willing to engage in further change.

2.5.2 Students’ Welfare

Another important characteristic of our professional identity as teachers both before and during the 1990s was what Beijaard et al., (2004) refer to as our constant service ethic to our students. Remembering our own educational experiences including the difficulties we had encountered ourselves, we have been motivated throughout our careers to try and improve our teaching in order to achieve the greatest possible benefits for our students.

Before the 1990s, our achievements within our classrooms in some way compensated for the lack of resources for our own professional development, as well as our limited agency in School affairs. During the 1990s, our concern for our students’ welfare as referred to in Chapter Five, section 2 was one of the characteristics of our collective cohesiveness. Similar to the teachers mentioned in Nias’s (1989) research, during the 1990s we identified

and formed relationships with other teachers who, like ourselves, showed they cared about the students and who in our eyes, therefore, took their work seriously.

2.5.3 Influence of Working Context.

Another relevant factor that had an influential role in the construction of our professional identities as teachers was our working context. This finding therefore appears to support Reynold's (1996) observation that a teacher's workplace is a "'landscape' [that] can be very persuasive, very demanding, and in most cases, very restrictive" (in Beijaard et al., 2004: 113). For example, the amount of recognition a teacher receives in his or her context from significant others may influence strongly his or her negative or positive sense of professional identity, given that

...identity is linked to the recognition of others therefore, if teachers are denied recognition, this may cause them to internalize a demeaning image of themselves.

(Zembylas, 2003: 223)

In our university, similar to other Teachers of English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL) elsewhere (Varghese et al. 2005), our standing as professionals was not taken seriously by the other members of our University community. In fact, to a certain extent we were marginalised both by the teachers in the other University Schools and by the University authorities as illustrated in my data in Chapter Four, section 1.4.2. In this University community in general, it seemed that the study of languages was not considered a 'real' discipline or science and, therefore, not worthy of respect. This was accentuated by the fact that we had not been able to further our studies, and in the School itself, there had been little change or development. In addition, the majority of us felt that we had no real standing at the School itself, given that many of us were employed on an hourly basis and so had little authority to become involved in the decision-making at the School.

This state of affairs as detailed in Chapter Five, section 1.1.2, changed dramatically during the 1990s owing to our engagement in change in our working context, and our successful completion of further studies. As a result of completing a postgraduate TEFL diploma, and later an MSc in TEFL, the teachers who had been employed on an hourly basis were finally promoted to full-time tenured teaching positions. This new position afforded them a higher

standing at the School and the possibility of participating more fully in School affairs. Furthermore, owing to these academic achievements and the changes we effected in our context, we gained recognition both within the University itself and among institutions elsewhere in the country. As a result of this reification by relevant others, our sense of identity as university teachers was strengthened by a feeling of security and empowerment given that we felt we had been socially legitimated as professionals.

2.5.4 Reform and Change

According to several experts, for example, Henkel (2000), as well as Geijsela and Meijersb (2005), educational reforms and changes can influence the ways in which a teacher construes his or her professional identity. In many cases, as emphasised by Kelchtermans (1996), change and reform can often threaten the stability of a teacher's identity and lead to feelings of vulnerability among teachers, given that change and reform often require shifts or modifications in a teacher's role (Volkman & Anderson, 1988; Beijard et al., 2000) and sense of identity. However, in our particular case, instead of feeling threatened we welcomed the changes as reported in Chapter Four, section 2.3.1.

Before the 1990s, we had felt that we could not do anything to change matters as our agency in decision-making was limited to the confines of our individual classrooms. Agency in decision-making is important, as it is only, as Mellenchamp (1992) affirms:

...when teachers have a voice in change, defined by the ability to initiate and decide change and be heard as respected members of the school community, that they are able to bridge the organizational and the personal and engage in fundamental school change.

(Mellenchamp, 1992: 8)

Here Mellenchamp (1992) is referring to the organisational and personal factors that she discovered to influence teachers' receptivity to change. In our case, during the 1990s, our receptivity to change, as I argued in section 2.4 (Teachers' receptivity to change) was due to the interactive relationship between three organisational factors - the appearance of *an effective change leader* and the *subsequent funding and opportunities for our professional development* – and, three personal factors - our *dissatisfaction with the prevailing status quo*, our *positive perception of change* and our *commitment to our students, to the School*,

as well to our professional development. This interaction resulted in our successful completion of higher degrees, which, in turn, enabled us to design and implement new study programmes while increasing our agency in the decision-making at the School regarding change. Once recognised as having the ability to initiate and implement change, both in the institution, and in and among ourselves, we gained respect as professionals from the relevant others in our community, our peers and from the University authorities, as well as considerably more voice in decisions regarding the changes that followed. Not only did this provide us with personal and emotional satisfaction, but we also developed a sense of empowerment in our practices and in our working context that we had previously lacked.

2.5.5 Nature of Teachers' Teaching Culture or Community

My findings in both Chapter Four, section 1.4 and Chapter Five, section 2 appear to support earlier research, for example, Beijard (1995), as well as Becher and Trowler (2001), that the nature of a teacher's teaching culture or community is another important factor that contributes to the construction of a teacher's professional identity. Before the 1990s, the nature of our culture could be defined as one of isolation and individualism. As a result, we 'learnt while doing' which "led to the emergence of idiosyncratic coping strategies as [we] came to acknowledge the complexity of teaching" (Flores & Day, 2006: 229). This given, our experience at the School seems to have corresponded, to a great extent, to what Hargreaves (2000a) refers to as the 'pre-professional age' of teaching, that is, the age in which "teachers struggled alone in their own classrooms...with few textbooks or resources to help them, and with little reward or recognition" (Hargreaves, 2000a: 152).

In contrast, from 1990 onwards, the nature of our teaching culture changed significantly. From being members of a rather isolated culture of teachers we began to emerge as a collegial culture, albeit somewhat 'contrived' (Hargreaves, 1996: 321). According to Hargreaves' (1994) definition, contrived collegiality

...makes it difficult for programs to be adjusted to the purposes and practicalities of particular school and classroom settings. It overrides teacher professionalism and the discretionary judgment which composes it
And it diverts teachers' efforts and energies into simulated compliance

with administrative demands that are inflexible and inappropriate for the settings in which they work.

(Hargreaves, 1994: 208)

Furthermore, although contrived collegiality is considered by many administrators as a means to facilitate change and professional development, it has rarely proven to be as successful as hoped or expected (Hargreaves, 1992). However, according to my findings, although Aide may possibly have ‘contrived’ (Hargreaves, 1997b) the beginning of our collegial relationship to a certain extent by identifying us as natural leaders and encouraging us “to focus on specific tasks and changes” (Hargreaves, 1992: 230) together; instead of imposing the changes on us, she first secured our engagement in change by employing certain strategies to convince us of the need for change as reported in Chapter Four, section 2.1.

As a result, faced with the challenges of the change process, we grouped together in what may be defined, in hindsight, as a Community of Practice in that we originally mutually engaged in the joint enterprise of performing a determined task (Wenger, 1998), that of creating a new BA curriculum. In addition, we “participated in different ways and to different degrees” (Wenger, 1998a: 3-4) in the changes that followed (Table 6). For example, seven of us played a major role in setting up an in-house MA in TEFL, while the others acted as fringe, supporting members in this change. In addition, although we did not consciously or deliberately make a decision to do this, during the 1990s, we appear to have developed many of the attributes common to a Professional Learning Community in that we worked and studied together, and shared the same commitment, values and vision “to enhance [our] effectiveness as professionals” (Hord, 1997:1 [my emphasis]), not only for our own benefit, but also for that of our students and the School. As a result, during the 1990s, we emerged as a strong collaborative and collegial culture as reported in Chapter Five, section 2.3.

My understanding of culture in this inquiry is based on Claxton’s (1999) definition that a culture, in general, is

...a group of people who act as if they shared some common set of beliefs...subscribe to a certain view of the world, value certain things above other things, and...do certain things in a certain way.

(Claxton, 1999: 234-5)

In particular, I agree with Fine's (1979) notion that "every continuing social group develops a variant culture and a body of social relations peculiar and common to its members" (p. 816). In other words, every group has its own culture, that is, an idioculture defined as

...a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours, and customs shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and employ as the basis of further interaction. Members recognize that they share experiences in common and these experiences can be referred to with the expectation that they will be understood by other members, and further can be employed to construct a social reality.

(Fine, 1979: 734)

Holliday (1999) took this a step further and proposed how small cultures may be formed by the following four elements:

- (i) Need for group cohesion: recipe, convention, discourse identity, expression, exclusivity;
- (ii) Cultural residues and influences: family, nation, region, peers, profession, institution etc.;
- (iii) Social constructions: routinisation, institutionalisation, naturalisation;
- (iv) Products: artefacts, art, literature values, discourse of and about 'culture'.

(Adapted from Holliday, 1999: 249)

However, I would suggest that what seems to be missing from Holliday's (1999) proposal of small culture formation (p.249) is that he does not make explicit the emotional or affective aspect of a culture. This, as I have discovered in my research, was an important element that helped to cement our interpersonal collaborative and collegial relationships. In my interpretation, collaboration denotes a situation in which teachers are working together to carry out tasks such as curriculum design; and I view collegiality as the development and continuation of both professional and social/emotional interrelationships in their working context.

This transformation from our state of being as a number of isolated, individual teachers to emerge as a small culture of collaboration and collegiality had a vital impact on the transformation of our professional identities. By identifying with each other and being identified by others among the teaching staff of the School, our professional identity as teachers was redefined, strengthened and we became further empowered, as we now felt that both our competence and participation were socially legitimated by ‘significant others’: the other members of this collaborative and collegial small culture of teachers.

In conclusion, five mediating factors dynamically interacted and influenced the formation and transformation of the personal construal of our professional identities as teachers during the change process in the 1990s:

- our biographical baggage;
- our concern for student welfare;
- the influence of our working context;
- our response to reform and change;
- the nature of our teaching culture.

The “dynamism” (Byrne, 1998:20) of these factors within this ‘change frame’ were positively reinforced by the combined interaction with the other change frames, and together led to the emergence of change in both our institution and ourselves as teachers. Perhaps more importantly, due to our engagement in institutional change and professional development, “new properties and behaviours” (Mason, 2008: 36) emerged that had not previously existed or even been foreseeable. We developed a sense of empowerment in our practices and in our working context that we had previously lacked, which at the same time sustained our engagement in the change process. Consequently, we not only helped to bring about change in our institutional context, but our sense of professional identity, as well as our teaching culture, was radically and positively transformed.

2.6 Emotional Understanding and Teachers’ Cultures/Communities

The transformation in the nature of our teaching culture was not only an important ‘change frame’ that contributed to a higher evaluation of our self-efficacy as teachers, but it was

also a vital element of the complexity of educational change in our context. Based on my findings, I contend that this significant change in the relationships operating within our new culture emerged as a result of the dynamic interrelationship of a number of elements (Fig. 18) that together co-constructed and reinforced our growing mutual emotional understanding (Denzin, 1984). This would appear, therefore, to highlight the crucial role that emotional understanding, or lack of it, plays in teachers' responses to change, as well as the ways in which collaborative cultures can come into being. As such, this goes somewhat further than current thought that as yet seems to have scarcely identified the importance of emotional understanding in educational change.

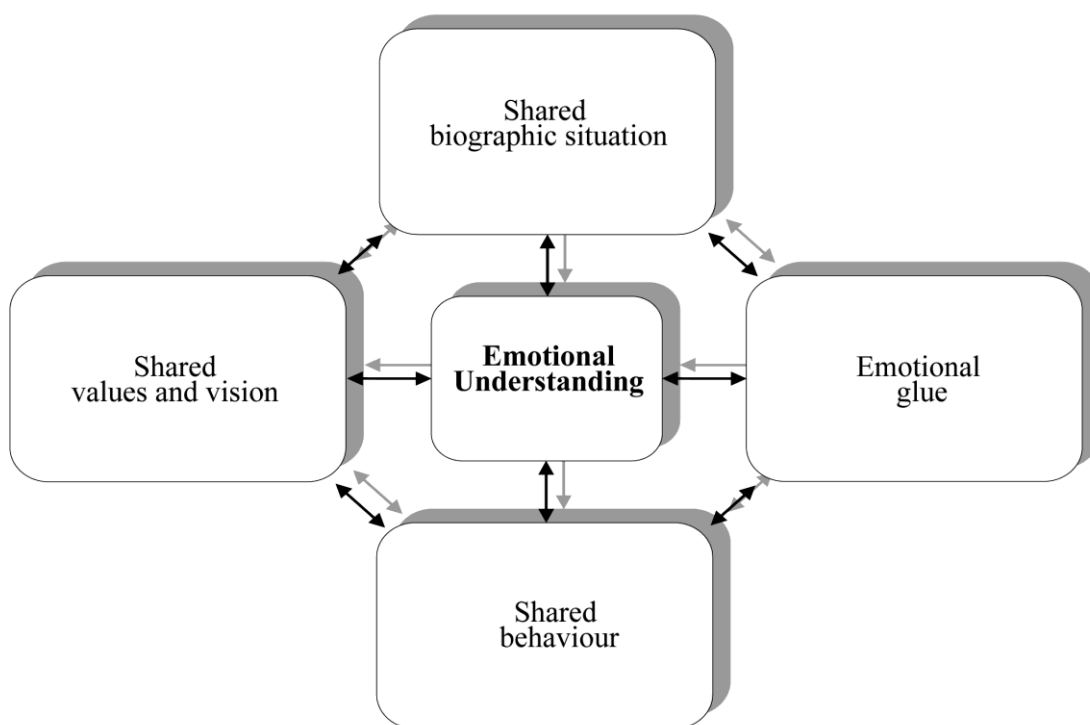


Fig. 18: Interacting and reinforcing elements of emotional understanding

2.6.1 Emotional Understanding

Emotional understanding is based on interpretation and shared experience (Denzin, 1984). Individuals interpret their experiences according to the fit that their emotions have within their own frame of reference. By examining other people's experience from this standpoint, they then come to identify with others who have similar shared emotional experience (Denzin, 1984). That is,

...people reach into the past store of their own emotional experience to interpret and unravel, instantaneously, at-a-glance, the emotional experiences and responses of others.

(Hargreaves, 2002:7)

Furthermore, this emotionality may be co-produced. People, because they share, or have shared, similar emotional experiences or can imagine them as real, are able to participate with, and understand other people who are experiencing these similar emotional fields of experience (Denzin, 1984).

The emotions that teachers experience and express, for example, are not just matters of personal dispositions but are constructed in social relationships and systems of values in their families, cultures and school situations. These relationships and values profoundly influence how and when particular emotions are constructed, expressed, and communicated.

(Zembylas, 2004: 186)

Depending on “how and when particular emotions are constructed, expressed, and communicated” (Zembylas, 2004: 186), a sharable field of experience will be constructed (Denzin, 1984: 145) which enables affective integration as a group (Levine & Moreland, 1990) or in our case, a small culture (Holliday, 1999). Based on my findings detailed in Chapters Four and Five, the characteristics on which our mutual emotional understanding was grounded are highlighted in Figure 18.

2.6.2 Shared Biographic History

According to Denzin (1984) a shared biographic history is one of the characteristics that help structure emotional understanding. It is by means of “long-standing, close relationships” (Hargreaves, 2001a:1059) that people are more likely to share similar emotional experiences and so achieve emotional understanding instead of “emotional misunderstanding” (Hargreaves, 2002:7). That is, when they “mistake their feelings for the feelings of the other” (Denzin, 1984:134). In our case, our shared biographic situation comprised of what I am referring to as our:

- a) Pre-service education (Chapter Three, section 3.2);
- b) *‘Professional slumber’* (Chapter Four, section 2) in the years before the 1990s.

a) Pre-Service Education

Regarding my Mexican informants' pre-service biographies, except for Veronica who professes she was interested in studying languages from the beginning, studying English was neither a deliberate nor even, in some cases, their first choice. Originally, some had had other career aspirations: for example, Raphael had first studied business administration, Maria had wanted to study law, and Carlos had first been interested in studying oceanography. However, they and the others had eventually decided to take a degree in English language, given that it was the most accessible, practical and viable option for them at the time. This contrasts with the cases of two of the non-Mexicans, Chela and I, who had studied BAs in language in our countries of origin with the definite aim of becoming teachers. The other non-Mexican, Modesta, had not studied at the level of higher education.

In particular, the eight Mexican teachers had also had a similar educational experience in that they had all studied their BA in English at the School of Languages, albeit at different times. Consequently, as there had been very little change in either the syllabuses and curriculum or the main teaching staff over the years, they had a similar field of knowledge and a similar learning experience in common. In addition, due to both the lack of qualified teachers who could serve as supervisors for the final degree paper and the extreme shortage of books and other resources, only two teachers, Carmen and Irma, had actually managed to complete their final paper and so achieve full first degree status.

b) 'Professional slumber'

I have referred to the early stage of our shared biographic situation as '*professional slumber*'. Apart from our struggle for survival as teachers (Huberman, 1989, 1993, 1995; Cole, 1992) we were involved in very little other movement or change. It was the stage in which as Fessler (1995) defines, that all our energies were focused on struggling "for acceptance on all levels...and endeavour[ing] to achieve a positive professional self-concept" (p.185). However, we discovered that this was a difficult task as:

Adjusting to life in classrooms and schools is a challenging, sometimes frustrating experience for new teachers. Those first few weeks, months, and even years of life as a teacher are often fraught with personal and professional trials.

(Cole, 1992: 366)

In the majority of cases (except for Jorge and Raphael), this induction period in our careers lasted for several years. During this time, as Cole (1992) mentions, we were faced with “personal and professional trials” (p.366) triggered by the elements of our educational context and the emotional dimension of our practices that dynamically interacted resulting in the emergence of our ‘*professional slumber*’ (Fig. 19).

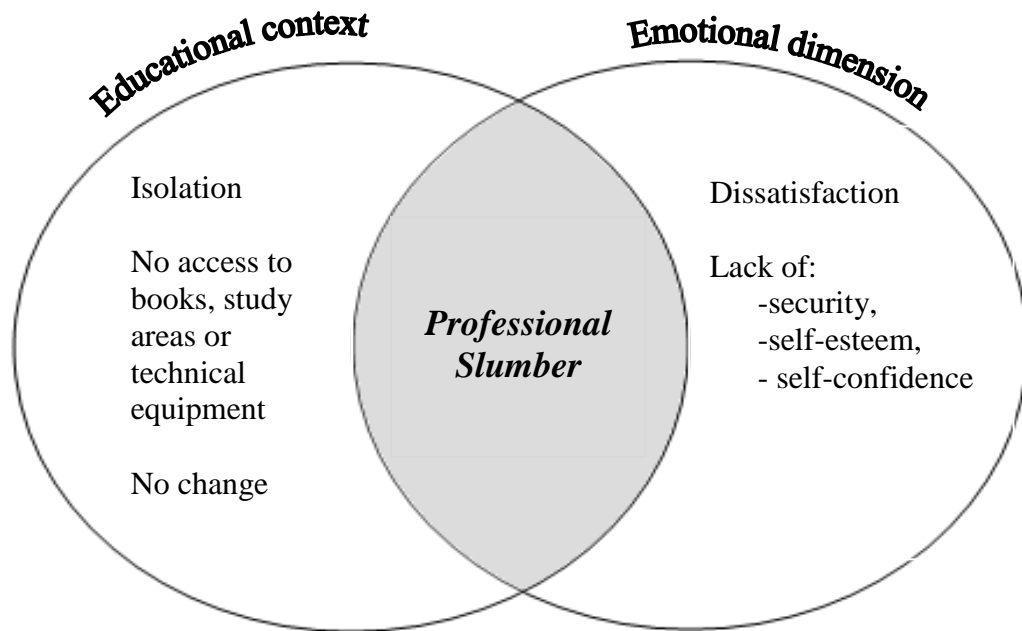


Fig. 19: Mediating and influential factors in ‘*professional slumber*’

At the beginning, most (9) of the members of our group had no job security. As a result they had to struggle before the beginning of every semester to accumulate teaching hours in the hope of eventually gaining tenure, as explained in Chapter One, section 2.6. In addition, we often felt dissatisfied with what we were doing in the classroom and this affected our self-image as referred to in Chapter Four, section 1.1. Although we tried out different ideas in an attempt to improve our teaching, we felt that “our hands were tied” (Prelim/Rosaurio/16/04/04 [translation]). In short, owing to what Huberman (1989) describes as “the gulf between professional ideals and the daily grind of classroom life” (p. 33), we felt dissatisfied with our working lives. In addition, as there was little we could do to enhance our low self-confidence and self-esteem as teachers, the only thing we could do was to conform to the lack of change in our educational context and continue with the daily routine of our working lives. However, as a result of these shared similar emotional

experiences, when we began to engage in the change process during the 1990s, we had an *intense and sharable field of experience* (Denzin, 1984) that influenced the emergence of our emotional understanding, as well as our cohesion as a small culture (Holliday, 1999), collaborating together to effect change.

2.6.3 Shared Values and Vision

Another characteristic that strengthened our shared emotional understanding and emergence as a small collaborative and collegial culture was what Denzin (1984) refers to as “an approbation of the other’s perspective as one’s own” (p.145). That is, we identified with each other as a result of our ‘shared values and vision’. As various experts (e.g. DuFour, 2004; Bolam et al., 2005; Sparks, 2005; Andrews & Lewis, 2007; Feger & Arruda, 2008) have affirmed, this is an important characteristic in the formation of professional learning communities, as well as an essential ingredient of a change process, given that, as previously cited, it is said to “foster genuine commitment and enrolment rather than compliance” (Senge, 1990: 9) when engaging in change.

In our case, as revealed by the way we described one another as reported in Chapter Five, section 2.1.1, we valued the personal and professional characteristics we identified in ourselves and each of the others. We shared a serious work ethic that included a strong sense of moral purpose for the educational welfare of our students. In addition, during our mutual engagement in the change process, we also positively evaluated each other (Argyle & Colman, 1994, Stets & Burke, 2000) as people who shared the same vision and commitment towards improving the School, our teaching and thus the learning context of our students.

This identification of each other as a group of people who shared the same values and a collective vision served to promote feelings of mutual trust and respect that influenced not only the emergence of our emotional understanding, but also our cohesion as a small culture (Holliday, 1999), for as Turner et al. (1987) state when a number of people “hold the same perceptions, those perceptions are mutually reinforced, and group formation is the result” (in Stets & Burke, 2000: 227).

2.6.4 Shared Behaviour

As reported in Chapter Five, section 1.3, our changed collective behaviour was another element that influenced the emergence of our shared emotional understanding and thus our small culture (Holliday, 1999), given that it was influenced by, and resulted in, what Denzin refers to as “shared and shareable emotionality” an element that he regards as “crucial to full emotional understanding” (1984: 145).

Instead of change representing a “threat” (Newton & Tarrant, 1992; Milstein, 1993; Evans, 1996, cited in Oplatka, 2005: 172) to our personal and professional selves, change for us represented the complete opposite. It was perceived as an unprecedented opportunity to tackle both the problems we were aware of in our working context and the lack of self-confidence and insecurity in our teaching. Thus, thanks to these shared feelings and the other elements that interacted to promote our receptivity to change (section 2.4: Teachers’ receptivity to change) we were ‘*awakened from our slumber*’ to become professionally engaged in the change process both in our School and in ourselves, as reported in Chapter Four, section 2).

This change in our behaviour may to some degree be equated with both Wenger’s (1998) theoretical description of a community of practice and with the characteristics identified in the description of professional learning communities (PLCs) detailed in Chapter Two, section 5.2. Our participation, similar to that of teachers in a PLC, was motivated by an efficient Dean who, instead of imposing her vision and values, included us, and our visions, in the construction of a collective vision for the school that we could all embrace. By means of our “*mutual engagement*” (Wenger, 1998: 73), that is, our shared responsibility and action in the changes that followed (Table 6), as well as, in similar ways to those of teachers in a PLC, our commitment to our students’ learning and our own learning, our cohesion as a small collaborative culture developed.

However, based on my findings in Chapter Five, section 2, I believe that our cohesion as a small collaborative and collegial culture was more significantly influenced by the growth of our “shared and shareable emotionality” (Denzin, 1984: 145) that emerged from our on-going shared behaviour, given that, as Denzin (1984) affirms, “The merging of shared

experiences into a new, sharable field of experience joins two persons together” (p.138). In our case, as a result of sharing the experiences of working and studying together, we not only developed feelings of trust in, and respect for, each other which are important identified characteristics of a collaborative and collegial relationship (Huffman & Hipp, 2003; Skytt, 2003; Stoll et al., 2006; Hargreaves, 2007), but we also shared a collective pride as referred to in Chapter Five, section 2.2. These were the ingredients of what I refer to as the ‘*emotional glue*’ that bound us together (Fig. 20).

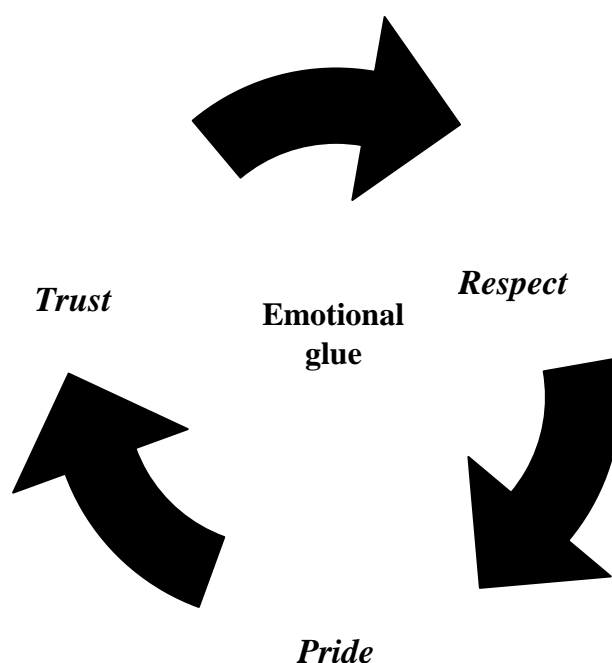


Fig. 20: The ingredients of the emotional glue that bound us together

2.6.5 ‘Emotional Glue’

‘*Emotional glue*’ (Fig. 20) is the metaphor I have developed regarding the nature of our growing relationships during the 1990s. I adopted this metaphor, because my findings seemed to indicate that it was a) our sense of mutual trust and respect, as well as b) our collective pride that *cemented* our emotional understanding, and *bound* us together as a small collegial culture collaborating together in change.

a) Trust and Respect

As trust and respect are so closely interrelated, I will discuss them under a single heading. Trust, which according to Barbalet (1996) is one of the “emotions which constitute the

bases of social life” (p.75) is generally accepted as the social glue that is needed in a successful society (Fukuyama, 1995), given that

...the entire fabric of our day-to-day living, or our social order, rests on trust [as] almost all of our decisions involve trusting someone else.

(Rotter, 1971: 443)

In short, trust is considered as a crucial element of social capital. Social capital, defined by Fattore et al. (2003) is

...the community’s stock of civic hardware – including groups, associations, and opportunities to participate and learn – that leads us to trust others and institutions, to take risks, and to develop. Advocates of the social capital idea think of it as a kind of glue that binds us together alongside our economic and political institutions.

(Fattore et al., 2003: 166)

Consistent with this definition therefore, trust can facilitate and influence social and professional interrelationships, as well as change initiatives of all kinds. For example, Hoffman et al.’s, (2006) inquiry supports the view that where there is a climate of trust, teachers are more *open* when talking about their practices, as well as *more prone to taking risks*, both of which are necessary during a change process.

Four main types of trust are referred to in the literature (e.g. Shapiro et. al., 1992; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996) which help to shed light on our growing relationships. These are as follows:

- Provisional trust
- Calculus-based trust
- Knowledge-based trust
- Unconditional or identification-based trust

At the beginning of any relationship, trust is provisional, dependent on the belief that both parties, the trustor and the trustee, are interested in sustaining the relationship. In addition to the latter, calculus-based trust may play a role when a trustor believes that he/she will

gain something from an interaction with the trustee. In the case of my colleagues and I, our initial trust in one another could possibly be defined as provisional trust, given that prior to 1988, we had been working in isolation and so did not know each other very well owing to the fact that we had only shared brief, mainly social, encounters outside our classrooms or during our joint attendance at meetings and annual graduation supper dances, as mentioned in Chapter Four, section 1.4.1. Thus, at the beginning of the change process, although not evident from the data, our shared trust may also have included elements of calculus-based trust as we were probably aware, at least subconsciously, that for change to be effected we needed each others' input.

However, later on, during the 1990s, owing to our shared experiences of working and learning together, we became aware that we could both depend and rely on each others' behaviour and so we developed knowledge-based trust. That is, a higher level of trust that emerges when the *trustor* feels that he/she knows the *trustee* well enough to be able to expect or predict his/her behaviour to be *trustworthy*. This type of trust is often based on the communication in repeated encounters and exchanges (Creed & Miles, 1996) over time (Zucker, 1986). In our case, during the 1990s in our multiple interactions and exchanges, we discovered that we had beliefs, desires, feelings, and values in common (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996) which led to our mutual understanding and recognition of each others' worth as reported in Chapter Five, section 2.1.1. In short, we became bound together by the development of *unconditional or identification-based trust*, which Lewicki and Bunker (1996) classify as the highest form of trust, strengthened by our understanding and sharing, as well as empathising with one another's desires, intentions and values (Jones & George, 1998; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Shapiro et. al., 1992).

In order to understand more completely the ingredients of our mutual *unconditional or identification-based trust* that developed during the 1990s, useful insights for this inquiry may be gained by referring to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (1998, 1999, 2000) work that has made a significant contribution to the understanding of the deeper nature of trust, as well as Bryk and Schneider's (2003) findings from their ten year study of over 400 elementary schools in Chicago on the dimensions of trust in schools. According to Hoy and

Tschannen-Moran (1999), there are five “faces” of trust that may often be manifested at more or less the same time (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Trust is one party’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is (a) benevolent, (b) reliable, (c) competent, (d) honest, and (e) open.

(Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000:556)

The interacting dimensions of our shared trust (Fig. 21) that have emerged from my data coincide with these five “faces” of trust mentioned above.

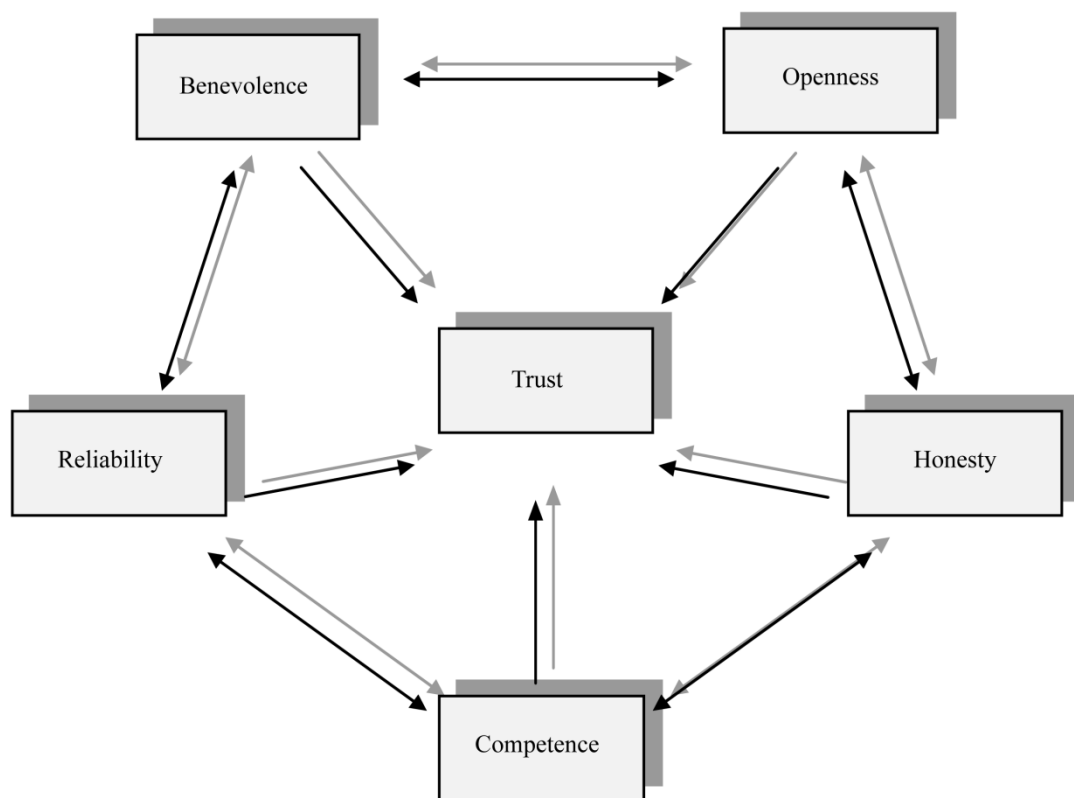


Fig. 21: The five dimensions of our shared trust

- **Benevolence**

According to several authorities (Baier, 1986; Cummings & Bromily, 1996; Hosmer, 1995; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999, Mishra, 1996) benevolence is the “confidence that one’s well-being, or something one cares about, will be protected and not harmed by the trusted party” (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000: 556). In our case, our confidence, our feeling of well-being (Heathfield, 2004) with the other change participants, was developed by our

growing reciprocal personal and professional regard for each other which included respect, an important ingredient of trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), as reported in Chapter Five, section 2.1. This respect was evident in our exchanges. Not only were we courteous with each other but, more importantly, we treated each other as equals, genuinely listening to each other and acknowledging one another's ideas and dignity. In addition, we did not allow any disagreements to affect our relationships. Instead, we always found ways to resolve the conflicts that emerged. Furthermore, from these exchanges and our experiences both working on the changes and learning together on the different postgraduate study programmes, a strong feeling of camaraderie and even a sense that we were part of a family, developed and grew. This feeling is important as, according to Sergiovanni, (1994) and Willis, (1995) a strong sense of community or family is indicative of a successful school.

- **Reliability**

According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000: 556), "reliability or dependability combines a sense of predictability with benevolence", that is, owing to behaviour previously observed, the *trustor* perceives that a *trustee* can be counted on to behave in an expected way that is beneficial to the *trustor* or to what he/she cares about. In our case, as reported in Chapter Five, section 2.1.1, we had faith in each others' personal and professional integrity which was manifested by both our words and actions (Arrow, 1974). Furthermore, we discovered we could depend and rely on each other as we shared the same kinds of commitment to what we were doing. As many of us had studied our BA in the School and we had all received support from, first, the Dean, and later, the University, we felt a strong sense of indebtedness and commitment to the School. In addition we were all committed to improving the educational welfare of our students and our teaching, not just for personal gain, but because for us teaching was more than just a job. Consequently, we were also committed to broadening our professional knowledge base (Nias, 1981; Tyree, 1996) as manifested by the postgraduate programmes we started and completed.

- **Competence**

Competence, another dimension that helps to build trust, exists when the *trustor* believes that the *trustee* is capable of performing the tasks that are required (Baier, 1986;

Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Bryk & Schneider, 2003). In our case, we believed that by working and studying together we could achieve change. Furthermore, we believed that we complemented each other and trusted that what one member of our group could not do, another could. In addition, apart from recognizing that our colleagues were intelligent people, we were also aware that we had the ability to sustain one another's involvement in the changes.

- **Honesty**

Honesty is another important ingredient of trust that is also strongly related to reliability. This is manifested by telling the truth (Baier, 1986; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000) and keeping our word, demonstrated by our deeds and actions (Tschannen & Hoy, 2000). In our emerging culture, we identified our group members as being honest and reliable as we discovered that we would always give each other an honest answer. This often entailed a high level of trust, as according to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) honest answers can often make one person vulnerable with respect to another. For example, we manifested the trust we had in each other when we declared our inability to achieve something. Moreover, we did not just verbally assent and then not do anything. Instead, when we agreed to do something, we could be relied upon to continue working until the task was accomplished.

- **Openness**

Openness, a characteristic of honesty, refers to the freedom with which we communicate with each other by "sharing our opinions, feelings and knowledge" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000: 558). Trust both enables openness in communication (Arrow, 1974) and is "cultivated through speech, conversation, commitments and action" (Soloman & Flores, 2001: 87) thus cultivating genuine relationships that are:

...fostered by personal conversations, frequent dialogue, shared work and shared responsibilities. As individuals interact with one another, they tend to listen across boundaries - boundaries erected by disciplines, grade levels, expertise, authority, position, race, and gender.

(Lambert, 1998: 79)

Part of our knowledge regarding each other was due to the fact that we were open and communicative with each other. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, my informants

reported that throughout our communications we always demonstrated both tolerance and respect.

In this section, I have shown how trust, “the emotional basis of cooperation” (Barbalet, 1996:77), as well as respect, were important ingredients of the emotional glue that cohered to form our affective integration. Furthermore, trust and respect were vital aspects of our social emotionality (Barbalet, 1996) and understanding that not only cemented our group cohesion and led us to emerge as a small culture (Holliday, 1999), but also enabled our collective positive response to change. However, another important ingredient of the emotional glue that emerged from my data was the *collective pride* that we felt due to our accomplishments and relationship as a group. This ingredient, in particular, appears to contribute to existing knowledge regarding the emotional dimension of teachers’ interrelationships.

b) Collective Pride

Our collective group pride, based principally on our pride of achievement that we could now recognize ourselves and be recognised as professional teachers, as reported in Chapter Five, section 2.2, is a relevant aspect of our emotionality regarding our working life in the School of Languages and our collective response to change. In order to understand this ingredient of the emotional glue that bonded us together as a small collaborative and collegial culture, I think it will be useful to draw on the philosophy of recognition, in particular, Honneth’s (1995a & b) theory of recognition based on his interpretation of Hegel’s writings (1967, 1979), as well as Huttunen and Heikkinen’s (2002) and Heikkinen’s (2003) subsequent adaptation of this theory to educational practices in order to interpret my findings.

In the words of John Donne (1572-1631) “No man is an island, entire of itself”. We all need to feel identified, singled out, respected, taken into consideration and esteemed by others, in short ‘recognised’, especially by ‘significant others’: family, friends, colleagues and work authorities, in our context. In short “Everyone needs to be perceived, to be taken into account and to be appreciated by one’s significant others” (Heikkinen, 2003: 3). In fact, according to Heikkinen (2003: 3), “Recognition is an essential element in the

formation of a person's identity” and as such “it could even be called a vital human need” (Heikkinen, 2003: 1). However, this “fundamental struggle for recognition...is not an easy challenge” (Heikkinen (2003: 1). Consequently, the different degrees that we perceive ourselves to have achieved this may influence or affect both our personal construal of our professional identities regarding our self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem (Honneth, 1995a & b). Perhaps more importantly, it may also influence our productive performance in our working context. For instance, it has been argued that a lack of recognition may contribute to a teacher’s burn out and lack of motivation to participate in change (Heikkinen, 2003).

Pride of recognition, as revealed by my data, is a complicated issue that may be explored from a number of perspectives.

- Recognition of our limitations;
- Recognition of self by significant others;
- Recognition of professional self by others;
- Professional self-esteem as a result of others demonstrating acknowledgment and recognition of our abilities and accomplishments;
- Recognition of our social identity.

- **Recognition of our limitations**

Firstly, ‘recognition’ in one sense refers to what we acknowledge regarding our limitations.

What we acknowledge – that is realize, admit or confess – is our commitments, obligations or responsibilities, and our flaws, mistakes, sins or guilt in failing to meet these.

(Ikäheimo, 2002:142)

Here, as previously mentioned, most of the members of our small culture recognized that before the 1990s, we had had no formal teacher training and so we believed that we had been ill prepared to be teachers. Thus, we, like the School, had been as it were, ‘asleep’. Although we had many years of teaching experience, we felt at a disadvantage. Some of the

Mexican teachers believed that they lacked both oral and teaching skills due to the fact that they were a 'product' of the old system having previously studied at the School of Languages. Furthermore, we had no contact with the 'outside': the TEFL community in Mexico and abroad or even any real contact with the other teachers at the School. Thus, we felt isolated, alone and insecure. This lack of professional confidence and professional esteem as teachers culminated in our lack of professional respect and mutual recognition of ourselves as teachers. However, it also resulted in being a motivational force that greatly contributed to our desire to become actively involved in professional development and the institutional change process given that as Honneth (1995b) affirms "the experience of personal disrespect represents a moral driving force in the process of societal development" (p. 248).

- **Recognition of self by significant others**

According to Honneth (1995a), the first level of recognition most human beings desire is a basic recognition of our existence in social interaction as this signifies for us that we have the right to exist, that we are accepted for who we are. Thus, if we are successful at this level, we may achieve self-confidence.

...relation of recognition thus also depends on the concrete physical existence of other persons who acknowledge each other with special feelings of appreciation. The positive attitude which the individual is capable of assuming toward himself if he experiences this type of emotional recognition is that of self-confidence.

(Honneth, 1995b: 253)

In short, at this first level we need to feel that we are accepted by 'significant others' who care about us and have an interest in our welfare (Heikkinen, 2003: 1). When people respond in kind, this may result in what Huttunen and Heikkinen (2002) refer to as a "positive circle of recognition" (p.3) that as a result may create a strong sense of solidarity among those who are involved.

Reciprocal recognition of work creates a strong feeling of solidarity in the community. This is the case of a positive working atmosphere where individuals give their best and recognise each others' work....This positive circle of recognition is very fruitful both for the individual and the community.

From the data that emerged in this inquiry, this level of recognition was an important ingredient of the emotional glue that bound us together, especially given that at first, we did not receive this from anyone else at all in our professional context, that is, from either the University authorities or from the TEFL community in general. We trusted and respected each other owing to the personal and professional integrity we identified in each other. That is, as reported in Chapter Five, section 2.1.1, we recognized each other as ‘worthy’ of respect. We also regarded each other highly and demonstrated this by the norms we practiced in our interactions, for example, we treated each other as equals and we tolerated each other when necessary. As a result of being treated well and by means of the reciprocal support we afforded each other, a strong sense of solidarity, referred to as camaraderie in Chapter Five, section 2.2.2 developed among us.

- **Recognition of Professional Self by Others**

At the second level of recognition referred to by Honneth (1995a & b), teachers need to feel recognised as such by others (Heikkinen, 2003). If teachers are successful at this level, they may achieve self-respect (Honneth, 1995a & b).

Self-respect grows out of the responsibility which the individual gains in the struggle for recognition at the level of the Civil Society.

(Huttunen & Heikkinen, 2002: 5)

According to Heikkinen (2003:1), in education, a teaching qualification “is the most official authorisation to work as a teacher, the ultimate epitome of the second-level recognition of a person as an autonomous professional”. In Mexico, educational authorities are now beginning to encourage teachers to sit examinations in order to acquire a teaching qualification. However, during the time frame of this inquiry (1989-2003) there was no such qualification. In fact, our postgraduate TEFL diploma was one of the first teaching qualifications in the country. To gain respect as a professional in Mexico, teachers needed only to have a degree status in their subject. Thus, at the beginning of the 1990s when my Mexican colleagues were given the opportunity to study a postgraduate TEFL diploma and so gain first degree status, they were highly motivated to participate, as it meant that not only would they learn more and enhance their own self-respect as teachers, but by this

means they could become recognized by others as a teacher in their context, as reported in Chapter Five, section 1.1.2.

- **Professional Self-Esteem**

Professional self-esteem is the third and highest level of recognition (Honneth, 1995b; Huttunen & Heikkinen, 2002, Heikkinen, 2003). Success at this level is based principally on others', that is, on your particular "value community's" (Heikkinen, 2003:4) acknowledgement of your abilities and accomplishments at work (Honneth, 1995b).

Self-esteem is built through the respect one receives for one's work. Here it is essential that one is recognised for some work through which one expresses oneself....Self-esteem means that one sees one's work being acknowledged and recognised...one really becomes recognised as a person who has something to give to the community.

(Huttunen & Heikkinen, 2002: 5)

In this inquiry, it emerged that our self-esteem developed as a result of our personal pride of achievement in obtaining full-time tenured posts, higher degrees and accomplishing our goals to improve the School. It was also based on our feeling and perception that our work, abilities and achievements were recognized by the other significant people in our context, namely, our "value community" (Heikkinen, 2003:4) consisting of our peers, University authorities and the TEFL community in Mexico. By means of obtaining full-time positions and effecting change in the School, we perceived we were now also appropriately recognised by our University authorities. Furthermore, we also perceived that we were afforded recognition by the change in attitude of the other academics from the different Schools in our University context that now openly showed respect for our achievements. In addition, we felt we received the recognition of our peers from other educational contexts during their visits to the School and, more especially, when they invited us to give courses or talks at their educational institutions.

- **Recognition of our Social Identity**

In his paper, Heikkinen (2003) suggests that in education the basic first level of recognition (recognition of self by significant others), is often ignored, whereas the second and third levels of recognition (recognition of professional self by others, and professional self-

esteem are more high-ranking). Therefore, Heikkinen (2003) points out the need to focus more on the basic level of recognition, especially when it is an element that can influence a teacher's work. As well as this, however, I would add a fourth level that needs to be focused upon to Honneth (1995a & b) and Heikkinen's (2003) proposed levels of recognition: namely, the recognition of our social identity (Tajfel, 1978). Our social identity is enhanced by our social integration (Moreland, 1987). That is, our personal internal recognition that we belong to a group with whom we can identify, and be identified. An example of this is our pride and the sense of camaraderie, as well as security and well-being that we gained from our group affiliation as reported in Chapter Five, section 2. We recognised each other as a group of people with whom we had not only grown both on a personal and professional level and with whom we had collectively shared change experiences, but also as a group by means of which we had managed to achieve so many of the changes in our educational institution. This was important, because as María noted:

The School has grown a lot. I believe that it is because we have worked not individually but as a group. It's a personal satisfaction but it's also satisfying that we have worked together as a group...If we hadn't worked together as a group, well, nothing would have been accomplished. Even if we had had all the support from the university it wouldn't have been worth anything.

(Prelim/María/14/07/03 [translation])

In sum, our collective pride based on the development of our confidence, respect and esteem, both in ourselves and in the other members, seems to be a highly relevant aspect of the emotionality that bonded us together. This emotionality, to a large extent, was not only dependant on our accomplishments but, perhaps more importantly, on the recognition these afforded from the 'significant others' in our community. This is supported by Honneth (1995b) who claims that an individual:

...can only learn self-confidence and self-respect from the perspective of the approving reactions of partners to interaction, their practical ego is dependent on intersubjective relationships in which it will be able to experience recognition ... these relationships establish the moral infrastructure of a social life-world in which individuals can both acquire and preserve their integrity as human beings.

In our case, the most significant ‘others’ with whom we had “intersubjective relationships” that enabled us “to experience recognition” (Honneth, 1995b: 253) and so develop an increased sense of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem were the other members of our small culture (Holliday, 1999) with whom we identified and still to this day identify.

In conclusion, four main elements that were vital in our emergence as a small collaborative culture dynamically interacted resulting in the development of our emotional understanding:

- our shared biographies;
- our shared values and vision;
- our shared behaviour;
- our growing *mutual trust, respect* and *collective pride* that were the ingredients of the emotional glue that cemented our relationships.

Not only did these elements interact with each other, but they also interacted with the elements of the other change fames. As a result our teaching culture was transformed. From being members of a culture of isolation, we emerged as a small collaborative and collegial culture of English teachers engaged together in change.

Conclusion

Before I began this inquiry, I was, like many others, naïve enough to believe that I might discover a new and different formula from the one I mentioned at the end of Chapter Four, section 2.4 that would explain the nature of change in educational contexts. However, what I actually discovered is that change cannot be so easily understood or explained; it may not be possible to reduce it to an objective “formula”. Instead, as it concerns human beings, I now believe that change can only be understood by examining it through the lens of complexity theory in each specific context.

In my context, what emerged from my data is that the change process in our institutional context and in ourselves as teachers was determined not by ‘single causes but by multiple causes’ (Byrne, 1998: 20), and the interaction among them, highlighted by the dynamics of several sub-categories that overlapped and affected more than one of the major categories. Stated differently, although my proposed spider web (Fig. 15) shows six main ‘change frames, within each of these, other spider webs may be drawn to represent the elements that dynamically interacted both within these ‘frames’ and with the six main ‘change frames’ that are represented in this figure. For example, a spider web may be drawn to represent our shared biographic history, values and vision, behaviour as well as the ‘emotional glue’ that led not only our mutual emotional understanding, but also to our receptivity and engagement in change.

As a result of these particular vital elements of our social system dynamically interacting and reinforcing each other instead of cancelling each other out, ‘the combined effect was greater than the sum of the separate effects’ (Byrne, 1998). Not only did the School develop, grow and gain recognition, but our sense of professional identity was transformed, and our relationships with each other arrived at the point where we emerged as a small collaborative and collegial culture bound together by the ‘*emotional glue*’ of trust, respect and collective pride. This demonstrates, as previously mentioned, that complex systems are “inherently dynamic and transformational” (Byrne, 1998: 51) and that “new properties and behaviours” (Mason, 2008: 36) can emerge that were not previously present or foreseeable, thus constructing a whole bigger and more complex than its previous parts.

Summary

In this chapter I revisited my main research question: *How did these particular teachers respond to change?* I identified the four main themes that emerged from the interpretation of my data in response to these questions:

- Teachers’ receptivity to change
- The transformation of teachers’ professional identities
- Emotional understanding
- The emergence of teachers’ cultures/communities

Instead of discussing these themes separately, I adopted and adapted Hoban's (2002) metaphor of a spider web (Fig.15) to demonstrate the interconnectivity of the 'change frames' I had discovered in the complex system of educational change within the context of this inquiry and defined and described the elements which seem to have been dynamically interacting during the change process in the context of the case study. In the following chapter, I will conclude by discussing the implications of my findings, as well as by providing suggestions for future research.

Chapter Seven

Implications for Practice and Recommendations for Research

In this final chapter, I will first present a summary of the main theoretical contributions of this inquiry. I will then discuss the implications of my findings for practice and offer some potential action principles that change policy makers, managers and change leaders may find helpful to consider, not only in Mexico, but potentially further afield as well. These are based on my findings that have led to my own deeper understanding of the nature of educational change. Finally, I will conclude by proposing a number of potential areas for future research.

1. Main theoretical contributions of this inquiry

In this study, I have analysed the ways in which a specific educational context evolved and developed through an extended change process and how we, a small number of teachers in the English department of a School of Languages, became, and have continued to form, an integral part of this process. As a result, my findings appear to contribute empirical data and thus knowledge, regarding the complex nature of change. In particular, they highlight not only the issues involved in triggering, and sustaining, teachers' positive response to change, but they add knowledge also as to how a change process may affect teachers both as individuals, as well as a culture.

This knowledge is grounded in qualitative data regarding teachers' positive receptivity to change. It therefore seems to add deeper understanding as to how teachers' response to change may be influenced strongly by both their personal and professional concerns. Specifically, the issues that may influence the formation and transformation of a teacher's personal construal of professional identity, as well as how this issue may interrelate with, and possibly influence, how teachers respond to change.

Furthermore, my findings not only provide an example of *what* CoPs and PLCs are, as well as *how* they develop and are sustained in a specific context, but they present more data regarding how collaborative cultures emerge in individual educational settings. They

contribute knowledge concerning both the *content* (Hargreaves, 1992, 1996, 1997b) and *nature* of one specific collaborative culture.

Finally, I would argue that my findings appear to contribute deeper understanding also into the emotional dimension of teaching, especially teachers' emotional response to change. In particular, how successful collaboration and change may depend, to some extent, on the emotional dimension of teachers' interrelationships that include their mutual emotional understanding. An understanding that is grounded in: *shared mutual respect, trust* and *collective pride* that emerge from "developing long-standing, close relationships" (Hargreaves, 2005: 968) with other teachers. These were the ingredients that not only fed our mutual emotional understanding and contributed to the emergence of our own small culture, but also enabled significant changes in both ourselves, and our institutional context.

2. Implications of the Research and Action Principles for Educational Change

I have argued that my findings provide various insights into the complex nature of change: a complexity which not only involves a dynamic interaction of external factors (e.g. national educational policies and support) and internal conditions (e.g. change leaders) all of which interact in complex ways in a change process, but also of personal factors, that is, teachers' perceptions and responses as individuals, and as a small culture, based on their shared aspirations, beliefs and emotions. While I would not presume to generalize my findings, as *each* educational context will necessarily have some idiosyncratic dynamically interacting characteristics and thus *context-specific* 'change frames', what I can now confidently confirm is that my findings seem to point to the need for change policy makers, managers and change leaders to thoroughly review their current practices in order to look at the nature of change in a less technicist (Schön, 1983, 1987) and managerially oriented way. That is, my inquiry seems to suggest that instead of imposing planned, externally managed, top-down change that rarely seems to be successful in changing practice, change may grow more organically from a given set of circumstances. For example, within this particular context, the changes were neither calculated nor planned, but emerged organically from a shared vision of what was needed, as well as the trust and freedom given to the teachers to organize and self-manage the changes.

Implications of the Research	Action Principles for Change Policy Makers, Managers and Change Leaders
Educational change does not depend only on making changes to one or even a number of separate elements of change.	Focus on as many dynamically interacting elements as possible concurrently so that decisions regarding educational reform may be better informed and managed in a <i>context-sensitive</i> manner.
Professional development is not the only important element that may influence how teachers' cope with, and adjust to change, there are also other factors that may dynamically interact with professional development and by so doing, not only influence, but perhaps, more importantly, also sustain, teachers' receptivity to change	Focus more on the teachers: provide them not only with support and opportunities for meaningful professional development, but also improved status and standing within their educational community, including their active agency in the decision-making process, as well as recognition and reification of their work.
A teacher's personal construal of his/her professional identity and whether or not this is not only cultivated and respected, but also enhanced by proposed changes, may strongly influence teachers' receptivity to change, as well as lead to a sense of ownership.	Gain more knowledge, and thus more understanding of how professional identities are formed and transformed, as well as how these factors may impact both teachers' levels of commitment and their individual and group responses to change.
The development of a healthy collaborative and collegial culture is an indispensable requisite for change that may fuel a sense of ownership.	Seriously consider how best to foster, nurture and sustain teachers' collaborative cultures, in order to facilitate change; but be ever alert to the fact that this process is by no means simple.
The basis of ownership: shared mutual respect, trust and collective pride are core ingredients that may not only feed mutual emotional understanding and contribute to the emergence of social capital and thereby a collaborative and collegial culture, but also enable significant changes in both the teachers, and their institutional context.	Take into more consideration the emotional dimension of change and try to discover ways, and provide the possible conditions for fostering trust and respect in collaborative relationships. However, remember that building relationships requires 'mutual engagement' over time in 'joint enterprises' during which the shared tacit norms that govern interactions, as well as the behaviours that inspire trust, may be observed.
Trust is not developed automatically, but is negotiated and earned in reciprocal relationships.	Humanise the reform process by actually communicating, getting to know and respecting teachers (King, 2006), listening to their ideas and acknowledging, as well as encouraging and sincerely showing appreciation for their contributions and achievements.

Table 9: Implications of the research and action principles for educational change

Therefore, I argue that our approach to educational change needs to be more focused on the people who embody the change. This means less emphasis on systems and control and more of the creation, maintenance, and nurturing of the conditions which enable change to emerge organically. This may mean less planning and structure, as well as less certainty about outcomes. However, it will provide for change which *people* can collectively *own*. This involves six broad sets of attitudes and actions which emerge from the findings of this study. These are outlined and summarized in Table 9 and constitute the basis of the discussion which follows.

However, before initiating this discussion, it is important to emphasise that these action principles and these conditions run counter to a great deal of the “text-book” literature in this area which is management and top-down orientated. However, the emergence of these principles from our group’s essentially person-focused, spontaneous and self-managed process indicates that these conditions themselves are worth attempting to replicate in other contexts especially as the adoption of these principles, appears to provide the potential for sustainable deep and lasting cultural change in educational contexts. In other words, we may need less rather than more planning in change. In sum, as Fullan (2001) indicates, the educational authorities are only helpful in successful change if they use their power to facilitate grassroots processes.

2.1 Recognition of the Complexity of Change

Until now, many change policy makers, managers and change leaders, especially here in Mexico, seem to have focused only on individual elements of change with a tendency to treat them as separate from each other. For example, they appear to have concentrated only on the need for, and perceived benefits of, proposed reforms, as well as possibly the external and internal conditions necessary for change. This would seem to imply that they may have not have taken into account the fact that, to a lesser or greater extent, education is primarily about *people* not just about *systems*.

In particular, change policy makers, managers and change leaders often give the impression that they may ignore teachers’ varying personal and professional aspirations, concerns and needs which, as revealed by my findings, are not in any way separate and mutually

exclusive to their decision-making process with regard to embracing or rejecting change; instead, they are systemic to the whole change process. Furthermore, as my findings have shown, educational change does not depend only on making changes to one or even a number of separate elements of change, albeit if such elements may appear to be of central importance to the process. Thus, my findings appear to support Mason's (2008) argument that:

...trying to isolate and quantify the salience of any particular factor is not only impossible, but also wrongheaded. Isolate, even hypothetically, any one factor, and not only is the whole complex web of connections among the constituent factors altered – so is the influence of (probably) every other factor too.

(Mason, 2008: 45 (brackets in the original))

Therefore, I would strongly urge change policy makers, managers and change leaders, to acquire a greater awareness of the complexity of change, so that their decisions regarding educational reform may be better informed. Attention should be focused on as many dynamically interacting elements as possible concurrently, as

...by implementing at each constituent level changes whose outcomes we can predict with reasonable confidence, we are at least influencing change in the appropriate direction and surely stand a good chance of effecting the desired changes across the complex system as a whole.

(Mason, 2008: 46)

In particular, I suggest that it is useful and relevant to view educational change through the lens of complexity theory when analysing, planning and implementing change in *each* specific educational context (Healey & De Stefano, 1997; Fullan, 1999), as

...the reality of complexity tells us that each situation will have degrees of uniqueness in its history and makeup which will cause unpredictable differences to emerge.

(Fullan, 1999: 21)

In other words, change initiatives would perhaps be best managed in a *context-sensitive* manner. Although successful reforms are based, in part, on good ideas, their implementation depends on the nature of the dynamic interaction among the conditions

(Fullan, 1999), that is, as I suggest among the ‘change frames’ in each individual context that enable these ideas to be successfully developed and implemented. Unfortunately, however, it would appear to be the case that reforms have often experienced varying levels of success, possibly because change policy makers, managers, and/or change leaders, especially here in Mexico, appear to have only focused on replicating the content of the reform itself, instead of also replicating the *conditions* which may have influenced its success (Healey & De Stefano, 1997) in other contexts. Thus I suggest that they would be possibly more successful at both implementing and perhaps sustaining change if they were to analyse in greater depth the wide range of conditions required, as well as the possible differences that may emerge among these in each particular educational context.

However, this view just as any other is not without certain difficulties. Awareness of the complexity of change *per se* cannot necessarily help “to predict the direction or nature of the change” (Mason, 2008: 46). Furthermore, “As systems scale up in size and have more and more component parts, the ‘interaction effects’ can make behaviour more and more difficult to predict” (O’Shea, 2007: 637). Therefore, the complex of elements involved within a particular context, coupled with their dynamic interrelationships, may be daunting. Nevertheless, evidence, such as that derived from this inquiry, may provide some concrete and useful indications of where change planners’ priorities should lie. For example, given that it is now generally accepted that teachers are “the most significant change agents in [educational] reform” (Villegas-Reimers, 2003: 5 [my emphasis]), it is surely vital to understand what may motivate teachers’ receptivity of change, whatever the context.

As I have shown above, according to my findings, teachers’ receptivity to change may depend on the interaction of several key factors. These include different aspects of teachers’ careers and lives and how they learn how to teach, as well as their individual and collective values, attitudes and beliefs. In sum, whether or not a teacher’s personal construal of his/her professional identity is not only cultivated and respected, but also enhanced by proposed changes, seems to be a crucial aspect. Furthermore, to a certain extent, it may also depend on the nature of teachers’ interrelationships with other teachers. Nowadays, as teachers’ roles and the demands of their work in the context studied have expanded to include a range of non-teaching tasks regarding curriculum design and planning, as well as, wherever

possible, research, it is now generally accepted that teachers, instead of working in isolation, need to collaborate with their peers (Jarzabkowski, 2002) Therefore, as Lortie (1975) suggests it is imperative not to underestimate “the significance of peer relationships” (p.192). Consequently, anyone who works in an educational institution and wishes to implement change may perhaps profit by reflecting on how it was that the particular small collaborative and collegial culture documented in this enquiry emerged, and thus take into consideration, and, if appropriate, foster, the necessary conditions that seem to encourage other small cultures to evolve that will be equally amenable to embracing change.

2.2 Consideration of Teachers’ Pivotal Role in Educational Change

This thesis argues that educational change is a challenging and complex process, principally because it heavily involves teachers’ own levels of receptivity to change, and their subsequent readiness to embrace, implement and sustain change dynamically. However, it also seems to be the case that adults are typically cost-benefit oriented (Claxton 1996) especially when it comes to deciding whether or not to engage with new learning challenges. Thus, more often than not, teachers’ receptivity to change will involve questions concerning whether or not they themselves feel positive towards the concept of change, whether they are willing to develop new skills and assume new responsibilities and roles, as well as possibly whether teachers are even open to altering their existing beliefs and value systems or, in contrast, feel challenged, vulnerable or threatened by change (Day, 2002). That is, will the benefits they may gain in all the areas mentioned be worth the cost in terms of their own effort? In other words, as van Veen et al. (2001) suggest, the crux of the issue lies in whether or not teachers are willing to accept a possible corresponding change in their own familiar professional identities in order to effect change, and to make the efforts implied.

Thus far, however, when planning change initiatives, change policy makers and organisations seem to have paid little attention to the factors that may influence teachers’ receptivity to change. This perhaps may be due to the commonly accepted and unfortunate assumption that people, in general, are not only unreceptive to change, but that they are “bound to resist” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002: 114). This lack of attention to factors affecting teacher receptivity to change may also be attributed to the fact that educational

organisations often appear to be more interested in producing and measuring the impact of change in quantitative terms, rather than in examining all the possible issues that are involved. Thus, teacher resistance as Giacquinta (1975) suggests, may be seen as a problem that can be overcome simply by means of providing opportunities for professional development and “in-service” training programmes (e.g. Fullan, 1991; Borko et al. 2002; Guskey, 2002; Reio, 2005). However, this notion may have its limitations especially when educational systems that adopt this stance often do not seem to take into consideration the fact that teachers are sentient individuals, and as such, their affective domain may greatly influence both their response to change and their motivation to improve (Day et al., 2006). In particular, teachers’ receptivity may depend primarily on whether change and development is voluntary or coerced. This will have an important effect on a teacher’s response, as according to Weissglass (1994: 69) change “does not simply happen from a desire or a request to change” nor can anybody as Clark (1992) asserts “force a person to learn, change or grow” (p. 77). Generative learning only occurs “when people are striving to accomplish something that matters deeply to them” (Senge, 1990: 206) as corroborated by my findings in this inquiry.

Nevertheless, it appears that many educational systems often attempt to motivate teachers to engage in training by providing only the necessary external conditions, such as financial support. For example, in Mexico, since 1990, teachers’ engagement in professional development has been motivated by funding for postgraduate courses, as well as financial reward programmes for teachers. These rewards are based predominantly on the “visible products” (Kent, 1998: 5) of teachers’ work, such as certificates that accredit attendance on training courses. However, although these programmes may well signify much-welcomed and often much-needed monetary bonuses, they are in the main very unpopular with many teachers owing to the evaluation system that is employed. This is strongly emphasised by Preciado Cortés et al. (2008), in their qualitative inquiry focused on university teachers’ experiences in Mexico regarding this particular evaluation system.

The evaluation system is perceived by teachers as an act of violence on their processes that has multiple implications; for example, one that stands out is teachers’ frustration, as this system has become an element that deteriorates and that (auto) destroys the image of the teachers (Díaz

Barriba, 1997) principally, because it attributes “a fundamental and single value as a means of description of...a person” (Glazman, 2001: 66).
(Preciado Cortés et. al., 2008: 1141)

In other words, according to these researchers, this evaluation system which is no more than an integral part of the limited and limiting “tick-box culture” (James & McCormick, 2009: 977) in education, fails to consider the complexities of the teacher as an individual. It does not take into consideration the “academic, moral and psychological consequences” (Preciado Cortés et al., 2008: 1141) that teachers may experience when as Ball (2003) argues, they “find their values challenged or displaced by the terrors of performativity” (p. 216). Therefore, despite the fact that professional development is an important element that may influence how teachers’ cope with, and adjust to change, as my findings demonstrated, there are also other factors that may interact with professional development and by so doing, not only influence, but perhaps, more importantly, also sustain, their receptivity to change.

One of the major factors that seem to strongly influence teachers’ receptivity to change that emerged from my inquiry, is a teacher’s personal construal of his/her professional identity. As I have argued this construal may be influenced by the importance the teacher assigns to a number of factors (Beijaard et al., 2004) at different stages throughout the course of his or her life history, through the ongoing interaction with his or her environment (Zembylas & Bulmahn Barker, 2007); above all, when faced with change, given that as Ball (2003) claims:

Within each of the policy technologies of reform there are embedded and required new identities, new forms of interaction and new values. What it means to teach and what it means to be a teacher (a researcher, an academic) are subtly but decisively changed in the processes of reform.
(Ball, 2003: 217-8)

My findings appear to not only corroborate this view, but also to suggest that one of the ways to kindle and sustain teachers’ receptivity, as well as their sustained commitment to change, is by means of respecting and supporting teachers’ needs to enhance theirs, and others’, construal of their professional identity. This includes not only providing them with support and opportunities for meaningful professional development, but also improved

status and standing within their educational community, including their active agency in the decision-making process, as well as recognition and reification of their work. In brief, given the changes that we teachers accomplished not only in ourselves, but also in our context (Table 1), my findings seem to confirm Fullan's (1993) succinct comment, made over a decade ago, that "focusing on the individual is not a substitute for system change, it is the most effective strategy for accomplishing it" (Fullan, 1993:135). Thus, I continue to argue that it is vital that organisations gain more knowledge, and thus more understanding of how professional identities are formed and transformed, as well as how these factors may impact both teachers' levels of commitment and their individual and group responses to change (Beijaard et al, 2000; Beijaard et al., 2004; Day, 2007). Such an understanding could then perhaps motivate educational authorities to create at least some of the conditions necessary for fostering teachers' receptivity to change which I have described, while at the same time promoting the transformations in teachers' professional identities, which are essential to enable them to become more efficient and positive in their responses to change.

2.3 Awareness of How Teachers' Cultures/Communities Evolve

Regarding the nature of teachers' collegial relationships, various leading experts (e.g. DuFour et. al. 2005; Graham, 2004; Stoll & Louis, 2007; Lieberman, 2008; Vescio et al., 2008), have affirmed that when teachers can work together and share their experiences with colleagues, this can have a profound impact, not only on teachers' and students' learning, but also on educational change. In particular, my findings appear to support Peterson and Deal's (1998) stance that the development of a healthy collaborative culture is an indispensable requisite for change, as without its presence, little may be accomplished.

Nevertheless, it would appear that instead of favouring and fostering the development of collaborative cultures, educational administrators often seem to prefer to rely on cultures of contrived collegiality, perhaps motivated by the desire to secure "commitment and compliance to changes imposed by others" (Hargreaves, 1992: 217). However, this has rarely proven to be as successful as hoped or expected. At best, it would appear that contrived collegiality may encourage teachers "to focus on specific tasks and changes" (Hargreaves, 1992: 230) and thus foster the formation of communities of practice.

Furthermore, by getting teachers to associate with each other, contrived collegiality may also be perceived as the first step towards longer lasting collaborative relationships. However, I would personally tend to agree with Hargreaves' (1992), statement that it

...cannot legislate a collaborative culture into existence, nor can it provide an adequate 'instant' substitute for such a culture with all the time and care that is needed to help that culture evolve and develop.

(Hargreaves, 1992: 231)

Therefore, I strongly recommend that change leaders and administrators should seriously consider how best to foster, nurture and sustain teachers' collaborative cultures, in order to facilitate change. This would involve the development of a deeper understanding not only of the *form*, but also of the possible *content* (Hargreaves, 1992, 1996, 1997b) of collaborative cultures. Thus, evidence such as that derived from this inquiry concerning both the *content* (Hargreaves, 1992, 1996, 1997b) and *nature* of one specific collaborative culture may serve as a contribution to this deeper understanding.

Although teachers in different contexts may not share such a very similar biographical history, as the ones in my inquiry did, it may be that many of the ingredients that I have found to have bound us together (shared values and vision, shared behaviour, respect and trust), may be fostered and nurtured in other contexts, by putting into practice the list of five essential tasks for building professional communities that Copland and Knapp (2006) advocate:

- building trusting relationships among professionals in the school...;
- creating structures and schedules that sustain interaction among professionals;
- helping to frame joint work and shared responsibilities;
- modelling, guiding and facilitating participation in professional communities that value learning;
- promoting a focus on learning and associated core values.

(Copeland & Knapp (2006) cited by Naylor 2007: 4)

Nevertheless, change leaders and educational administrators need to be ever alert to the fact that this process is by no means as simple as this short list seems to indicate. Although collaboration may be encouraged by these strategies, transforming culture is no easy task

(Seashore Louis, 2006). My findings seem to prove that building respectful trusting relationships among professionals requires ‘mutual engagement’ **over time** in ‘joint enterprises’, during which the shared tacit norms that govern interactions, as well as the behaviours that inspire trust, may be observed, whether consciously or sub-consciously. For example, when I showed my informants a list of the elements and issues I had discovered from the data they had provided me with, the majority agreed with my findings. At the same time, many were surprised that I had in fact apparently discovered so much when they themselves had hardly ever consciously given much thought to these issues. This was noted by Jorge in the following extract.

...I agree with everything here ... I look at this list and say well this is my list...although it includes things that I did not mention to you, now that I see them, I agree with them, but before they didn't occur to me.

(Ver/Jorge/03/05/06)

This extract seems to imply that before my inquiry we had never stopped to think seriously about the nature of our developing interrelationships. For example, Raphael also confirmed this by saying “we’re a culture. It’s true, we are a culture, and I hadn’t thought about it” (Ver/R/02/03/06). This would therefore seem to support Cooper’s (1988) statement that cultures “are not made; they are born and grow” (p.46). Thus although practices such as the ones suggested by Copeland and Knapp (2006) may be helpful to strengthen interrelationships, they cannot guarantee the development of a collaborative culture given that collaborative and collegial cultures

...are not strings of one-shot deals...They are found in the minutiae of school life: in the small gestures, jokes and glances that signal sympathy and understanding; in kind words and personal interest shown on corridors or outside classroom doors, treat days and other little ceremonies; in the acceptance and intermixture of personal lives with professional ones; in overt praise, recognition and gratitude; and in sharing and discussion of ideas and resources.

(Hargreaves, 1992: 226)

Furthermore, what appears to be missing from Copeland and Knapp’s (2006) list, as strongly emphasised in my own data, is the fact that change leaders and administrators need to be much more forthcoming with public acknowledgement of the value of teachers’

work, as well as their respective abilities and accomplishments. If authorities in any given context strengthen teachers' individual and collective pride by sincerely showing their appreciation of their respective abilities and achievements, this may help teachers to develop not only "a sense of belonging and purpose...a sense of spiritual well-being" (Parkinson, 2008:52) in their work place, but it may also lead to their developing a shared "social capital" (Putnam, 2000: 19).

Social capital, as Cohen and Prusak (2001) affirm, "bind[s] the members of human networks and communities and make[s] cooperative action possible" (p.4). Trust especially, one of the vital elements of social capital, is considered as the backbone of collaborative relationships (Skytt, 2003; Hargreaves, 2007). For example, Hoffman et al. (2006) argue, that in educational institutions where there is a climate of trust, teachers are more open when talking about their practices, as well as more prone to taking risks. However, as MacMillian et al., (2005) point out, trust is not developed automatically, but is negotiated and earned in reciprocal relationships. Nonetheless, It is imperative to discover ways of fostering trust in collaborative relationships given that as Coburn and Russell (2008) show, the development of 'social capital' may have important benefits, for individuals, for the emergence of collaborative cultures, and also for the implementation of change in educational organizations.

2.4 Awareness of the Emotional Dimension of Change

In many higher education institutions, more emphasis is often placed on "valuing rationality, objectivity and cognition above emotionality and feeling" (King 2006: 20). However, my inquiry serves to underline the fact that change policy makers, managers, and change leaders need to be fully aware that

...educational change does have an emotional dimension that must be acknowledged in the process of reform. We need to recognise that emotions both shape and are shaped by major change.

(King, 2006: 21)

If the emotional dimension of change is not acknowledged, recognised and paid attention to, it "can act unnoticed and thus have unacknowledged negative or positive influences" (Day, 2007: 605), or, as Hargreaves (1997a) expressed more simply, if ignored, "emotions

and feelings will only re-enter the change process by the back door” (p.18) possibly with disastrous results. For example, as Oplatka (2005) discovered the prospect of change may result in “uncertainty...a threat to core skills and competence...fear of failure, loss, increased confusion, unpredictability and conflict” (p.172), disgruntled teachers may refuse to engage in, or even implement, proposed changes (e.g. Riley, 2000). Consequently, awareness is needed in order to

...create workplaces for teachers that promote positive, even passionate emotional relationships to teaching, learning and improvement...It means reviewing and revising educational reform agendas and the ways in which they are implemented, so they do not negatively affect the emotional labor and emotional rewards of teachers’ work, for example, by making teachers feel ashamed, humiliated, disvalued, and misunderstood.

(Hargreaves, 1997a: 18)

As such, this entails humanising the reform process by actually getting to know and respecting teachers (King, 2006), listening to their ideas and acknowledging, as well as encouraging their contributions, as mentioned in the previous section. As my inquiry shows, confirming Beatty (2002), teachers will be more receptive and so participate more in the changes when teachers receive these

...honorific rewards that can produce feelings of enjoyment, satisfaction and happiness when they are interpreted by teachers as evidence of appreciation and respect for their work.

(Leithwood & Beatty, 2008: 85)

Thus, as Zembylas and Bulmahn Barker (2007) also affirm, “understanding the emotional aspects of educational change is essential, if reform efforts are to be more meaningful and successful” (p. 237). Genuine communication, therefore, is vital between teachers and change leaders, given that my findings confirm Leithwood and Beatty’s (2008) notion that “being respected, personally valued and professionally supported are critical” (p. 93). Thus if teachers are to feel more motivated to develop both their professional identities and the school where they work, as well as be more receptive to change. Consequently, change policy makers, managers, and change leaders need to be aware that

Change and emotion are inseparable...There is no human change without emotion and there is no emotion that does not embody a momentary or momentous process of change.

(Hargreaves, 2004: 287)

In other words, as Smit (2003) asserts “the human and emotional significance of teachers' experiences and understanding of policy change are defining” (p. 2). Teachers' emotions have an impact on their work, their sense of professional identity, and their relationships with other people especially students and their colleagues in their working context, which combined influence their receptivity to, and performance in, change. Thus, change policy makers, managers, and change leaders need to take into consideration not only how to engage teachers' *minds* in change, but also their *hearts* (Hargreaves, 1998).

3. Recommendations for Future Research

Each of the elements that emerged in the various ‘change frames’ identified in this inquiry could be a topic for further research. However, I will only highlight the five major areas that I now consider to play the most vital roles in educational change.

3.1 The Complex Nature of Educational Change

I am well aware that, although my findings have shed some further light on the rich and complex nature of educational change in a specific bounded context, they are not completely and directly transferable to other contexts. Each context will have its own spider's web of ‘change frames’ that dynamically interact and result in the emergence of new properties and behaviours. Therefore, a considerable amount of empirical research is needed in other contexts to explore the complex nature of change in greater depth. This would build on my existing findings and/or perhaps discover other change frames and dynamic relationships inherent among them, other properties and behaviours, and other information on when and how all this occurs. Furthermore, it is possible that much more could be learned if a researcher were to document a change initiative as it was happening in real time, while change was actually being planned, introduced and implemented, rather than inquiring retrospectively, as is the case of this inquiry. In addition, this kind of information could perhaps, in the future, be employed in a possible new style of project evaluation to be applied in educational contexts that would undoubtedly be richer and deeper than the tick box type.

3.2 Teachers' Receptivity to Educational Change

Although receptivity to change is considered one of the vital factors in successful educational change, there is relatively little research that examines teacher receptivity *per se*. Instead, most of the research focuses more on identifying the reasons why teachers *resist* change and what can be done to overcome their resistance. In addition, recent literature regarding teachers' receptivity to change tends to be based more on the results of quantitative rather than qualitative research that has either modified or adopted Waugh and Punch's (1985, 1987) model of teacher receptivity to a system-wide change. Although this research is valuable, more research from different perspectives is required if, as Giacquinta (2005) proposes, "we are to fully grasp the nature of this phenomenon in its own right, as well as its relevance to the various stages of planned change" (p.162). For example, two of the questions that Giacquinta poses are: "what eventually happens to a change effort when clarity is present but not willingness? ... When organizational compatibility and receptivity are present but not resources? (Giacquinta, 2005: 164). In addition, there appears to be a serious lack of qualitative inquiry of the type needed to shed more light on teachers' attitudes, feelings and thoughts that are unquantifiable, and that affect their receptivity to change in their particular working context. Such information could compliment and inform the information derived from prior quantitative research. Thus, although my inquiry contributes some knowledge to this area, more research is needed in other contexts to build on and enrich these initial findings.

3.3 The Formation and Transformation of Teachers' Professional Identities

There is a wealth of research that has focused on the importance of understanding teachers' professional identities. However, there still seems to be a lack of inquiry, regarding the specific personal and professional factors that may influence the formation and transformation of these identities. More attention, therefore, needs to be paid to exploring these factors and the possible impact that they may have on teachers' practices, as well as their responses to change in different contexts of educational change. This could then lead to further research regarding what educational authorities could do to enable and support the necessary processes involved in the formation and positive transformation of teachers' professional identities.

3.4. Teachers' Cultures/Communities

Although there is a growing body of educational research focused on identifying and describing the different types of teachers' cultures/communities, most of this inquiry focuses mainly on how teachers may facilitate change and school improvement by working together, for example, how they may benefit and facilitate students' learning. Nevertheless, there is still only scarce research concerning how teachers' social interactions may benefit the teachers themselves, as well as their institutions. Although my findings add some knowledge to this area by highlighting the significant contribution that social interrelationships played and continue to play in fostering and sustaining the emergence of a small collaborative culture in the university context of this inquiry, a lot more research is necessary in different educational contexts, among teachers working at different levels and types of institution. This would entail exploring the personal concerns and emotional issues involved from the teachers' own perspectives. For example, the experiences of teachers in a culture/community regarding the vital ingredients of trust and respect, as well as pride that may enable the emergence of social capital, as this inquiry has shown. As a result, essential conditions for fostering, supporting and sustaining a healthy culture/community may be more deeply understood and created in the future.

3.5 Emotions in Collegial Relationships and their Impact on Change Initiatives

Nowadays there is a growing body of literature focused on identifying and exploring the emotions that are involved in teaching. However, as various experts point out (e.g. Leitch & Day, 2001; Beatty, 2002; Zembylas, 2002), little empirical study can be found in the literature regarding the issues that may foster either positive or negative emotions in teachers' relationships with each other, or the impact that these may have on their responses to change initiatives. This is especially true in the context of transitional countries (Smit, 2003) such as Mexico, as most of the research concerning the emotional dimension of teachers' practices and their responses to change has so far been carried out in English speaking countries. Such research could help change policy makers, managers and change leaders understand the elements that influence teachers to embrace change. In addition, the ways in which their positive perceptions of change are and/or may be developed, as well as the impact these have on professional growth and the implementation of educational reforms (Oplatka, 2005).

Conclusion

As my finished picture can only be an interpretation of my informants' perception of their realities in retrospect, I fully acknowledge that other interpretations, meanings and understandings are possible. I especially agree with Parker (1999) that "there will always be a gap between the things we want to understand and our accounts of what they are like if we are to do qualitative research properly" (p. 3). However, given that my findings are grounded in teachers' retrospection and a subsequent 'reconstruction' of their 'individual feelings and interpretations' that they experienced during a change process in their working context from 1989 – 2003, I believe my inquiry has rigorously and transparently reconstructed a plausible picture of the complex nature of change as *we experienced it*. It has highlighted the fact that the change process, in this particular bounded context, comprises the dynamic interaction of not only external and internal contextual conditions, but also of personal conditions, in that teachers' perceptions - based on their beliefs, emotions and aspirations – were proven to be a crucial element of a successful change process in the context studied. The major implication of this is that if change policy makers, leaders and managers try to impose large scale reform without taking into consideration the fine texture of each specific educational context – and especially the personal/individual dimension - substantial and durable change may be difficult, if not impossible to achieve. Thus, it is imperative that substantial further inquiry, of a similar type to the present study, needs to be carried out in different contexts so that our collective knowledge can develop internationally to mutual benefit.

List of Appendixes

Appendix 1: Life history interview guide

Where are you from?

Where did you study your BA and when?

What influenced your decision to study this BA?

When did you begin work at the School?

Why did you apply for a job here?

Had you worked anywhere else before? If so, where and how long for?

What is your opinion of this (these) jobs?

Have there been changes in your contract since you started (hours, half-time, full time etc.)?

Have you held any kinds of positions at the School?

Have you furthered your academic studies during this time? If so, can you tell me about them – what, when, why?

Appendix 2: Personal Construct of before and after the 1990's

Characteristics	Before the '90's	During the '90's
BA Study Plan		
Methodology		
Teaching materials (Books & Worksheets)		
Technical equipment		
Working conditions		
Conferences		
Teachers		
Students		
Change incentives		
Work load		
Others		

Appendix 3: Prelim research/interview questions guide

Research questions	Interview questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the teacher's perception of his/her academic self? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kinds of actions are you required or asked to perform in your role as a full-time University teacher? Do you feel comfortable when required to perform these actions/roles? Why or why not? Which of these actions do you prefer performing and why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the teacher's perception of the changes during the last ten years or so in the School of Languages? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the last 10 years or so, there seem to have been many changes and/or developments in the English Language department. Can you tell me about these changes? Who initiated the changes? (You, other teachers, the university authorities, the SEP?). Did you participate in any of these changes? If so could you describe your level of participation? In your opinion who are the best people to organize change (external consultants, U.V authorities, members of the Faculty?) and why? Were the changes that occurred in the last ten years or so necessary? How successful were the changes? How important was the role of the teacher in these changes?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the teachers' perceptions of their role and/or participation in the change process? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you want and/or agree with having a role or participating in the change process? Why or why not? At what level would you or do you want to participate? Why?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is or has been your initial reaction or response to change? What motivates you or has motivated you to participate in these changes? What aspirations or expectations do you normally experience in respect to reform initiatives? How do you feel when you are called upon to do something new? What happens if you find yourself needing new skills and not being proficient when you are used to knowing what you are doing (in your eyes as well as others)? What is necessary for successful change?(characteristics/conditions/people)

Appendix 4: Critical incident interview guide

Think about one of the changes during the 1990s, and try to remember what you felt and thought about it.

Did you participate in this change?

If so, what was your participation or how did you participate?

If not, why does it stand out for you?

Can you remember how the decisions were taken to initiate this change? Did this influence you in anyway?

Were there particular people who led this change?

Did you find this change easy or difficult to take on board? In what sense?

What is your general attitude to change?

How did you feel during the process of this particular change?

How did you cope with this situation?

What motivated you to continue working on this change?

When you have participated in change and seen the results, how has this made you feel?

Can you think of a change that you did not agree with during that time? Why?

What changes would you say are impacting your work at the moment?

What would you say has helped you to cope with, or handle all these changes, during and since 1990?

Appendix 5: Repertory Grid: changes

Look at the three numbers I mention, and see if you can find a way in which two are the same or similar, and one is different. Write down the characteristic the two have in common.

Shared characteristic	1 Plan '90	2 TEFL diploma	3 Opening of SAC	4 MSc	5 Opening of MA	6 MEIF	7 Standardized Exams	8 LDBA

Appendix 6: Repertory grid: people engaged in change

Think about eight people who worked together on the changes during the 1990s, and write their names under the numbers. Look at the three numbers I mention, and see if you can find a way in which two are the same or similar and one is different. Write down the characteristic the two have in common and tell me what it is. In order to conserve anonymity, please do not either tell me their names or give me back this paper.

Shared characteristic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Appendix 7: An example of the transcribed response during the repertory grid interview about the changes

RG/CH/I/11/03/04

Same teachers/actors – we were interested in both
Same people involved in both
Same people involved
Same people / progression – more interest shown in these
Same people continued from one to another
Same interest in studying more, leaving other previous changes behind
One evolves out of the other, same people
Doesn't know either
Technology
Out of the needs of one evolved the other
New
Programmes at a distance
One consequence of the other, i.e. developed out of the other
Same level, one developed out of the other, we studied then we gave
One compliments the other
One helped the other to improve
Postgraduate studies, one provided interest to do the other
One was the base for the proposal of the other
One was the result of the other
One was the result of the other
One satisfied needs of the other, a trend that gave solution or aid to the other
Postgraduate studies, big majority had experience in one, which was the seed for the other
One was the result / consequence of the other
One resolved one of the necessities of the other
One should have the other, in fact it 'transcends' the other
Consequence of the time – began more or less at the same time
Postgraduate programmes – same people involved (the majority)
Our in- house changes, the other wasn't

Appendix 8: An example of the transcribed response during the repertory grid interview about the people engaged in change.

RG/P/V/02/03/05

People who really wanted to improve & participated actively in the changes they were involved in even though they were not understood & supported by some of their colleagues.
People with the knowledge & the will to change things
People who were the head or were in the position to either get involved in the changes or to promote & let others make the necessary changes.
Different personalities but aiming to make changes, let people make the changes
Very hard working & committed people to change & getting involved
Innovators & knowledgeable
Visionary people
Hard working, committed & professional
Hard working & try to do their best to achieve the things they are involved in.
Passionate about projects they were involved in, believed in them & worked very hard together
Very solid knowledge, clear ideas of what they want to do, they think they know what & how to do it.
They believe (although different personalities & approaches) in same things in general, academically speaking.
Always willing to work
Very very different approaches but always for changes.
Very hard working & committed people to their jobs
Knowledgeable & try to innovate
Hard working, honest – they believe in what they're doing.
Different approaches but people who are for changes & innovations, although in different ways.
Easy to work with, to improve things, have their own ideas but also open to others' ideas.
Innovators
Enthusiastic & believe in improvements
If they decide to get involved, they try to do their best and work hard.
Hard working & passionate about projects and work they get involved in
Hardworking, and as long as they worked together, they did what was needed to be done.
Committed, very organized & hard working & cooperative
More knowledgeable, hard working & very committed to the Language Faculty & the changes.
Active role in a lot of innovations that took place in that period.

Appendix 9: Verification interview guide: What I think brought us together

Here is a list of the things that I think solidified our interrelationship, as well as helped us to respond positively to change during the 1990s. What do you think about these things? Do any of them ring a bell? Are there any you would edit, modify or add?

Shared life history

Most people:

- Studied their first degree at the School, some at the same time, some at different times.
- Studied on the 'old plan' when the emphasis was on learning the language.
- After studying the BA, worked elsewhere for a short period of time, so saw different things.
- Have spent time abroad.
- Began to work at the School on an hourly basis as most did not have first degree status.
- Studied the TEFL diploma together.
- Were involved continually in different change projects together.
- Gained full-time status after completing further studies.
- Studied the MSc in TEFL together.
- Worked together on the design and implementation of the in-house MA in TEFL and the LDBA.
- Have been on courses and to conferences in different cities together.
- Are at present studying a Ph.D, or are involved in other change projects.
- Meet outside the School socially and keep in touch, at least via internet.

Shared values

- In general, share a feeling that the School 'made us'.
- Have a shared work ethic – we generously dedicate our time and work to colleagues, students and the School.
- We respect and value hard work.
- We are committed to the School, our students and each other.
- We know we can count on each other.
- We know we will give each other an honest answer, not just say yes, and then not do anything, instead, when we agree to do something, we feel committed to participate until it is finished.
- We treat each other with respect.
- Strong sense of collaboration and co-operation.
- We trust each other.
- We have never allowed that the adverse situations or problems that we have experienced affect our relationships.
- We respond to values at an emotional level. We don't spend hours and hours thinking about these, we respond to them almost immediately.

Shared feelings

At the beginning of our careers we:

- Felt insecure as teachers. We had had no teacher training so relied on instinct and previous role models in order to teach.

- Lacked full confidence in our language abilities.
- Felt cut off, left behind, isolated from both other members of staff and the outside English educational world.
- Conformed with our working lives.

During the 1990s

- We discovered while working together that we had things in common and that we could get things done together because we had similar feelings and objectives.
- We are non-conformists, we don't conform with our present reality, but we look how we can transform it for the better.
- We are restless in our pursuits.
- We are not afraid of trying new things.
- We like challenges.
- We like to learn and improve both the School and ourselves as professionals.
- We have changed with the changes.
- Being involved in further studies and successfully completing higher degrees encouraged us to attempt more and more changes.
- We get on well because we respect each other by not imposing our will on each other, not getting involved in the others' private lives unless invited to do so, and perhaps more importantly, we put up with each other when necessary.
- There is harmony among us based on communication and discussion.
- We respect each other
- We share a feeling of 'well-being' with each other.
- We are not naïve, but are aware of the obstacles and problems in our context, and share the desire to strive to improve it for our students.
- We share a bond of solidarity, especially when facing problems together.
- This bond seems to have developed initially from our joint experience of studying together, and then was later strengthened by working together on the changes.
- We feel we are not alone.
- We depend on each other for support and encouragement.
- We are proud of our collective achievements.

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