

**What happens when teachers participate in
Teacher Rounds?**

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by

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Abstract

This study explores what happened when teachers in three London schools participated in Teacher Rounds (Del Prete, 2013) as a collaborative professional learning activity. It seeks to understand if and how the Rounds' protocols supported teachers' professional learning and helped them improve their practice.

In a climate where teachers' response to traditional CPD and feedback from formal observations is often "passive" (Danielson, 2009, p.4), I argue that Teacher Rounds are an innovative form of professional learning where teachers can take ownership of learning from each other. The Teacher Round protocols ensure a safe environment for teachers to work together in a collaborative way and helps them develop a language to talk about teaching and learning and have professional dialogue with each other. I suggest that professional learning that takes place in the "authentic world" (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 2011, p.82) of the classroom is more effective than traditional CPD in improving the practice of teaching.

This study is primarily a participatory action research (MacDonald, 2012, Chevalier and Buckles, 2013) project, which works with teachers rather than on them. Teacher Rounds are similar in many ways to Instructional Rounds (City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Teitel, 2009) and are based on the practice of teaching hospitals where trainee doctors learn around a hospital bed. Participants in Teacher Rounds used the Round protocols, which included identifying their problem of practice, inviting the Round group into their classrooms, and gathering evidence without attempting to interpret or judge what they see and hear. Following each Round a post-Round discussion was held where teachers reflected on their own practice and the practice they had seen in the classroom.

This thesis makes a unique contribution to the literature and research around professional learning and performance cultures and offers Teacher Rounds as an alternative approach to teacher development.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Rationale (Research Problem)

During the final focus group meeting Christine remarked:

How you get teachers talking about teaching and this (Teacher Rounds) is a process that allows that to happen.
(TB1, Focus Group meeting, 23.6.2016, L190 -191)

Her comments at the end of the Teacher Rounds research summed up the importance of Teacher Rounds as a vehicle for getting teachers talking about teaching and learning. Teacher Rounds (Del Prete 2013) are a form of peer observation and professional learning activity where teachers learn from each other in the context of the classroom.

Twenty years ago Christopher Day commented:

For many teachers, the last twenty years have been years of survival, rather than development. As social and economic change have placed new demands upon and created new expectations from schools, hardly a year has passed without some reform being mooted, negotiated or imposed in the name of raising standards (appraisal, inspection), increasing `user' participation (open enrolment, local financial management) and pupil entitlement (a national curriculum). (1997, p.102)

Clearly the situation for teachers has not changed since then and has in fact become more problematic. Louis (2012) reminds us about the sense of urgency and pressure that exists in schools as tasks and challenges increase. The challenge to continuously raise standards despite the barriers faced by so many cannot be matched by the resources available to tackle these issues. Del Prete argues that the collaborative theme in teachers' work exists in "disheartening tension" with the rising system of "prescribed and controlled curricula and its pressing demand for testable and measurable results, with teachers, increasingly subjected to narrowly conceived evaluation schemes in the name of accountability" (2013, p.xi). Hierarchy and power dynamics in schools are highlighted as teachers often feel powerless in terms of their own classroom practice. Timperley (2007) and City et al. (2009) cite similar dissatisfaction with the state of

education and the lot of teachers. The isolation of teachers at all stages of their careers is well documented (Lortie, 1975; Goodlad, 1984; Lieberman and Miller, 1984) and it is clear that the daily functions and processes of schools typically provide little time for teachers to talk, and share ideas with colleagues (Little, 1987; Lytle and Fecho 1991).

In the early 1980s Judith Little suggested four elements for a school's success:

- Teachers talk about teaching;
- Teachers observe each other teach;
- Teachers, plan, organize, monitor and evaluate their teaching together;
- Teachers teach each other

These four simple strategies perfectly describe the Teacher Rounds protocols where teachers come together to talk about teaching. They identify a problem of practice which is individual to them, they visit classrooms to see each other teach, they develop a language to talk about teaching and to reflect as individuals and as a group and finally they teach each other through the Round and through the post-Round discussion.

The purpose of this study is to examine the process of using Teacher Rounds as professional development for teachers in three London schools. I aimed to research what happened as they used the protocols and also wanted to provide teachers with useful, practical strategies to use to improve their classroom practice. Introducing them to the established Teacher Round protocols and working through the process was a real opportunity for them to collaborate, to talk about teaching and learning in a safe, non-judgmental environment and participate in professional learning in a classroom context.

There is huge pressure to bring about school improvement and subsequently raise student achievement and attainment in the UK and

across the world. The system is constantly looking for the next big idea to improve student performance and the skills of teachers. Finding effective ways to improve the quality of teaching remains a priority for educational systems around the world (Gore, Lloyd, Smith, Bowe, Ellis and Lubans (2015). The high stakes performance culture causes great anxiety and stress amongst teachers but does not help to improve the quality of teaching. The performance agenda also causes great anxiety amongst leadership teams in schools who in turn introduce compliance policies for teachers to adhere to. Therefore, collaboration in schools is much talked about but meaningful opportunities for teachers to work and collaborate together are few. Furthermore, there is real dissatisfaction with professional learning, which teachers claim is not helping them to improve their practice.

The pressures on teachers and on the profession as a whole are immense. Teachers are set increasingly high targets for student performance and are under constant scrutiny with little or no autonomy. The threat of the next Ofsted inspection looms large over every school and every teacher. Heads and Principals are under increasing pressure to improve and many transfer this pressure to their staff. Heads will often insist on teachers conforming to specific school policies on planning and teaching as well as many other aspects of a teacher's job. As a result of so much prescription and oppressive supervision teachers feel unable to take risks in the classroom and to apply new and different pedagogy. Foucault's position on Power and Discipline (1995) is relevant as teachers try to teach in a way that is seen as normal and does not stray from the strict guidelines teachers are presented with by their head teachers. These guidelines are usually informed by Ofsted criteria for good and outstanding teaching.

The research problem is the difficulty of improving teaching and learning quality in the context of centralized, prescribed curricula and teaching methods.

1.2 Background – Teacher Rounds

Rounds in education emerged from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in the 1980's and are based on a medical model with doctors learning around a hospital bed (See Chapter 3). Rounds (in various forms) have been used as a school improvement tool and professional learning activity ever since. Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of various types of Rounds used in schools and in hospitals.

Richard Elmore and Tom Del Prete feature prominently in this study as two of the main promoters of Rounds in education. Both were introduced to Rounds as part of their early work as academics in the Harvard Graduate School. Both were (and still are) concerned with school improvement but whilst Elmore concentrated on developing a systems-wide agenda focused on the leadership of instruction (teaching) and went on to develop Instructional Rounds with City, E., Elmore, R., Fiarman, S., and Teitel (2011). Del Prete was more concerned with supporting teachers at different stages of their careers as part of a university and surrounding schools and he developed Teacher Rounds (1997, 2010, 2013) which are the focus of my research.

Both authors make a detailed assessment of education reform in the United States of America and they are both equally scathing of what has been done. Elmore (2004, p.13) mentions the National Commission on Excellence in Education Report (1983) which describes a Nation at risk and “a rising tide of mediocrity” in relation to education. Elmore (2003, p.9) points to the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), asserting that its fixation on testing diverts the attention of educators away from the “essential but complex task” of defining and building the capacity for high quality instruction in their schools. Whilst Del Prete (2010) argues if reforms are to succeed, we need to understand teaching practice and learning cultures that enable all students to learn. He agrees with Elmore about the negative effects of test based accountability and bureaucratic reform. He says the institutional structures and practices of education have been a “relatively muted topic” (ibid, p.8) in the reform agenda and

he claims teaching practice and learning cultures are the most important of these aspects of reform. However, he says that during the era of No Child Left Behind (2002) the overriding “theory of action” has been that we will gain better results by “demanding them and measuring” (ibid, p.9) them. Del Prete (2010, p13) goes further and asserts tests can make certain “habits of mind and work an endangered species in classrooms”. He says they are at risk when teachers and students are “consumed by testing and measurable results”.

My research, concentrates primarily on the teachers who participated in Teacher Rounds. It outlines their experience whilst they took part in Rounds and in contrast their experience of (oppressive) performance management observations and of the extremes of accountability which Foucault (1977a) describes as surveillance - a constant feeling that they are being watched and evaluated against a particular set of standards.

During my research teachers spoke feely about their experience of performance management and extreme accountability and the negative effect it had on them. Therefore, it has been important for me to examine the effects of power and leadership on the experience of teachers in schools and this is covered in Chapters 2, 4, 6 and 7.

Whilst Elmore sees the fixation with testing as damaging he does make it clear that he believes schools and school systems should be held accountable for their contributions to student learning and asserts that school leaders and Administrators and policymakers at the state, district and school levels should regularly evaluate whether teachers are teaching what they are expected to teach and whether students can demonstrate what they are expected to learn (Elmore, 2000). He says evidence from evaluations of teaching and student performance should be used to improve teaching and learning and, ultimately to allocate rewards and sanctions. Although Instructional Rounds are not evaluative they do involve principals and administrators visiting schools in their district where they (principals and administrators – not teachers) identify a

problem of practice for all the schools involved in Instructional Rounds. They try to find solutions to these common problems of practice that are applicable to all the schools. The problem with this model (in my view) is the distance from the teachers who have little or no say on what the Rounds will focus on. Most are told by their principals that they will be observed as part of the Rounds process. Del Prete designed Teacher Rounds on a much smaller scale because they take place in one school, where teachers volunteer to participate and more importantly they decide on the individual problem of practice in each Round. Similarly, to Instructional Rounds they are not part of the evaluation process in a school.

Elmore's career as a researcher and writer has initially been about bringing about reform at scale and at systems level but his views on this have changed in recent years (Elmore 2016). He asserts "the closer an innovation gets to the core of schooling, the less likely it is that it will influence teaching and learning on a large scale" (Elmore 2004, p.11). Furthermore, he says that most educational reforms "never reach, much less influence, long-standing patterns of teaching practice, and are therefore largely pointless if their intention is to improve student learning" (Elmore, 2004, p.14). The changes that do "stick" in schools are those that are most distant from the core" (p.15). Del Prete has a far more intimate view of teachers and schools and sees even small changes in practice as a positive outcome.

1.3 Aims of the study

The study's objective was to examine teachers' perspectives on Teacher Rounds as a professional learning activity. The research therefore had four main aims:

- (i) To examine the kinds of learning that might be promoted through an application of the Teacher Round method.
- (ii) To investigate potential relationships between individual teacher development and school/department development.

- (iii) To consider the importance (or otherwise) of theory and/or abstract ideas from outside in developing practice.

Finally, I wanted to know if

- (iv) Teacher collaboration *per se* is sufficient to improve practice (Ellis, Gower, Frederick and Childs, 2015).

In the event, my research question was a broad one and was open-ended:

What happens when teachers participate in Teacher Rounds?

The research was a qualitative study that involved teachers in a participatory action research (PAR) project as inquirers into their own practice. The idea was to work with teachers, not on them and there was no hypothesis to test or prove. The research question was open-ended and therefore, some of the outcomes and emphasis were unexpected. My assumption was that the outcomes would be around what participating teachers learned (specifically) from the Round peer-observations. The data showed that teachers opened up about the personal professional experience that had had a major effect on their development (Chapter 5).

1.4 Significance

To date, in education, Rounds have been used as a means for school improvement (City et al. 2009; Gore et al. 2012), for initial teacher education (Del Prete, 1997; Teachers College, 2012) and as a form of professional learning for experienced teachers. Del Prete (2010, 2013) has begun to develop the link between Rounds and school improvement and professional learning but to date the relationship is significantly under-researched. Although the Rounds methodology has a relatively high profile within the school improvement literature (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; and Hopkins 2007, there is little or no evidence of impact on practice and there is little or no understanding of the processes of teacher learning the Rounds model is said to promote (Ellis et al. 2015).

Potentially Rounds are “one of the most valuable tools that a school or district can use to enhance teachers’ pedagogical skills and develop a culture of collaboration” (Marzano, 2011, p.80). It is, therefore, timely to look more closely at this emerging practice. Rounds are virtually unknown in this country, although Learning Rounds were introduced in Scotland some time ago where there has been some research into their implementation and sustainability (Philpott and Oates, 2015), but the topic has not been researched in England and there are few empirical studies from around the world.

1.5 Backdrop to the study

I retired from my role as a head teacher in August 2013 and spent time reflecting on my experience in leading teachers for seventeen years and working alongside them as a teacher for twenty one years before I took up headship. My reflections led me to believe that teachers took the brunt of current pressure, high expectations and consequent stress. In such a high stakes climate, the pressure I was under as Head was visited upon my staff. Although my relationship with the majority of teachers (and there have been many hundreds over the years) was generally good and I believe I was a caring head who attempted to include staff as well as children, I was still at a distance from individual teachers in their everyday practice. It is only retrospectively that I worry that I made their job impossible by giving them more and more hoops to jump through as we worked endlessly to raise the attainment of students in our inclusive school. Scrutiny and compliance was the way we worked but we did everything in our power to ensure teachers were well trained and developed and had all the support they needed to meet the needs of our inclusive clientele.

In a discussion with Professor Viv Ellis, following a conference I was speaking at in Brunel University, I was first introduced to the concept of Rounds and to Teacher Rounds more specifically. Professor Ellis had heard Professor Tom Del Prete speak on the subject at various times and knew him personally, and after listening to my presentation about my

leadership journey and my musings on the way teachers were supported he pointed me in the direction of Teacher Rounds. I had been reflecting on the constant monitoring and checking processes teachers endured and I thought that there must be another way to achieve accountability and quality control and to support teachers in their efforts to become even better practitioners. Professor Ellis recommended Del Prete's book, and the notion of teachers collaborating and learning together in the context of the classroom was impossible to resist, and so this study came about.

As a retired secondary head I am interested in finding sustainable ways to improve teaching and learning. Teachers have been monitored, evaluated, observed and judged throughout their careers. The fear and anxiety caused by formal observations has resulted in a climate of mistrust that provides little opportunity to collaborate with other practitioners to improve their practice.

Finally, we are now in the midst of one of the greatest teacher recruitment and retention crises in recent history. The research on teacher supply shows that between 2011 and 2015 the overall "wastage rate" increased in every subject at secondary level. Furthermore, statistics published by UCAS in January 2018, show that on 18 December 2017, 12,820 people had applied for teacher training. At the same point in the previous recruitment cycle, 19 December 2016, 19,330 people had made applications. The figures equate to a drop of 6,510 (33 per cent). There were 34,200 applications in December 2017, compared with 52,590 in December 2016. (TES, Will Hazell - 4th January 2018)

This crisis is not going away and it is clear that teaching has got to become more manageable and teachers need to be respected and trusted to do their jobs. Collaboration between teachers is subordinated to compliance, with quantitative data used to reflect the effectiveness of teaching. More often than not, such approaches subtly destroy schools and disengage our professional teachers. Jeremy Hannay, Headteacher of Three Bridges School recently said in a blog post:

If you want a world-class education system, then empower our teachers. We cannot have courageous and confident teachers if they are simply passive and compliant. (November 2016)

1.6 Overview of Study

This thesis is organized into seven chapters.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the research topic and an overview of the study.

Chapter 2 is a review of literature on Collaboration and Professional Learning.

Chapter 3 is a review of literature on Rounds.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed breakdown of the methodology and methods used to undertake the study.

Chapter 5 outlines the results and findings and looks at the data, which were collected through the interviews, post Round discussions and focus group meetings with the sixteen teachers who participated in the study.

Chapter 6 provides a detailed analysis and discussion of the findings.

Chapter 7 presents the conclusions and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review 1 - Collaboration

2.1 Introduction

Teacher Rounds involve groups of teachers visiting each other's classrooms in order to learn from each other and to improve their practice. Rounds operate under strict protocols and are a practical way of enabling teachers to reflect individually and as a group and allow meaningful collaboration. Therefore, I felt it was important to include a review of the literature around collaboration between teachers in schools as the first chapter in this thesis. This chapter sets the scene for the following chapter – a Literature Review around Rounds. This review on collaboration is structured around claims in the literature about the importance and effectiveness of collaboration as part of teachers' professional development.

Little (1982) and Lieberman (1990) argue that the most powerful influences on teachers are other teachers. Shulman (2004) and Sutton and Shouse (2016), argue that teaching is a complex process and claim teachers and school leaders crave more meaningful collaborative experiences to help make sense of that complexity. They suggest that collaboration between lead practitioners and teachers is a powerful professional learning activity that can help teachers improve their subject knowledge, think about teaching strategies in different ways and learn new ideas. This model currently depends on teachers learning from experts rather than from their peers, yet teachers have been found to learn more from each other than from mentors or in traditional workshops.

Freiberg and Knight (1987, p.3) suggest teaching in effective schools is a "collective, rather than individual enterprise". This view is supported by Timperley et al. (2007) and Sutton and Shouse (2016) amongst others but Hargreaves et al. argue that education policies have rarely built on this fact. He says that the best way of exploiting this phenomenon is through "regular, face-to-face encounters among professionals that focus on the improvement of teaching and learning" (2010, p.23).

2.2 Rounds as a collaborative activity

As early as autumn 1997, Del Prete cited the Teacher Rounds model of professional development as playing a major role in the development of the Clark University Collaborative of schools. He explained (1997, p.1) that the Collaborative adopted the Rounds model to engage university and school teachers along with prospective teachers in “reflective and productive dialogue” on children’s learning and teaching practice. Collaboration amongst teachers is a theme running through Del Prete’s writing (2010 & 2013) and his work at Clark University. He believes that teacher development is central to school improvement. His work has centered on getting teachers to collaborate together to improve their practice, and Teacher Rounds provided a structured model to facilitate this approach.

The original goal of the Clark University Collaborative was to build a professional learning community, which viewed adult learning as vital to the continuous improvement process (Del Prete, 1997). This emphasis on teacher development rather than specific student outcomes was unusual as much of the literature around professional learning communities is focused almost entirely on raising student standards as the reward for collaborative activity. The needs of the profession appear to be something of an afterthought in much of the literature.

Teacher Rounds were seen as a very effective way of facilitating positive collaborative working amongst teachers (Del Prete, 2013) while City et al. (2009), writing about Instructional Rounds, cite collaboration amongst teachers as the answer to the many problems facing the teaching profession; for instance, the increased pressure to produce better results (Hargreaves, 2007; City et al. 2009; Del Prete, 2013), the pace of change (Timperley et al. 2007) and teacher isolation (Lytle and Fecho, 1991; Sutton and Shouse, 2016). However, Del Prete (2012, p.13) makes it clear that collaboration for collaboration’s sake will not be effective. He argues that collaboration must have a clear aim and purpose. Furthermore, Timperley et al. (2007, p.10) argue that research evidence

reveals only a “weak relationship” between participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and improved student outcomes but she cites findings from many studies that suggest that participation in a PLC with one’s colleagues is an integral part of professional learning.

Much of the discussion around collaboration and collegiality is framed in the language of PLCs. These involve groups of teachers collaborating together to improve teaching and learning. Teacher Rounds are one such example.

Collaboration in itself will not solve all the problems teachers face in their everyday practice. However, enabling teachers to talk to each other and to reflect on their own practice and that of their colleagues can lead to improvements in the quality of teaching but this does not always lead to demonstrable student outcomes. With this in mind teachers need to feel that their professional learning is just as important as measurable student outcomes.

2.3 Collaboration

Hawkes and Romiszowski (2001) define collaboration in education as “the process of willing cooperation with peers and colleagues to reach educational objectives” (p.287).

Stoll (2010) described collaborative inquiry as a means in which learning communities:

De-construct knowledge through joint reflection and analysis, re-constructing it through collaborative action, and co-constructing it through collective learning from experiences (p.474).

Du Four (2004) defines teacher collaboration as the professional collaborative and cooperative practices and activities that teachers engage in to achieve their shared educational goals. Del Prete describes class-to-class variation in achievement as a common occurrence in schools and he suggests the best way of addressing this issue is to “establish school based professional learning practices through which teachers routinely share, examine, discuss and develop their teaching

practices and their students' learning" (2010, p.16).

Troen and Boles (2014, p.21) promote the idea of collegiality and collaboration as ways of enabling meaningful teacher discussions around their practice, especially when situated within "assumptions of critical collegiality", strengthening teacher-learning opportunities and reinforcing the "practical basis" for teacher growth.

Del Prete (2013, p.13) warns that when collaboration is subject to "top-down control, increased standardization of curriculum and teaching, and narrow accountability measures", then teachers have more reason to resist than to participate. Furthermore, he argues that imposed collaboration can foster more "conservative individual" behaviour and he says that students' education can suffer as much as teacher professionalism under these circumstances. This is an important point and one of the barriers to effective collaboration in schools is that the principal, or senior team, often choose the collaborative task (Sutton and Shouse, 2016) rather than the teachers themselves deciding the problem of practice. This, they argue means teachers do not always take collaboration seriously and often see it as an irrelevant exercise with no clear outcomes.

2.3.1 Power and discipline and surveillance

It is clear that collaboration cannot be forced or imposed on teachers. Whatever the intended impact or outcomes of the collaboration if it is not decided or owned by the teachers themselves it is unlikely to be effective. This raises the issue of power in schools and Foucault's writing in terms of power and discipline is very relevant at this point. In particular the notion of the panopticon, which is a social theory originally developed by Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish* (1995). This is particularly relevant to schools where teachers participating in this study feel like they are constantly being watched and judged. The panopticon refers to an experimental laboratory of power in which behaviour could be modified, and Foucault viewed the panopticon as a symbol of the disciplinary

society of surveillance. Jeremy Bentham (1791) considered the panopticon as a circular building with an observation tower in the centre of an open space surrounded by an outer wall. This wall he suggested would contain cells for occupants. He claimed this design would increase security by allowing more effective surveillance of inmates. He suggested occupants would be invisible to each other, with concrete walls dividing their cells. Thus they would be isolated from each other as teachers are in their classrooms. Bentham (1791) asserted that due to the bright lighting coming from the watch tower, occupants would not be able to tell if and when they are being watched, making discipline a passive rather than an active action. Whilst this is an extreme description it does have parallels with the experience of teachers in their everyday life. Bentham argues that the inmates in their cells act as if they are being watched, though they cannot be certain eyes are actually on them.

The result of this constant surveillance is according to Foucault (1995) is a type of invisible discipline as each prisoner (or in this case teacher) self-regulates, in fear that someone is watching their every move. Foucault (1995) builds on Bentham's conceptualization of the panopticon as he elaborates upon the function of disciplinary mechanisms and illustrates the function of discipline as an apparatus of power. The ever-visible inmate, Foucault suggests, is always "the object of information, never a subject in communication" (1995, p.198). This could be an apt description of the experience of teachers in schools today. Foucault adds that:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (1995, p.202, 203).

I would argue that teachers in our schools have become "the principle of his own subjection" because they have been trained and led in such a way that they believe there is only one way to teach and are constantly in

fear of being found out if they do not stick to the schools way of doing things and will be judged as being poor teachers. They believe that the Ofsted framework and criteria being promoted in their schools is the norm and they need to measure up. Thus they work hard to normalize their teaching according to set criteria. Acceptance of this premise means teachers take responsibility for their own subjection.

When Foucault talks about surveillance (1977a) he could be describing the audit and performance agenda that is so common in so many of our schools.

2.3.2 Collegiality

Teacher collegiality is defined as, “teachers’ involvement with their peers on any level, be it intellectual, moral, political, social and/or emotional” (Jarzabkowski 2002, p.2). Hipp and Huffman (2007) offer a slightly different definition and argue that teacher collegiality is related to the quality of the relationships among teachers, including respect, trust, norms of critical inquiry and improvement, and positive, caring relationships. So collegiality is therefore about qualitative relationships between teachers. However, Timperley (2007) says a collegial community will often end up entrenching existing practice and the assumptions on which it is based. She points to the major problem with many collaborative projects that have been set up in schools because of what she describes the “norms of politeness and the absence of challenge” (Timperley, 2010, p.11).

Within schools teachers are often grouped together into smaller Professional Learning Teams (Ning et al. 2015). This might be Key Stage groups or curriculum teams, depending on the school organization. The effectiveness of teacher learning teams relies mainly on team members’ willingness to set aside individual differences to engage in collaborative activities and learn from one another (Stoll et al. 2006; Webster-Wright 2009). Past research has provided evidence for the positive effect of teacher collegiality on collaboration (Jarzabkowski, 2002) and collegiality

amongst teachers is integral to achieving effective collaboration.

Hargreaves and Dawe (1990, p.227) defined and analyzed the differences between *authentic* collegiality and *contrived* collegiality. They found that *authentic* collegial relationships between teachers can foster teacher and curriculum development, whereas the *contrived* form of collegiality merely enhances administrative control. Therefore, a curriculum team might be seen as a useful organizational and administrative tool. *Contrived* collegiality would be composed of working groups put together by the senior leadership team. *Authentic* collegiality is where participation is based around common interests, for instance, around curriculum development and pedagogy.

The quality of the collegial relationships among teachers is considered fundamental and necessary for the successful implementation of school Professional Learning Communities, (Bryk et al. 1999; Musanti and Pence, 2010 and Lee et al. 2011). Moreover, Bryk et al. (1999) argue: “when teachers trust and respect each other, a powerful social resource is available for supporting the collaboration, reflective dialogue, and *deprivatization* characteristics of a professional community” (p.767). Deprivatization of practice assumes that teachers share with others their teaching practices and therefore their beliefs about teaching and learning to a greater or lesser degree. Thus, a collegial Professional Learning Team climate, whereby team members trust and respect each other and engage in supportive and productive interactions with one another as professional colleagues, is crucial for teachers’ collaborative learning and development and for authentic collegiality to flourish.

Collegiality is an essential ingredient of effective collaboration and cannot be taken for granted. The issue of good relationships and trust amongst teachers is a major one and the literature around the subject is discussed in this chapter in section 2.9.

2.3.3 *Collectivism*

The value-concept of collectivism is explained by Hofstede (2001) as the

prioritization of group interests over self-interest. The author argues that past studies have shown that collectivists have high regard for team harmony (Oyserman et al. 2002) and have low resistance to teamwork (Kirkman and Shapiro, 2001a). Furthermore, Chen and Tjosvold's (2008) study, which examined collectivist values for productive teamwork, found that a collectivist team culture strengthens teammates' collegial relationships. Ford and Chan (2003) found that in low collectivism cultures, knowledge sharing can be more difficult as individuals view knowledge as a source of power, and knowledge hoarding as a tool which can provide advantages and success for individuals. But in high collectivism cultures, knowledge sharing is much more common if it is seen as beneficial to the group.

The study by Ning et al. (2005) demonstrated that team collectivism has a positive effect on team collegiality. This finding is in line with past studies, which have established the link between collectivistic values and team relationships and harmony (Kirkman and Shapiro, 1997, 2001a; Oyserman et al., 2002). In addition, the results also indicate that team collegiality is a significant and positive predictor of both measures of team collaboration. This corroborated findings from previous teacher research which has shown that collegial relationships with colleagues can encourage cooperation and collaborative work practices (Jarzabkowski, 2002). It is difficult to establish which comes first; collaboration or collegiality but it is clear that there is a strong link one with the other.

The Ning et al. (2015) research findings confirmed that team collectivism was found to have both direct and indirect effects on team collaboration, which implies that some of the positive effects of team collectivism on team collaboration can be attributed to team collectivism-induced collegiality among teachers. This finding echoed the team's expectation that team collectivist values can strengthen teammates' collegial relationships, which in turn can foster team collaboration.

The results of the Ning et al. study (2015) suggested that team collegiality is such a significant predictor of team collaboration that the authors suggest a sustained effort should be made by school leaders to encourage positive interactions among teachers (Stockard and Lehman, 2004). The provision of supportive conditions for teachers to interact with each other can facilitate the cultivation of a collegial atmosphere and encourage communication (Barth 1990; Heck and Marcoulides, 1996; Hord 2004). However Pang, (2003, p.301) suggests there is a need to reduce power differentials and bolster the development of authentic collegial relationships: “teachers should also be involved in school decision making and policy formulation and be given the freedom to function relatively unimpeded by superiors” to allow for greater exercise of autonomy in professional judgment (p.301).

Elmore (2000) suggests that school leadership needs to change and needs to be anchored in the work of instructional practice. He argues that there is an emergence of a new definition of school leadership with an increased focus on “the distribution of leadership, dispersing responsibilities for guidance and direction along the same contours as the distribution of competence and expertise in improving the quality of instructional practice and the level of student learning” (ibid, p.42). Although Elmore is promoting distributed leadership he is still talking about an instructional model that does not really allow teachers greater autonomy. This no doubt was part of his thinking in setting up Instructional Rounds with City et al. (2011). Instructional Rounds were designed to allow Administrators/District Officers and Principals get into classrooms and for them to have a more hands on approach to instruction. The Instructional Rounds process depends on a group of Administrators and Principals working together, visiting each other’s schools and classrooms but they (not the teachers who will be observed) decide on the problem of practice to be addressed. Whilst the model is a good example of collaborative working amongst senior leaders it is still a top-down model that does not distribute any power to teachers.

The government does not monitor the extent to which schools are engaged in different forms of external partnership and collaboration, but it is estimated that the majority of secondary schools in England are in some form of collaborative arrangement (CMRE Report, 2016, p.7) with many engaging in multiple partnerships for different reasons. At the same time, it is estimated that up to 20% of schools are in some form of hard federation, involving more formal relationships between schools (House of Commons Education Committee 2013a). However, little is known definitively about what impact any of this has had for improving pupil attainment. School-to-school partnerships have to date been promoted by “theoreticians and (historically) by policy makers far in advance of any real understanding of the value they add” (House of Commons Education Committee 2013a: 15-16; 2013b: Ev64, p.12). Even less is known about in-school collaboration.

Team collegiality is a significant element of achieving team collaboration but this needs to be cultivated and nurtured. It won't just happen. Power differentials and hierarchies need to be reduced if authentic collegiality is to develop. Creating a supportive school culture where teachers can thrive and collaborate effectively is an issue for school leaders to consider and is discussed in section 2.11.

2.4 Effective Collaborative Practices

Hargreaves (2010) warns educators to be cautious, as collaboration by itself will not enhance teacher learning any more than student learning. He says that collaboration needs a valued common purpose with some measure of self-direction, and with shared responsibility and accountability. He argues that collaboration needs to initiate and nourish trust among participants and trust between teachers and any overarching leadership or institutional structure (Bryk and Schneider, 2002). It needs to be founded on “respect” for teachers as professionals and for the challenging work of teaching (Del Prete, 2013, p.13).

Teachers learn from each other as collegial peers, but in reality, they may

remain conscious of whose opinions hold more weight based on the power position the sharer holds at school, and submit to those who are in authority. In other words if a member of the senior team is part of the discussion group, individuals may modify their responses for fear of being seen as resistant or difficult.

The democratic nature of Teacher Rounds empowers teachers and facilitates discussion about teaching and learning. Foucault (1996) argued discourses define the reality of the social world and the people, ideas, and things that inhabit it. For Foucault, a discourse is an institutionalized way of speaking or writing about reality that defines what can be intelligibly thought and said about the world and what cannot. This is particularly true of schools where teachers' voices are often muted because of the hierarchical structures and performance and accountability culture. Foucault's point is that a new discourse may not discover some pre-existing, core truth but rather created it through particular practices of power/knowledge. He suggests discourse changes the way we think about key concepts and ourselves. The protocols associated with Teacher Rounds encourages and enables teachers to have a discourse around what happens in their own classrooms. Whilst these discussions may not result in the discovery of new truth or new knowledge but the support teachers reflections on their own practice and resulted in small individual changes in classrooms.

Foucault's notion of governmentality (1991) challenges traditional notions that see power as residing in a central institution or body that holds power over its subjects. Foucault believes that power, and especially disciplinary power which operates to make individuals "provide a hold on their conduct" and is "diffuse, relational and discursive" (Foucault, 1991, p.170). If power is found in the complex relationships that construct and control what people think and do, then understanding how power operates can become a tool which illuminates beliefs, behaviours and practices (ibid 1991). This point is relative to teachers who often feel powerless in their roles and feel unable to speak out and to exercise any

form of autonomy in their classrooms. The feeling of being done to rather than being done with is a very real experience for many teachers.

Hofstede (2001, p.98) argues that the value-concept of power distance is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of a society expect and accept that power is distributed unequally”. This is an important issue to consider when introducing Teacher Rounds in a school. Foucault (1991) believes power does not have to be negative. He claims resistance is intrinsic to governmentality and explicitly states: “we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’.... in fact, power produces; it produces reality’ (Foucault, 1991, p.194). Foucault’s ideas of power and discourse illuminate that while there are “practices of subjection”, there are also “practices of liberation” (Patrick, 2013, p.6). The issue of subjection in schools is relative and is often subtle but its effects are felt to a lesser or greater degree by teachers across the UK who are directed, monitored and judged on a daily basis. Redistributing this power through distributing leadership (Elmore 2000) may be the way forward. Teacher Rounds might be the way to redistribute some of that power by giving teachers a voice and a language about what is happening in their own classrooms.

The findings of Ning et al. (2015) draw attention to the important roles of team value orientations and collegiality in the context of teacher professional learning. Therefore, they suggest that collectivism and power distance are the two value orientations which have received the most attention in the literature and have been shown to be the most important dimensions in relation to team relations, interactions, and collaboration (Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001; Basabe and Ros 2005). Thus, PLCs require the willingness and ability of teachers to collaborate with each other as part of their professional learning. This requires a collectivistic view of the self as an integral part of the teacher professional network.

Sharing of professional and personal practice with colleagues within a collaborative group, is known as “deprivatized practice” (Louis et al. 1996, p.760) and requires teachers to engage in activities such as peer coaching, classroom observations, lesson study and discussion to advance their professional development (Hord 1997; Stoll et al. 2006) and these need an appropriate infrastructure. Bryk et al. (1999) found that when teachers engage in peer observation and feedback and open their practice up to scrutiny by colleagues, they learn to ask questions and evaluate their practices in a more analytic fashion. Louis (1992) argues that teacher collaboration can therefore cultivate teachers’ sense of belonging and helps sustain improvement by strengthening the networking and professional affiliation among teachers.

The issue of trust amongst participants in any collaborative activity is key but so too is trust in the leadership. The emphasis of accountability as opposed to collegiality and collaboration is problematic. Teachers learn from each other but the structures and cultures of schools do not always recognize this fact when planning professional learning opportunities (Section 2.9).

2.5 Why collaborate?

Sutton and Shouse (2016) argue that teaching is a complex process and claim teachers and school leaders crave more meaningful collaborative experiences to help make sense of that complexity. They suggest that collaboration between lead practitioners and teachers is a powerful professional development activity that can help teachers improve their subject knowledge, think about teaching strategies in different ways and learn new ideas to try in the classroom. Furthermore, research claims that teachers who work together have proved more likely to remain in the profession because they feel valued and supported in their work (Beane, 1998; Barth, 1999). This is an important issue to consider in today’s climate where large numbers of teachers are leaving the profession and recruitment is at an all time low.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) assert that teaching is defined primarily by what teachers do when they are not with other teachers. Moreover, they suggest that when teachers are evaluated, it is individual classroom performance that is scrutinized. Lytle and Fecho (1991) argue that isolation acts as a deterrent by secluding teachers from each other and creating a cycle in which teachers may view teacher research as hazardous. This is because of the high stakes around individual performance management. Moolinar et al. (2012) argue that researchers and policy makers have begun to acknowledge the importance of teacher collaboration for strengthening schools and building individual teachers' knowledge.

Sutton and Shouse (2016) suggest that the structural, cultural, and historical factors involved with schooling hinder the extent to which teachers can and do collaborate. This is because teachers usually work in isolation in their classrooms and rarely get any time to work together. The authors argue that if schools want to overcome these barriers they need to work around the “persistent structural constraints to establish a sincere and thoughtful collaborative culture” (ibid, 2016, p.1) then they must approach collaboration differently. School culture they say emerges as a significant support or barrier to collaboration and the authors comment that collaborative cultures emerge from authentic and relevant problem solving (ibid, p.1). Furthermore, the authors claim that collaboration amongst teachers facing similar problems in a school builds trust and expertise and enables schools to implement changes with greater ease. Trust is a major issue and is discussed further on in this chapter.

2.6 Barriers to collaboration

Moolenaar et al. (2012, p.8) argue the major challenge for research on teacher collaboration is that the concept has been interpreted in a very broad sense — for instance, as a form of school climate or culture

encompassing “norms of collegiality, trust, and social support; a management instrument to enhance school effectiveness; and a characteristic of a professional learning community”. Conversely, Del Prete (2013, p.13) suggests that the conditions for collaboration need to be very clear. He warns that when teacher collaboration is subject to “top-down control, increased standardization of curriculum and teaching, and narrow accountability measures then teachers have more reason to resist than to participate”.

Perryman (2006, p.148) discusses the notion of “panoptic performativity” to explore the experience of a school in Special Measures undergoing numerous Ofsted inspections. The panoptic vision is based on Foucault’s writing (1977a) and describes a type of *invisible* discipline that reigns throughout a school in special measures as each teacher self-regulates and behaves in a way that they would if someone was constantly watching them. Perryman claims that Ofsted forms an important part of the disciplinary regime in education. She quotes Lonsdale and Parsons (1998, p.110): “The exercise of school inspection [is] one of improvement through threat and fear, an intentionally disciplining role”. Perryman claims there are clear links between special measures regimes and Foucault’s (1977a, p.170) work on discipline where he argues “the success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination”. This is replicated in schools and to the experience of teachers in our schools. Perryman (2006, p.150) argues that Ofsted is a system which “dictates that in order to be removed from special measures teachers must adhere strictly to a rigid and predetermined recipe for success. This ‘recipe’ is based on school effectiveness theories, and uses *performativity* and *normalization* as its mechanisms”. She comments that it is assumed that all schools can follow the same recipe for success, and any deviation from this norm can be an indicator that a school is failing. It is for this reason that head teachers have used this framework to normalize

working practices even though they may not be judged to be in Special Measures.

Foucault (1977a, p. 184) writes, 'Like surveillance, and with it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power'. By "normalization" he means the establishment of rules and judgements around the idea of a norm, so that rather than coercing subjects, forcing them to follow 'the rules', institutions are judged as successful in so far as they educate people to obey particular regimes. For schools, this is linked to assessment, appraisal and evaluation, as teachers become agents and subjects of measurements (Perryman 2006).

Teachers work within a tight framework where they are expected to conform. Ofsted and subsequently Teaching Standards became the frameworks adopted by heads of schools that all teachers are expected to fit. Their performance is judged against this criteria. Thus, accountability and an over emphasis on performance in schools acts as a major barrier to collaboration.

Del Prete (2013) argues that imposed collaboration can foster more "conservative individual" behaviour and he says that students' education can suffer as much as teacher professionalism under these circumstances (p.13). This is a valid point and one of the barriers to effective collaboration is that the principal or senior team usually decides on the collaborative task (Sutton and Shouse, 2016) rather than the teachers themselves deciding the problem of practice. This, they argue, means teachers do not always take collaboration seriously and often see it as an irrelevant exercise with no clear outcomes.

The performativity agenda is a real barrier to collaboration. Ball (2004) notes the insidious nature of the performativity agendas in schools and warns of the divisive nature of such agendas suggesting that many teachers are terrorised by performativity agendas at all kinds of levels. Teachers are particularly vulnerable to these regimes of accountability or what Foucault (1977a) may describe as surveillance, a constant feeling

that you are being watched and evaluated against standards.

The use (and abuse) of power in schools can act a barrier to effective collaboration and according to Foucault (1977a) discipline is a mechanism of power that regulates the thought and behavior of social actors through subtle means. He argues that in contrast to the brute, sovereign force exercised by monarchs or lords, discipline works by organizing space (e.g. the way a prison or school is built), time (e.g. the set times you are expected to be at work each day), and everyday activities. He also suggests that surveillance is an integral part of disciplinary practices. This structure described above perfectly describes the mechanism of power and disciplines in many of our schools that can act as an additional barrier to collaboration. Formal observations, learning walks, work scrutiny, performance managements and constant monitoring of practice means teachers become anxious and fearful of being judged as failing. Trust is eroded through the overuse of these processes.

Collective efficacy, which is a teacher's ability to produce a desired or intended result, improves student performance and creates a work environment that builds teacher commitment to the school (Brinson and Steiner, 2007; City, et al. 2011). Collective efficacy has "a fairly strong positive relationship to organizational effectiveness" (City et al. 2011, p.165). One of the suggestions stemming from research as to how leaders can improve collective efficacy is by creating opportunities for teachers to collaboratively share skills and experience (Brinson and Steiner, 2007, p.3). Instructional Rounds tries to model the relationship between individual learning and collective learning by putting people in situations where they have to develop "common norms and a common understanding" about the conditions that produce their success (City et al. 2011, p.165).

Teaching is a complex and difficult process and teacher isolation is common. We know teachers learn from each other and thrive when they

participate in supportive collegiate activities. Collaborative activities and communities working on a number of shared issues can lead to improved practice in the classroom.

2.7 Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Professional Learning Communities come in all shapes and sizes and are not just found in schools and education establishments or organizations. They may have different ways of working with different aims and objectives but the thing they have in common is that they enable people to work in partnership on achieving common goals. Another definition of a PLC is a professional development initiative derived from day-to-day work practices (Dunne et al. 2000). DuFour and Esker (2007, p.14) defined PLCs as “educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve”. However, Louise (2007, p.3) proposes that schools where PLCs are introduced are where the focus is:

- (i) professional learning;
- (ii) within the context of a cohesive group;
- (iii) collective knowledge, and
- (iv) occurring within an ethic of interpersonal caring that permeates the life of teachers, students and school leaders.

Furthermore, the authors conclude that a structure for greater collaboration among teachers that is implemented properly and sustained over time, results in a strong professional community that, in turn, contributes to improved student learning however, the evidence that collaboration amongst teachers has any influence on student outcomes is scarce.

Lieberman (2012, p.470) suggests that the original idea of learning communities was developed by Judith Warren-Little (1982). At that time she was studying schools in Colorado where there had been a recent court-ordered desegregation of schools. She found that in schools where

there were norms of collegiality and experimentation it was easier to promote higher levels of student achievement, as opposed to schools where teachers were isolated from one another. This study laid the groundwork for subsequent studies seeking to find out how such norms were built, structured and sustained and gradually the idea of community emerged.

Stoll et al. (1995, p.239) carried out a review of the literature around PLCs and pointed to the issue of trust and positive working relationships. The authors argue that working together productively in schools depends on positive relationships and collegiality (Nias, Southworth and Yeomans, 1989; Louis et al. 1995), although de Lima (2001) argues that the only imperative in forming a community of professionals is deep commitment to pupils' learning, development and well-being. Nonetheless, dysfunctional relationships can have a negative effect on a school (Reynolds, 1996). Engaging in learning can be risky, especially when working with colleagues. Teachers are unlikely to participate in collaborative activities unless they feel safe. Trust and respect from colleagues is critical (Louis et al. 1995). As Bryk et al. (1999, p. 767) note:

By far the strongest facilitator of professional community is social trust among faculty members. When teachers trust and respect each other, a powerful social resource is available for supporting collaboration, reflective dialogue, and deprivatization, characteristics of professional community.

Louis (2012, p.478) comments that the popularity of PLCs builds both on an increasing research base and also on their practical appeal reflecting that PLCs are not expensive, and “do not require big up-front investment”. Louis argues that in order to shift a school toward organizational learning and professional community, it requires “rearranging existing resources and the imaginative use of talents” (Ibid, p.478) and assumes that teacher development necessitates building on human capital that already exists.

Slegers et al. (2009) argue that focused attention on PLCs has not produced consensus about a definition of a PLC. However, there is

agreement about some of the core characteristics of a PLC (Fullan 1999; Putnam and Borko 2000; McLoughlin and Talbert 2001; Stoll and Louis 2007; Hord and Sommers, 2008). These include the notion that PLCs involve collective work. The work of groups of teachers focuses on reflective inquiry with the explicit emphasis on how knowledge improves student learning. Also there is a core of shared values and norms that influence how daily decisions are made in classrooms.

Louis (2012, p.477) explores two approaches to school improvement, directly related to teacher and school development. These are *professional community* and *organizational learning*. She argues that *organizational learning* focuses on how people find and use information to improve their collective work and *professional community* reflects the natural strengths of schools and teachers, as generally cooperative and concerned about student learning. However, Talbert (2010) argues that bureaucratic systems (such as schools) create mandates, checks and rules that govern the behavior of the PLC participants and therefore, learning communities are bound to be challenged by the way the school systems are organized and run. Furthermore, he argues that developing learning communities is akin to changing professional cultures and that collaboration, mutual trust and accountability, must grow in a context of rules, regulations and monitoring.

PLCs are set up primarily as a professional learning activity and they provide a structure that enables teachers to work together and in partnership to achieve common goals or objectives. Trust and positive relationships are essential ingredients of an effective learning community as is a deep commitment to pupils' learning and well-being. However, PLCs can be risky for individual teachers in these days of accountability and performance management. Therefore trust and good relationships need to be established so that teachers can participate without fear of recriminations. The notion of shared values of participating teachers might need to be further explored rather than assumed.

2.7.1 The Benefits of Professional Learning Communities

Studies reviewed by Vescio et al. (2008) have shown that effective school Professional Learning Communities can lead to significant changes in teaching cultures and practices, such as increased use of student-centered teaching approaches and authentic pedagogies and higher levels of social support for achievement (Dunne et al. 2000; Louis and Marks 1998; Strahan 2003). Other studies, which have examined the relationship between teachers' participation in PLCs and student achievement have also indicated significant improvement in students' performance in standardized tests (e.g. Phillips 2003; Strahan 2003).

2.8 Sustaining learning in networks

Much of the research on sustaining collaborative learning communities has centered on identifying the factors that influence sustainability. In writing about learning networks with respect to action research Elliot (2003) observed:

Most of the collaborative action research I have seen hasn't been sustained. It's temporary. The networks created are temporary structures. When the funding runs out they collapse. I am quite interested in how you generate quite radically new kinds of more sustainable permeations across boundaries. (p.174)

In his examination of the evidence in England, North America and Europe regarding sustainability, Imants (2004) suggests that there is little that supports the notion of the ongoing evolution of learning communities, subsequent to the early initiatives. Bolan et al. (2005, p.27) note, in the conclusion to their extensive review of the literature on effective professional communities, that there is "a notable silence regarding the issues of sustainability".

2.8.1 Factors that influence sustainability

Ning et al. (2015, p19/20) claim research on PLCs has made real progress in identifying school and contextual factors which influence teacher collaboration (Heaney 2004; Hirsh 2005; Van Eekelen et al. 2006; Penuel et al. 2007; Harris and Jones 2011). Team relationships and collaborative behaviours are most directly influenced by team

members' personal attributes such as demographics, values, beliefs, and attitudes as well factors inherent in the social dynamics of the team. As professionals, teachers interpret new work initiatives according to their personal values (Stoll et al. 2006). Del Prete (2013) reaches a similar conclusion when he talks about lesson observation.

Sustaining PLCs over time particularly under pressured conditions is problematic. However, Hargreaves (2007) described seven principles for developing sustainable professional learning communities quoted in Lieberman (2012).

These include:

- Depth and breadth - a focus on long-term rather than short-run outcomes.
- Stability and change – teacher mobility and administrative decisions create settings in which teachers spend more time building trust with new partners than getting on with the work. On the other hand, if teams are too stable, they may become so cohesive that they compete, or otherwise undermine school-wide planning and change efforts (Kruse and Louis 1997)
- Diversity and Focus – research suggests that diversity within groups may lead to better longer run problem-finding and problem solving – the desirable “friction” that demands self-exploration. Supporting the risk that comes from exploration and questioning requires organizational acceptance of failures as well as successes.
- Networking and Integration – PLCs need both to look inward, taking advantage of the unexplored talents of staff members and creating cohesiveness, and outward. There is some tension between focusing on the individuals who want to participate in professional groups outside the school and the need to create internally focused work groups.
- Professional development and other investments in professional learning need to plan for both. (Lieberman, 2012 p.487)

Louis (2007) argues that continuing improvement is unlikely to occur in the absence of professional communities that change the way in which teachers and leaders work together to meet the needs of students. The

role of leadership in ensuring the effectiveness of learning communities (or otherwise) is very complex.

Louis (2007) suggests the big dilemma is how best to balance the focus on professionalism, community and learning, while at the same time moving toward continuous improvement of schools. However, she suggests that a focus on professionalism and learning to the exclusion of school-based community could lead to:

fragmentation in the school that reinforces the old pattern of teachers as autonomous actors. On the other hand too great an emphasis on community and learning could lead to self-satisfied groups that are content to focus on sharing and applying locally developed knowledge, deliberately eschewing what research and development has to offer (p.488).

She also suggests that an excessive emphasis on professionalism and community could lead to a focus on:

developing resistance to the intrusion of worrisome concerns from parents, community, or other outsiders. (p.488)

In other words, the three components that make up a professional learning community must develop in some balance, so that teachers and their supporters remain true to the core ideas which have been decided by that community. The importance of finding local solutions to local problems is well made. This is relevant to Teacher Rounds where teachers concentrate on identifying their individual problem of practice as a starting point for reflection and discussion whereas Instructional Rounds concentrates on a problem of practice identified by a group of Administrators and Principals. The argument might be around what is regarded as local. In order to ensure teachers had ownership of the process I made the decision to introduce Teacher Rounds rather than Instructional Rounds as the topic for this study.

Wenger et al. (2002, p.507) propose that the value of Communities of Practice lies in their ability to connect personal development and the professional identity of practitioners to the purposes and strategies of the organization in which the practitioners work. This can be a challenge as it

involves the needs of the individual competing with the needs of the organization. The authors believe that such communities do not happen by chance but need to be cultivated and nurtured. With this in mind they advocate six principles for designing communities of practice (Ibid, p.507):

- Design for evolution – allow the community to develop and grow;
- Create conditions for dialogue both internally and externally;
- Allow for varying levels of participation without coercion;
- Have both public and private space in which the community may interact;
- Combine familiarity with excitement; and
- Respond to the rhythms of the organizational life.

Similar design principles are echoed by others who have examined such communities (Bolam et al. 2005; Louis and Stoll, 2007). Lieberman (2012) reflects that once developed these features are not easy to apply, but are necessary if the network or PLC is to enhance adult learning as well as student achievement. Senge (2000) writes about the discipline of shared vision and mutual purpose, which is one of the main building blocks of a PLC. This is an important aspect of leadership that needs to be in place before collaboration can be effective. However, the purpose of the PLC also needs to be clarified and agreed by all participants.

Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009) assert that whilst sustainability is an important goal for professional learning networks, they recognize that in view of the shifting terrain of education, this may be more an ideal than a long-term viable attribute. For instance political shifts, changes to funding dynamics and so on can often undermine the fabric of a learning community in a relatively short time span.

Elliot (2003) suggests learning networks are temporary and when the funding runs out they collapse which suggests that they are not really valued by schools or school leadership. This is not always the case and there are many examples of networks that have been running successfully for years in different localities and for different purposes.

Ideas for sustainability of such networks are offered by Hargreaves (2007) and others. However, they point to the role of leadership in ensuring the effectiveness of learning communities but also point out that their role is a very complex one and is around the way teachers and leaders work together. The topic or issue for discussion in learning communities is key. Who decides what the problem or priority is and is this owned by the members of the learning community? Louis (2007) returns to the importance of core ideas, which have been decided by that community – not by leaders.

2.8.2 Collaborative Teamwork

Collaborative teamwork, according to the literature, is the most significant attribute of PLCs. Teachers work together collaboratively in schools in a variety of ways, including learning teams, whole school teams, phase teams in primary schools and department teams in secondary schools (Stoll and Louis, 2007). Furthermore, the authors argue that in order to create a school culture based on collaborative learning and collaborative inquiry, it is essential to generate the synergy that occurs when the teamwork of a group is working so well that the group's efforts produce the maximum results from the available resources (Murphy and Lick, 2005). Stoll and Louis, 2007 argue that these positive results contribute to the:

synergy of teacher collective efficacy, the group's belief in their ability to improve student achievement. When teacher-learning teams create the results that the members have worked hard to achieve, professional morale is strengthened (p.12).

In writing about communities of practice Hegarty (2009) noted that it is important for teachers to opt in to communities of practice. The author argues that the non-coercive nature of networks where school involvement is predicated not upon compulsion but rather on responding to local needs, issues and interests, is significant. This he suggests will result in *authentic* collaboration described by Hargreaves and Dawe (1990, p.227).

2.8.3 Teacher and Leadership capacity

Stoll and Louis (2007, p.12) claim that successful collaborative teamwork that results in improved student, teacher, and leadership capacity is the most significant attribute of PLCs. The focus on building student capacity for learning and improving student outcomes is accompanied by the recognition that you can't have better student achievement without working on teacher capacity, which is the fourth attribute of a successful PLC as outlined by Stoll and Louis (2007, p.12). Working in collaborative teams they say, produces "job-embedded professional development". Furthermore, research has shown that a positive contributor to improved student achievement is the development of the capacity of teachers to collaborate. Bredeson's (2003, p.13) claim that "building blocks of a PLC include a strong professional culture with an instructional programme supported by professional development".

Another attribute of a successful PLC outlined by Louis (2007, p.13) is leadership capacity, which recognizes the importance of strong leadership when building a PLC since the quality of the leadership of principals and teachers directly impacts the quality of teaching, learning, and relationships. Bolam et al. (2005, p.117) assert that "creating, developing and sustaining a professional learning community is a major leadership and management task". Transforming a school into a PLC can only happen when the principal is an advocate for collaborative action and actively supports the school's development as a PLC (Barth, 2006; Hord, 1997). This conflicts with the issues raised earlier in this chapter around power-distance and hierarchies where leaders discourage collaboration through an over emphasis on accountability.

2.9 Relationships and trust

Collaborative working through PLCs and Teacher Rounds depend on strong trusting relationships between participants. Moolenaar (2012) points out that over the past 20 years, educational researchers and policy makers have become increasingly interested in teacher relationships and

teacher collaboration to support teacher professional development and capacity building in schools. This, she claims, is due to the crucial role teachers' play in implementing new curricula and numerous educational reforms.

2.9.1 Trust

Bryk and Schneider (2002) present three conceptions of trust, specifically, *organic*, *contractual*, and *relational trust*. Organic trust is based on the absolute belief in the moral authority of an institution and requires both consensus about beliefs and a shared moral vision. It is unconditional and results in strong social bonds and a relatively clear institutional identity. This also results in inflexibility for the individual teacher who must comply with the requirements (in terms of teaching and learning) set out by the school. On the other hand, *contractual* trust means there are mutual performance expectations, which are narrowly defined and breaches are easily observed, as in teaching. Contractual trust implies the potential for one party to breach a contract and be held accountable. When a contractual trust concept is applied to schools, it becomes difficult to determine if teachers are meeting diverse expectations. In contrast is the notion of *relational* trust (ibid, 2002, p.22), anchored in the social exchanges attached to key role relationships found in schools. Relational trust describes the extent to which there is consonance with respect to each group's understanding of its and the other group's expectations and obligations. For example, when a principal holds views about her or his own responsibilities and the responsibilities of teachers that are consistent with those held by the teachers themselves, then there is a match in assumed values, which in turn begins to build a foundation for the growth of trust.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) subsequently identified four dimensions of relational trust: respect; competence; personal regard for others and integrity. The authors claim that trust affected students' engagement and learning because teachers' vulnerability was reduced and they were more willing to engage in public problem solving. They argue that the principal

was the key person in developing relational trust, both in demonstrating it her/himself, and in the way she/he fostered a culture where relationships were trusted. However, Smylie and Hart (1999) caution that when trust provides a context for predictability, stability, assurance and safety, the response may not necessarily be reflective conversation and professional learning. Instead, they argue it might inhibit innovative activity by keeping individuals satisfied with their current situation.

Trust is mentioned as a precondition for any learning community (Sutton and Shouse, 2016; Stoll et al. 2007) and the authors assert that collaboration amongst teachers facing similar problems in a school builds trust and expertise and enables schools to implement changes with greater ease. The implication is that even if trust does not exist when the learning community is formed, it will emerge as the group works together. Fullan (1999, p.37) claims that in order to improve student outcomes school-wide, success will only be possible “if organizational members develop trust and compassion for each other.”

According to Hargreaves (2007, p.118), strong and sustainable PLCs are characterized by strong cultures of trusted colleagues who value each other personally and professionally, who are committed to their students, who are willing to discuss and disagree about evidence and data that can inform them about how to improve their practices, and who are willing to challenge one another’s practice in doing so.

Judith Warren-Little (1990, p.509) asks some very pertinent questions:

How central or peripheral are teachers’ relations with colleagues to their success and satisfaction with students, their engagement in their present work, and their commitment to a career in teaching? What is the contribution that teachers’ collegial involvement makes to the quality of the work force and the productivity of schools?

Moolenaar (2012) asserts that it was these questions that started a large body of research into the meaning and potential of teacher collaboration for issues such as student learning (Louis and Marks 1998; Goddard et al. 2007), teacher learning (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1999; McLaughlin

and Talbert 2006), and school improvement (Hargreaves and Dawe, 1990); Fullan 1992). As a result of this ongoing research Moolenaar (2012, p.8) argues educational practitioners and scholars around the world are now looking at teacher collaboration to support teachers' professional development and enhance student achievement through a variety of collaborative initiatives, such as communities of practice and professional learning communities (Vescio et al. 2008; Wenger 1998).

Trust is almost universally seen as a precondition for any learning community with the exception being Smylie and Hart (1999) who suggest trust might inhibit innovative activity by keeping individuals satisfied with their current situation. However, this view is not shared with other writers on the subject.

2.9.2 Trust amongst teachers

Danielson (2009) confirms the opinions of Louis et al. (1995), Bryk et al. (1999) when she says that the most important condition for professional conversations is the existence of trust between teachers and senior leaders. She comments that without trust, teachers are always on their guard in the presence of their principal or line managers. This relationship between teachers and middle and senior leaders is considered crucial when setting up collaborative communities.

Trust is an important element of collaborative working and setting up a professional learning community. A Teacher Round is a form of professional learning community, which has one purpose – for teachers to learn from each other. However, in order to do this they need to develop the kinds of adult relationships that can support individual change in classrooms across a whole school (Spillane and Louis, 2002; Toole and Louis, 2002). As mentioned before, the principal plays a key role in developing a school culture that nurtures these relationships (Barth, 2006; Hord, 1997; Sparks, 2005).

Crow, Hausman, and Scribner (2002) emphasize the importance of

relationships in their model of professional learning communities that comprise three concentric circles. The innermost circle represents the relationships that exist between teachers and children, and the outermost ring signifies the relationships between the teaching faculty and the community at large. The middle ring represents relations among the teaching faculty in a school. It is this middle ring, they claim which mediates between the outside world and the inner workings of the classroom. What appears to be missing in this model is the relationships between teachers and the senior team in schools and the power dynamics that impact on trust and relationships.

Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) assert that trust among teaching staff may well be the foundation of school effectiveness, which complements Barth's (1990) sentiment that positive adult relationships in schools are the basis of school improvement. The authors argue that the outer ring of community tends to have this sort of expectation of the trustworthiness of teachers. However, in the teaching faculty the notion of trust is even more nuanced; it takes into account everything from care for one another to the ability to withstand serious critique. Fullan (1999) claims that in order to improve student outcomes school-wide, success will only be possible "if organizational members develop trust and compassion for each other" (p.370).

According to Hargreaves (2007) strong and sustainable professional learning communities are characterized by strong cultures of trusted colleagues who value each other personally and professionally, who are committed to their students, who are willing to discuss and disagree about evidence and data that can inform them about how to improve their practices, and who are willing to challenge one another's practice in doing so. The problem is that many teachers have little or no opportunity for such open discussions.

In analyzing the discourse of principals about relational trust and its role in schools striving to develop as professional learning communities, five key themes emerged that seemed to be shared among the study

participants regardless of their unique school context or experience (Bryk and Schneider, 2002).

The five themes offered are:

- trust develops as teachers are in relationships;
- relational trust requires establishing group norms around risk-taking and change orientation in order to foster a safe, comfortable climate for professional growth;
- relational trust supports effective collaboration;
- the principal is central in establishing a climate of trust; and
- the faculty requisite trust of the principal is paramount.

These themes support the assertion that robust social relationships among teachers and between teachers and a principal are critical preconditions for the formation of a professional learning community (Toole and Louis, 2002).

Fielding et al. (2005, p.10) in a report on sharing good practice claim that research participants frequently spoke of the corrosive effects of “competition” between schools in destroying trust. This is a particular issue where schools are competing for students in the same locality. As the school system has become increasingly fractured the issue of competition between schools is a growing one.

Robust research suggests that trust is an element of organizational culture that is both critical and routinely overlooked. Trust is the basis for taking for granted aspects of social interaction, which are a necessary ingredient for cooperative action, and a foundation for school capital (Coleman 1988, Zucker 1986), but the problem of trust is evident in educational settings. Louis (2009) comments that many schools have weak levels of relational trust among the adults who work in and with them, even when there are pockets of high relational trust in small groups of like-minded teachers (Goddard et al. 2001). While higher or lower levels of trust can characterize a whole school, the problems of change in the relationships between teachers and administrators are less trusting

than those among teachers (Bryk and Schneider 2002). This means that teachers often look cynically at a leadership-initiated change. Furthermore, Louis (2007) and Louis et al. (2009) argue that change increases distrust.

Finally, trust is a precondition for developing PLCs (Louis, 2012) but the authors claim few schools have confronted the issue of how to improve this component of organizational functioning. Relational trust between teachers and leaders in many schools is weak which leads to resistance to change and innovation. As stated above, Fielding et al. (2005) refer to the corrosive effects of competition between schools, which is destroying trust. However, they don't mention the high expectations in terms of the push to continue to raise standards that teachers have to address in their schools. The performance culture creates its own competitive culture, can inhibit teachers and be a barrier to trusting relationships and to effective collaboration.

2.9.3 School culture

The issue of school culture and trust amongst teachers and senior leaders is one that arises throughout the literature. Trust cannot be taken for granted but needs to be nurtured (Sutton and Shouse, 2016). Lieberman (2012, p.471) comments that developing collaborative professional learning communities is "akin to building a different kind of culture in the school, one that not only takes time, but revolves around a view of conflict can be made productive and growth enhancing – even as it appears to threaten the very idea of community". Breaking the isolation of teachers turns out to be enormously difficult, even as it presents an opportunity for teachers to work together in a meaningful way (ibid, p.471).

The issues of competing discourses and competing functions can be barriers to developing professional communities. The two approaches are not supportive of each other. Lortie's study (1975) concluded that "teacher isolation due to lack of shared culture, means the teacher's craft

is often marked by an absence of concrete models, unclear lines of influence, multiple and controversial criteria, ambiguity about assessment timing, and instability of the product” (p.36). Research suggests that the schools with the greatest student-learning going on are those, which do not isolate teachers, but instead encourage professional dialogue and collaboration. Freiberg and Knight (1987) suggest that teaching in effective schools is a “collective, rather than individual enterprise” (p.3).

Schools where the leaders’ role is to promote, create and enable a culture where teachers are not isolated but are able to work collaboratively to improve the quality of teaching and learning will be those where trust is high and change is easier to bring about. Leaders need to model this culture and to trust teachers as professionals.

2.9.4 Teachers and guilt

Davies argued (1989, p.49) that “at the center a feeling of guilt is self-disappointment, a sense of having done badly, fallen short or having betrayed a personal ideal, standard or commitment”. He identified two different forms of guilt: *persecutory* guilt and *depressive* guilt. In teaching, persecutory guilt comes with accountability demands and bureaucratic controls. This guilt then leads to anxiety and to self-doubt about their competence, which might be exposed by observation and inspection. Depressive guilt (like all guilt) has its origins in early childhood (Davies 1989). Depressive guilt is at its most intense when we realize we may be harming or neglecting those for whom we care, by not meeting their needs or by not giving them sufficient attention. Davies suggests that those in the caring professions (such as teachers) are especially vulnerable to this form of guilt. Hargreaves and Tucker (1991) argue that the guilt traps of teaching, are “socially located at the intersection of four specific paths of determination and motivation in teachers’ work: the commitment to goals of care and nurturance, the open-ended nature of the job, the pressures of accountability and intensification, and the persona of perfectionism” (p.496). The authors claim that these four paths

of determination create powerful and perplexing combinations of depressive and persecutory guilt in the working lives of many teachers and pose serious problems for their effectiveness and integrity. Furthermore, the authors claim that guilt is a central “emotional preoccupation” for teachers (ibid 1991, p.494).

There are some who suggest that guilt can be a positive emotion. Taylor (1985) argues:

Recognition of guilt is the first step towards salvation. (p.101)

Taylor suggests that guilt experienced in modest proportions can be a “great spur” to motivation, innovation and improvement. (p.101). But the author argues that the way teachers talk about guilt is bound up with overwhelming feelings of frustration and anxiety, which can be demotivating and disabling in work and life experience.

Day (2009) makes the point:

Teaching involves a moral commitment to serve the interests of students and society. It involves knowledge, expertise and accountability, but it also involves ideals. (p.114)

Hargreaves and Tucker (1991) argue that in research on teachers’ mental states, studies of teacher feelings as compared to teacher thinking have been relatively neglected. They analyze the nature and importance of guilt as one such feeling, which connects the self of the teacher to the system in which the teacher works. Four guilt traps of teaching are identified. These are:

- the commitment to care
- the open-endedness of teaching
- accountability and intensification
- the persona of perfectionism

Hargreaves and Tucker (1991) suggest the solutions to the guilt traps of teaching involve easing the accountability and intensification demands of teaching; building communities of colleagues who can set their own

professional standards and limits at school level and thereby reduce the open-endedness of teaching: and reducing the dependence on personal care and nurturance as the prime motive of elementary teaching. These possible solutions were made in 1991 and since then conditions for teachers have worsened and workload and accountability measures have greatly increased. Therefore, it is unlikely that workable solutions to tackle teacher guilt will be put in place any time soon.

Guilt can be debilitating as well as a 'spur' to motivation and improvement as mentioned above. However, the very nature of a teachers' role is tied up in caring for the well-being of the children in their class as well as the need to drive up standards in an increasingly pressurized and accountable system. This fact alone leads to a feeling that they will never be good enough. Little research has been done on establishing the way teachers feel about their roles and responsibilities and the need to become even better teachers. In my experience teachers strive for perfection but perfection is often elusive. Therefore, the mental health of teachers needs to be considered in a world where they have little autonomy and where their voice is often unheard. Teachers are rarely regarded as true professionals who have something to contribute to the big educational picture. This needs to change.

2.10 Teachers as Professionals

2.10.1 Professionalism

As mentioned in section 2.3.3 Pang (2003, p.301) suggested "teachers should also be involved in school decision making and policy formulation and be given the freedom to function relatively unimpeded by superiors" to allow for greater exercise of autonomy in professional judgment (p.301). However, currently the extent to which teachers are allowed to exercise their own professional judgment and to make adjustments to their practice within prevailing systemic power dynamics and hierarchies is limited and will depend on the head teacher or principal.

Teacher agency and professionalism is about core beliefs and values and

is about understanding what you do and why you do it. Biesta, Priestly and Robinson, (2015) describe teacher beliefs as falling into three categories: beliefs about children and young people; beliefs about teaching; and beliefs about educational purpose. They comment that the teachers in their study:

largely shared a professional discourse that seemed to frame many of their beliefs about students and their roles as teachers, as well as their views on the purposes of education in quite similar ways. (p.629)

However, the authors argue that these discourses appear to be “fairly restricted in scope, more geared to short-term goals, and predominantly articulated via the language of recent policy documentation” (p.629). Furthermore, Biesta et al., (2015) claim teachers “convey the strong sense of teachers’ professional responsibility towards their students” (p.629). “All the teachers believed that the relationships they developed with their students were critical”. This explains the guilt they experience (described above) when they believe they are not doing a good enough job.

The outcome of the research of Biesta et al. (2015) pointed to the influence of education policy when framing discussions about teaching and learning:

It is evident from our dialogues with teachers, that a great proportion of the professional discourses, which frame their practices and contribute to their professional agency, have their origins in the language of policy. (p.635)

The authors claim that these teachers seemed to lack a systematic set of professional discourses over and above those provided by the language of policy and they suggest this potentially reduced their power and agency in developing the curriculum through limiting their potential to envisage different futures, and through denying them the language with which to engage critically with policy (p.636). Furthermore, Biesta et al. (2015) suggest that many of the discourses of modern schooling appear to be a mishmash of competing and vague ideas and, in the absence of opportunities for systematic sense-making in schools, teachers are

regularly left confused about their role (p.636). They conclude that even in schools where they have found a clear sense of purpose and purposeful relational structures to enabling collegial working (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2012), they found little evidence of long-term thinking about the purposes of education.

The Biesta et al. (2015) study suggests that many teachers struggle to locate their work within deep consideration of the purposes of education. Instead, teachers are driven by goals in their work, but such goals often seem to be short-term in nature, focusing on process rather than longer-term significance and impact. In an earlier article, Biesta (2010) comments that several decades of government policies have worked to de-professionalize teachers by taking agency away from them and replacing it with prescriptive curricula and oppressive regimes of testing and inspection.

If teachers are required to act as professionals they need to be treated as professionals rather than deliverers of education policy. If those in positions of power want teachers to own the policies and pedagogy adopted in our schools they need to be involved in the decision making and bigger picture thinking rather than just telling them what to deliver. A move to do this would lead to actively developing teacher voice and teacher agency.

Not everybody regards teachers as professionals. Elmore (2016) make it clear that he does not regard education as a profession. He argues professions have practices that they expect their members to use and they evaluate themselves according to how well those practices work. He talks about “real professions which education is not one” developing practices which come at the end of a “long causal chain of learning and cultural socialization that creates foundational knowledge, dispositions toward the acquisition of new knowledge, and formal and informal institutions that stand apart from the workplace and that reinforce the culture that produces the practice” (ibid, p.531). Furthermore, he argues “real professions select their members based on mastery of knowledge,

not based on bureaucratic and institutional procedures”. He says educators “because of the weakness of professional culture and autonomy, tend to treat best practices as tips and tricks that can be readily assimilated by reading the right books, or hiring the right consultants, rather than by investing seriously in developing the cultural and institutional infrastructures of professional practice”. The weakness of professional culture and autonomy described by Elmore above is an indication of the disempowerment of teachers over the years. Teachers may need to be encouraged to move away from ‘tips for teachers’ and be provided with intellectual and professional spaces within which they can develop deep thinking about their developing practices. Teacher Rounds can provide this space.

Del Prete’s (2010, p.26) view of teachers is very different. Although he does not talk about teachers as professionals his description of their work indicates his respect for what they do and what they need to help them improve. He sees them as individuals not as part of a system. Describing ways to support teachers in improving their practice he adds “Socialize new teachers into a profession that must be collaborative, collegial, and highly effective and rewarding”. While Elmore rarely uses words such as collaboration and collegiality he was one of the major players in setting up Instructional Rounds (City et al.2011) which gave teachers and administrators an opportunity to work together even if teachers were the ones under the spotlight. However, it would be unfair to say that Elmore was disrespectful of teachers by not considering teaching as a profession but is simply a dispassionate observation that they are more often than not viewed and treated as technocrats. Perhaps it is the lack of passion from Elmore about teachers (rather than about teaching) that makes him different from Del Prete and led to two different ways of developing Rounds.

2.10.2 Teacher Agency

Biesta et al. (2015) defined teachers’ agency as being about teachers’ active contribution to shaping their work and its conditions. The authors

assert there is an ongoing tension within educational policy worldwide between countries that seek to reduce the opportunities for teachers to exert judgment and control over their own work, and those who seek to promote it. They suggest that some see teacher agency as a weakness and seek to replace it with evidence-based and data-driven approaches, whereas others argue that because of the complexities of situated educational practices, teacher agency is an indispensable element of good and meaningful education (ibid p.624). So what are the implications for Teacher Rounds? Roberts (2012, p.126) describes the Rounds process as a “culturally disruptive” practice because it is so different from the normal methods of adult learning in schools. The Rounds process has the potential to upset the power dynamics in schools where it is introduced as teachers speak out and question the status quo. This change might encourage more risk-taking and enable teachers to break out of the mold of “normalized’ lesson planning and delivery (Perryman 2006, p152) that is so common in schools. This change is likely to be a positive development as teachers and teaching needs to change and develop in order to meet the needs of a diverse group of pupils in an ever-changing world. However, the disruption caused through Rounds might threaten the control heads and senior managers have over teachers. Some head teachers may not be willing to take that risk.

In an article exploring the connection between teacher agency and professional learning in the context of Learning Rounds and Scotland, Philpott and Oates (2016) review the literature around teacher agency and subsequently conclude that agency is “theorised as an interaction between personal capacity and disposition and the affordances or resources for agency of the particular socio-cultural context” (p.2). Furthermore, they claim, this “socio-cultural theorisation of teacher agency tends to view personal capacity and disposition as arising from earlier biographical trajectories through differing socio-cultural contexts and in relation to differing resources for agency rather than in terms of innate or idiosyncratic personal differences” (p.3). This small study, in four schools found that in three of the four schools studied there was

scant evidence that Learning Rounds (A form of Instructional Rounds introduced in Scotland - described in Chapter 3) were being utilised as an affordance for teacher agency. Such lack of agency seems to be attributable to several features in the data. They suggest that Learning Rounds (and by extension many PLCs) are “technical-rationalist in that, at best, they focus on ‘what works’ in technical terms rather than asking broader questions about the nature and purpose of education and the identities of those involved” (ibid, p.9). As Edwards (2015) cautions, they may only be affordances for weak evaluation. This is evaluation only of the effectiveness of certain means to achieve ends given by others. This brings us back to the issue of power and leadership and “contrived collegiality” described in section 2.3.1. If the agenda and endgame is decided by senior leaders or Government teachers may not take ownership of it.

Philpott and Oates (2016, p.11) point to Priestley et al., (2012) and cite Biesta (2004) to argue that accountability is more of a constraint on teacher agency than the prescription of means. They argue that as long as the goals and measures of success are set by others and teachers are held to account in relation to these, the scope for teacher agency will be limited. They conclude that although Learning Rounds appear to be a valuable affordance for teacher agency, this agency will be constrained as long as they are used in the service of achieving goals set and ‘measured’ by others. Furthermore, the authors quote Van der Heijden et al. (2015) who argue that teachers need to be risk-takers if they are going to exercise agency, and in the context of high-stakes accountability the force of this can be seen (Philpott and Oates, 2016, p.12).

The issue of ownership of the process of Learning Rounds is discussed by Philpott and Oates (2016, p.12) who claim the limited scope of current Learning Rounds practice opens up questions about who owns the process and how this relates to the exercise of agency. The authors refer to Datnow (2012) who writes about formally organized learning communities as potentially stifling teacher enquiry or framing and

directing it in certain ways and to Vongalis-Macrow (2007) who claims that teachers are given professional makeovers as new forms of Professional Development are imposed on them with little ownership. However, the Learning Rounds researched in this particular study (Philpott and Oates, 2016) were largely set up by the teachers involved, but the authors point out that the nature and purpose of the Learning Rounds process can be seen as “defined by policy” and by local authority and school management. As a result, they claim questions can be asked about the extent to which teachers have ownership of how the process is defined and its purposes, even if they participate voluntarily. Furthermore, if teachers do not own Learning Rounds this may have a constraining effect on its ability to be an affordance for teacher agency. Philpott and Oates (2016) found that teachers participating in Learning Rounds often thought about them in terms of the procedures they had been taught rather than the underlying purposes of those procedures. They conclude by suggesting that this lack of ownership of purpose, reduces the ability to evaluate the success of the Learning Rounds practice and make informed revisions to it, and this is itself a constraint on agency.

Finally, Philpott and Oates (2016) suggest that ownership of the purposes of Learning Rounds is connected to how understanding of the process is developed in teachers. The authors refer to teachers’ use of Instructional Rounds in the USA, which was developed through “long engagement with the academics who developed the process” (ibid, 2016, p.12). In contrast, in Scotland most teachers were given a single training event or accessed online materials with no training. This, the authors say, can result in Learning Rounds practice being assimilated into existing school cultures rather than reconstructing cultures with enhanced teacher agency.

Teachers’ agency is about teachers’ active contribution to shaping their work and its conditions. The current emphasis on raising standards and accountability has led to a control and compliance culture that actively rejects teacher agency. The drive for evidence-based and data-driven

approaches means teacher agency is viewed negatively by some school leaders and policy makers. However, others argue that because of the complexities of educational practices, teacher agency is an indispensable element of good and meaningful education. The literature points to a compliance culture where teachers teach what they are told to teach and how to teach. They are monitored frequently to ensure they comply with school policies. This means they don't feel involved and often don't understand the bigger picture and more importantly don't understand their part in it.

2.11 The role of leadership in creating a collaborative culture and practice.

Teacher Rounds and Instructional Rounds are collaborative practices that challenge the traditional leadership models in our schools. Troen and Boles (2014, p.97) suggest the role of leadership in introducing and implementing Rounds is an important one. They claim a strong leader models the change she or he asks of the faculty and staff. They say "principals understand, in theory, the value of teachers working collaboratively with the goal of improved instruction. But hierarchical, top-down leadership from the principal isn't going to get the job done". If the model of distributed leadership isn't embraced by the principal, then the goal of building strong, effective Round groups will remain an "unfilled dream" (Ibid, p.97).

The notion of distributed leadership in terms of collaboration and PLCs is an interesting one. Harris (2004, p.13) indicates "distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization rather than seeking this only through formal position role". She claims that it is "characterized as a form of collective leadership" (ibid p.14). Furthermore she concludes that collegiality is "at the core of distributed leadership" (ibid, p.15) but she adds that it involves both vertical and lateral dimensions of leadership practice, suggesting a link to both formal and collegial models. So collegiality and collaboration and a collective model of leadership are at the core of distributed leadership as

they are characteristics of Teacher Rounds.

Hoyle and Wallace (2005, p.124) argue that “Participative leadership refers to the opportunities that staff members have for engaging in the process of organizational decision making”. This thought is echoed by Pang (2003) who argues authentic collegial relationships will only be developed power differentials are reduced and teachers can be involved in school decision making and policy formulation (see 2.3.3).

Bush (2011) suggests the existing authority structure in schools and colleges provides a potential barrier to the successful introduction and implementation of distributed leadership and this is true of all collaborate activities as previously mentioned in this chapter. Bush (2011, p.91) asserts that an “appropriate climate” is an essential pre-condition to meaningful distributed leadership. Harris (2005, p.169) suggests that the “the creation of collegial norms” are essential and adds that teachers need time to meet if collective leadership is to become a reality. She adds that cordial relationships are required with school managers who may “feel threatened” (Ibid, p.169) by teachers taking up leadership roles. The role of leadership in creating an appropriate school culture for collaboration to thrive is covered in section 2.9 above. Although Teacher Rounds are not intended to be part of a leadership structure they are a form of PLC where individuals collaborate and reflect on their practice and may (or not) challenge the hierarchies and power structures in the school during that process. The process and protocols associated with Teacher Round are designed to help teachers develop their confidence and their agency in their roles.

The commitment of school leaders to the principles of PLCs and their skills in inspiring their schools to espouse those attributes is of extreme importance to the success of PLCs (DuFour and Eaker, 1998; Bredeson, 2003). Stoll and Louis (2007, p.13) cite leadership capacity as an important element necessary for effective PLCs. They recognize the importance of strong leadership when building a PLC. Furthermore, PLC advocates have written extensively on the role of the leader in creating

and sustaining such learning communities. They claim this is about leaders developing the appropriate school culture for collaborative learning to flourish.

Leaders are responsible for creating a culture of trust and openness where collaboration and collegiality can flourish and thrive. Or they can create a culture where teachers are controlled and where they have very little say in what they do every day. Giving teachers' agency is risky because a teacher may question school policies and head teachers' decisions. Therefore, the head teacher or principal decides what sort of culture they want in their school. If they don't understand the benefits of teacher collaboration and collegiality they will make no effort to engage with it. The implications for Teacher Rounds is that schools that don't have a nurturing and supportive culture are unlikely to be involved in a project where teachers identify their own problem of practice and where they reflect individually and collaboratively to improve their practice. Furthermore, a learning community that does not include leaders and managers (unless otherwise decided by the Rounds Group) might lead to suspicion about the perceived outcomes of Teacher Rounds.

Leading a school where PLCs are set up and indeed where Teacher Rounds are implemented is risky because they challenge the norms of leadership and encourage teachers to reclaim their professionalism and agency. Lee Teitel in a foreword to Fowler-Finn's (2013) book on leading Instructional Rounds says that introducing Rounds can be a "countercultural practice" in that it asks educators to learn new ways of thinking and acting on multiple levels (p.v). These new ways of thinking and learning apply to both teachers and head teachers because they challenge the normal power dynamics in schools. Troen and Boles (2013) point out that principals need to become learners and be seen to be learners whilst Roberts (2012) talks about introducing Rounds in schools as a culturally disruptive practice because it challenges the norms of adult learning and more importantly because it challenges the norms of power relationships and dynamics in schools.

2.12 Sharing best practice

The literature is awash with example of best practice and how to implement changes and improve teacher performance and student outcomes (Fielding et al. 2005). However, a recent paper by Elmore (2016, p.530) clearly indicates that he has had a major rethink when it comes to “doing things at scale” and sharing “best practice”. As someone who has been in the education research field for so long this comes as a surprise and is very different from his earlier paper on the same subject in 1996. In this newest paper he addresses the obsession around “best practice.” He argues that the deeply complex practices of leadership and instructional practice can only be learned through deep, daily immersion in guided practice and cannot be adequately covered by a short discussion or training session with leaders and teachers. Elmore comments that he has visited over 4000 classrooms in 500 schools where he “routinely observed classrooms in which the artifacts of high-level, challenging content are prominently displayed on the walls and in the materials distributed to students” but he says “it is clear to me that the teachers in those classrooms have never experienced themselves the kind of learning they are asking students to engage in” (ibid, p.530). Subsequently, he asks “Can you teach people how to learn in ways you yourself have never experienced” (p.531). He thinks not.

Elmore says he is routinely asked to work with schools that are asked to operate in systems that have “blatantly dysfunctional administrative structures, clotted with multiple levels and cross-functional relationships that, on their face, do not, cannot, and never will have a positive impact on learning” (ibid, p.531). He goes further, and suggests “the main function of people who work in these organizations seems to be telling other people what to do - usually things they themselves do not know how to do” (p.531). Yet he comments that there seems to be endless optimism among the “committed reformers, and professional policy experts”, that somehow we can make things better by “implementing” something called “best practices” “at scale”(p.531). He concludes that each of these terms embodies “deep and profound misconceptions about

how human beings learn, develop, adapt, and change” (ibid, p.531).

Elmore (2016, p.531) continues by breaking down these definitions. First, he says “implementation” is something you do when you already know what to do; “learning” is something you do when you don’t yet know what to do. Therefore, when we are asking teachers and school leaders to do things they don’t know how to do, we are not asking them to “implement” something, we are asking them to learn, think, and form their identities in different ways. He says when we expect them to “implement” when they don’t know what they are doing, we are asking them to pretend to be people they are not. This is a big issue for schools who rely on lead practitioners to model best practice and is relevant to the issue of teacher agency discussed above. Elmore makes the point that “learning is a profoundly developmental practice; implementation is a technical practice” (ibid, p. 532).

Next Elmore dismantles the notion of “best practices”, which he claims is “antithetical to developmental models of learning” (p.532). Educators tend to treat “best practices” as tips and tricks that can be readily assimilated by reading the right books, or hiring the right consultants, rather than by investing seriously in developing the cultural and institutional infrastructures of professional practice (p.532). He claims the things that are easily “scaleable” in this environment are the things that require the least depth of preparation and practice. Furthermore, he comments that every effort at education reform is heavily influenced by the contexts, micro and macro, in which it exists (ibid, p.532). In the face of this understanding, he claims, the idea of “scale” is either very superficial or wrong. He says policy-driven reform has made “uniformity the rule, and diversity a suspect and problematic exception” (p.532).

Elmore (2016) suggests that policy makers speak and act as if variability in practice and outcomes is the result of “subversive, self-interested motives, or down-right bone headedness” (ibid, p.533). Policy experts treat international metrics, and the measurements and the constructs behind them, as if they represent some universal set of cultural and social

attributes that have equal value in every society and culture. The drive for “scale,” in other words, is a drive for a kind of uniformity that makes the world more intelligible to people who are uncomfortable with complexity. The word uniformity is an interesting one as teachers are constantly monitored to see if they are consistently applying various school policies in the classroom. The drive for consistency and uniformity in teaching and learning may be the real barrier to collaboration in schools which indicates that leadership may need to consider adjusting their approach to best practice and consistency of applying school policies.

Elmore’s view of best practice is contrary to much of the literature and the belief commonly in schools that sharing best practice is the key to school improvement. Instead teachers sharing practice, which might be good or bad or something in between may be a more useful approach. Furthermore, the question needs to be asked if best practice encourages or discourages collaborative working. The danger is that many teachers will view such activity as another instruction or direction on how the should be teaching. Equity is an important issue when it comes to introducing and sustaining collaborative activities and the truth is that many teachers will not share their practice with others if they believe it is not good enough and that they can only learn from those identified as experts.

Fullan and Miles (1992, p.749) argue that change involves “learning”. Elmore (1996) quotes this in his paper and argues that teachers are more likely to learn from direct observation or practice and trial and error in their own classrooms than they are from abstract descriptions of new teaching. He asserts teachers have to feel that there is some compelling reason for them to practice differently, with the best direct evidence being that students learn better; and teachers need feedback from sources they trust about whether students are actually learning what they are taught. Elmore argues that education reform seldom recognizes this fact and teachers are often tossed “headlong into discussion groups to work out the logistics of implementing a new curriculum” (Elmore 1996, p.38). He

claims teachers are encouraged to develop model lessons as a group (collaborative) activity and then sent back to their classrooms to implement them as “solo practitioners’. Finally, he comments that the issue of getting to scale with good educational practice requires nothing less than deliberately creating and reproducing alternatives to the existing flawed institutional arrangements and incentive structures” (ibid, p.39). Although he does not mention collaboration per se he does suggest that changes to institutional structures and arrangements was needed.

Elmore (2016) puts his early thinking on doing things at scale and on best practice were due to naivety. He says: “The article was written by someone who, at that time, was a strong, if slightly fuzzy, believer in “policy-driven reform” - no more” (p.529). He continues “It was written, in other words, by someone - a person who now seems very unfamiliar to me—who believed in what seems to me now an irresponsibly simplistic and schematic view of human learning and development” (p.530). This is a very honest reflection on Elmore’s part and can help us reflect on the way we do things in schools.

2.13 Does collaboration work?

The literature review published by the Centre for the Study of Market Reform of Education (CMRE) 2016 states that although there is much popular rhetoric about the benefits of collaboration, there is a lack of robust evidence to show that it improves pupils’ results. The report goes further and claims that collaboration probably isn’t key to the next phase of school reform. The reason for their lack of positivity in this area is, they say, that the literature on the subject (collaboration between schools) tends to focus on successful schools that share resources and work together to solve problems and suppose that this must contribute to their success. Furthermore, they point out that this does not take account of those that practice this and don’t succeed. Instead, the report argues that any differences that Multi-Academy Trust (MATs) chains are making to pupils’ outcomes could be attributable to the influence of

corporatization rather than to collaboration itself. On a more positive note they suggest that research on multi-academy trusts has opened up positive lines of inquiry.

MATs are key players in the government's efforts to drive school improvement in England. A MAT is a single entity established to undertake a strategic collaboration to improve and maintain educational standards across a number of schools. Two or more schools form a single MAT, which has overarching responsibility for their governance. The MAT is accountable for the performance of each school in the group. One of the perceived benefits of MATS is that they facilitate and enable school-to-school collaboration.

The CMRE Report (2016, p.4) suggests that collaboration has been regarded as an important way in which schools may find the means to improve their educational performance. Yet little is known definitively about what impact collaboration has for improving pupil attainment. In other words finding a causal link between, collaboration and SATs or GCSE results is very difficult as it is impossible to isolate the specific aspects of what a school is doing that has a direct impact on standards. The authors (CMRE) argue that the lack of robust evidence that collaboration amongst teachers and schools improves standards is because research in this area is dogged by weak methodology. They claim the literature on the subject is overwhelmingly qualitative, proving "text book examples of a consensus view regarding what is important for collaboration for generating school improvement" (p.5). The focus they say is on successful schools that collaborate to problem solve and share resources and essentially suppose that this must contribute to their success and does not take account of those who do this but don't succeed. The authors conclude that the best practice approach is of limited use to finding out what actually makes the difference for pupil progress and attainment. Furthermore, they argue that in seeking to identify critical features of success, the method relies heavily on the judgment and authority of its authors, whose expertise is deemed to be

self-authenticating. This, they say, makes research of this nature especially vulnerable in shaping influences of underlying value commitments.

Proponents of collaboration often confuse chain and confederation effects, but these are different. The latter arise following corporate structural mergers and integration. Recent research in this area, though unable to draw causal inferences, has opened promising lines of inquiry. This research suggests that those types of federations which mostly expressed a purpose of improving pupil attainment, and have organized themselves to deliver are more likely to be most impactful. Tightness of focus and management appears to make a difference. While far from definitive, this suggests that *corporatization* may be more important than collaboration for school improvement (CMRE Report, 2016, p.4).

Finally, the CMRE Report (2016) report claims that the influence of the theoretical frameworks and underlying values commitments shaping practice in the area of collaboration influence school leaders towards small scale, and less binding/formal arrangements designed to preserve the independence of participating schools. However, the evidence suggests that these arrangements do not spur on improvements in pupil attainment. The reasons cited for this conclusion is that such arrangements are less likely to be subject to rigorous cost-benefit analysis. They are thus prone to a lack of clarity around objectives, what resources are likely to be required to achieve them, and to problems with oversight and accountability. This makes them time consuming, potentially costly undertakings for teachers and administrators alike – which may very well in turn deplete the time, effort and resources available for staff to focus on their own school and students (ibid, p.5).

The CMRE Report (2016, p.7) argues in favour of a theoretical distinction between collaboration and hard federation or what might be better termed as *corporatization* (p. 9). Furthermore, the authors conclude that the future of school collaboration is in fact competitive and corporate (p. 14).

In seeking to describe the benefits of collaboration the literature has been

concerned to establish direct impact for learners not the impact for teachers. According to Evans-Stout (1998), this is characteristic of the literature going back as far as the 1970s, but more than ever from the 1990s, with most researchers turning thereafter to emphasizing the advantages of collaboration for teachers.

Outcomes from the excluded reports were also concerned with adults only.

Adult learning, attitudes and beliefs, knowledge and skills were the most common outcomes from network collaborations (CMRE Report, p. 45 and p.14).

The emphases in the literature are the importance of collaboration and networks for teacher development and support, in order to improve organizational functioning. As Goddard and Goddard (2007, p.878) note, these studies typically draw on interview and survey data gathered from successful collaborations, which aim to capture such indicators as teachers' perceptions of improved efficacy (Shachar and Schmuclivitz 1997), more positive attitudes towards teaching, (Brownell, Yeager, Renells and Riley 1997), and higher levels of professional trust (Tschannen-Moran 2001). The assumption is that there is a link between teacher empowerment and improved organizational functioning. But the research does not establish such a link. However, many in education circles believe collaboration between teachers is beneficial and does improve practice. Teacher Rounds are a revolutionary, cost effective way of setting up and sustaining collaboration and teacher professional learning.

2.14 Summary

The literature cites teacher collaboration as a good thing without any real evidence as to its success in improving student outcomes. Nonetheless it is recognized that collegiate communities where teachers work together on specific issues and problems is beneficial for teachers. Such activities help them make sense of the complexities of teaching. This fact alone seems a good enough reason to do it.

The problems of setting up and sustaining effective collaborative networks within schools and amongst groups of schools is more problematic and the literature gathers together examples of what works. However, it is clear that collaborative communities will only thrive where the school culture is nurturing and supportive and where there is trust between teachers and between teachers and leadership. The current climate of performance and accountability has eroded that trust in many schools and teachers are cynical and suspicious of leadership-initiated change, even if it involves them working with other teachers. The role of power and leadership in setting up and sustaining collaborative working is key to success but is not simple and requires a very different approach to leadership that currently exists in many schools. Collaboration requires a form of distributed leadership that allows teachers to take more control of what happens in their classrooms.

Power, discipline and constant surveillance are a part of teachers everyday experience and are part of a performativity agenda and way of working. This leads to normalization of practice where teachers are not willing to take risks and to try different approaches to teaching for fear of being judged as failing.

The issue of teacher agency and professionalism, or lack of it, is identified as a consequence of the performance management cultures and perceived need for consistency in schools where the aim is to drive up standards no matter what the cost. The erosion of teachers' voices in the 'big picture' of the school ethos and vision means that they become deliverers rather than architects of education. Principals and heads and senior teams have a big part to play in developing a school culture where teachers can thrive and develop their skills and expertise. This culture needs to be nurturing and supportive and needs to enable them to work collaboratively. Creating and sustaining such a culture on a larger scale as in the case of Instructional Rounds is difficult as Richard Elmore makes clear. Del Prete's more intimate model of Teacher Rounds as a process to enable effective collaboration is explored further in the next

chapter.

Chapter 3 Literature Review 2 - Rounds

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I review the literature on Rounds as a professional learning collaborative activity. There are many variations of Rounds in use in different countries of the world and I present an overview of these. As Rounds assume a collaborative approach to learning amongst professionals, I have already examined the literature around collaboration in the preceding literature review.

Elmore (2004), Del Prete (1997, 2010, 2013), City et al. (2009), Roberts, (2013), Fowler-Finn (2013), and Troen and Boles (2014) suggest Rounds as one way of improving the skills of individual teachers and creating school and system wide school improvement. Currently Rounds are being used effectively in individual schools and across groups of schools but there is little or no empirical research or evidence on the impact on teachers and student outcomes. The practice is most popular in several states and districts in the USA who have adapted Rounds in a variety of guises. The practice has also reached Australia where some of the initial founders of the instructional Rounds model have visited to train principals and senior administrators and to help them set up Rounds projects (Gore, 2014, 2016). Education Scotland (2011) also piloted what they term Learning Rounds in many of their schools.

Improving the quality of teaching is complicated by the varying definitions of teacher quality and how to attain it. Del Prete (2010) asserts that much current reform policy tends to characterize teacher quality more in terms of “credentials than what constitutes good teaching practice and how it develops” (p.17). He is saying that policy makers are more concerned with the qualifications of teachers rather than being able to identify what good teaching looks like and how we can develop it in practitioners. City et al. (2009) argue that despite much research and discussion we are still

no clearer about what makes good teaching;

We have worked, collectively and separately, in dozens of school districts where there was no common point of view on instruction, where ten educators from the same district could watch a fifteen-minute classroom video and have ten different opinions about its quality, ranging the full gamut from high praise to excoriation. Gaining an explicit and widely held view of what constitutes good teaching and learning in your setting is a first step toward any systematic efforts to scaling up quality. (2009, p.173)

Gore (2014, p.88) makes similar claims. She says that one of the biggest challenges in moving toward greater quality is actually defining what quality teaching and learning is, “While quality as measurable student outcomes on standardized tests, is widely used and accepted (with some concerns), consensus about what quality is and what it looks like as far as teaching is concerned has proved much harder to achieve”. The most recent Sutton Report ‘What Makes Great Teaching’ (2014) confirms the lack of clarity about best practice in the classroom. Currently in the UK the measure of quality teaching is firmly defined by the Ofsted criteria for good and outstanding lessons and success in terms of student outcomes.

Teachers rarely get the opportunity to formally reflect on their own practice or to observe their peers teach and to learn from each other. However, teachers need opportunities to practice, analyze, and inquire into and reflect on their teaching with others. This is the core principle of what Richard Elmore (2004) refers to as the consensus view of powerful teacher learning, which argues that teachers learn through social interaction around a problem of practice and that the development of new practices requires support for collegial interaction. This argument led to the development of the Instructional Rounds model.

3.2 The broad context within which to consider the particular practice of Teacher Rounds.

Teacher Rounds are considered in this study as a collaborative professional learning activity, where teachers learn from each other in the

context of the classroom. Teacher Rounds are a relatively new approach to professional learning that involves teachers working together in order to improve the practice of teaching. A Round (both Teacher and Instructional) involves observation, reflection and inquiry and is hosted by a willing teacher in her/his classroom and seeks to engage between three and seven participants in the process.

3.2.1 Professional Learning (PL)

Borko and Putnam (1995) argue, “successful professional development efforts are those that help teachers to acquire or develop new ways of thinking about learning, learners and subject matter” (p.60). Teacher Rounds are designed to be part of a professional learning programme rather than as a stand-alone process. Del Prete (2013) makes clear that all participants in the Rounds group are expected to be learners:

A Teacher Round is designed to support collaborative teacher learning in, from and about practice, in an actual classroom. It entails observation, reflection, and inquiry. While the primary actor is the teacher who hosts the round in his or her classroom, a Teacher Round engages all participants in learning. (p.xvi)

Furthermore:

Teacher Rounds bring teaching and learning into detailed focus. They help bind teachers together in a common effort to share and develop practice that works best for students. They help develop shared understanding of what learning that engages students fully looks like and what leads to it. (p.xvi)

3.2.2 Teacher Rounds as a collaborative professional learning (PL) activity

Del Prete (2013, p.12) claims that collaborative practice has yet to be fully established as the norm for Professional Learning (PL) and he argues it is not necessarily effective when it is implemented. Timperley (2007) makes a similar point when she says a collegial community will often end up entrenching existing practice. She points to the major problem with many collaborative projects that have been set up in schools because of what she describes as the “norms of politeness and the absence of challenge”

(Timperley, 2010, p.11). She argues that teachers are very polite and supportive of each other and find it hard to give honest feedback to colleagues which can be a big drawback when introducing Teacher Rounds and other collaborative projects. She insists teachers need to be able to challenge each other in a positive, safe and constructive way and this should be part of the preparation that takes place prior to introducing any collaborative project or setting up a PLC. This is an important issue and points to the need to develop protocols for professional conversations as an essential part of the Teacher Round process. Similarly, the Instructional Rounds model of Elmore (2004) and City et al. (2009) have a dual focus on the need for a common language and on scaffolding and inquiry. The Instructional Rounds model acknowledged the need to base inquiry on local evidence and diagnosis of local conditions by building a descriptive language that allowed participants to describe and analyze what they were seeing and hearing.

Timperley (2007, p.24) argues that sustained improvement depends on teachers developing “professional, self-regulatory inquiry skills” so that they can collect relevant evidence, use it to inquire into the effectiveness of their teaching, and make continuing adjustments to their practice. She concludes that it is difficult for teachers to engage in sophisticated inquiry processes unless leaders support them and enable them to carry out this work (ibid, p.25). The importance of leadership support in allowing and enabling teachers to collaborate and to become practical inquirers is well made and is confirmed throughout the literature.

One of the attributes for an effective PLC outlined by Stoll and Louis (2007, p.13/14) is closely tied to building teacher and leader capacity in professional development. Capacity building includes both professional development external to the school and the internal learning that occurs in collaborative teacher teams. The authors argue that PLCs make active use of “job-embedded learning, judiciously accessing external professional development when it meets their learning goals” (2007, p.14). They claim that teachers best develop their instructional practice

when they learn by doing and have a process in place to assess the results of their practice and respond to the data. Moreover, they claim that “When professional development is continuous, shared, and closely connected to teaching and learning, teacher capacity grows” (Ibid, p.13).

The collaborative discussion and interaction made possible through collaborative learning teams allows teachers to benefit from the insights of their colleagues (Hargreaves and Giles, 2003; Stiggins, 2005). Research has shown that this job-embedded professional development offers the best source of improved teacher capacity. In other words going out on a CPD course is less effective in changing practice in the classroom.

Stoll and Louis (2007) conclude their paper by saying that the PLC principal leads a school that has “embraced the shared purpose of improving student achievement” (p.16). They claim that, “together, administrators and their faculties develop an infrastructure of collaborative teamwork, producing an exciting synergy that effects change” (p.16). Furthermore, they assert that “teacher capacity building and leadership capacity building are continuous” (p.17), as the PLC nurtures the development and use of strategies and actions that increase the collective power of the whole organization to engage in continuous improvement for ongoing student learning.

Timperley (2007) argues that teachers who are engaged in cycles of effective professional learning take greater responsibility for the learning of all students and they don't see student underperformance as an inevitable consequence of the home or community environment. She says that as teachers take more responsibility, and understand that their new professional knowledge and practice are having a positive impact on their students, they then begin to feel more effective as teachers. However, she does not conclude that this leads to much greater levels of job satisfaction.

Although teacher learning is a relatively new field of research (Borko et al. 2007) and there have been differing views about what constitutes effective Professional Learning (PL) for teachers (Garet et. al. 2001; Cameron et al. 2013), they all suggest there are emerging consensus about some key features of effective PL. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) suggest there appears to be agreement that PL should be situated in the “authentic world” of classrooms and “engage teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection that illuminate the processes of learning and development” (ibid, p.82).

Learning in the context of the classrooms and teaching/learning processes has real relevance and value for teachers particularly when new learning can be applied almost immediately. Effective teacher learning takes place when the focus is school based and integrated into daily practice (Wideen et al. 1998; Opfer and Pedder, 2011).

Professional Learning is more effective “if teachers from the same school, department, or year level participate collectively” (Opfer and Pedder, 2011, p.385). Furthermore, the view is that effective PL should be “connected to and derived from teachers’ work with their students” (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 2011, p.82), involving opportunities for teacher-led learning addressing real problems of practice and capitalizing on teachers’ desire to maximize the learning of their students.

Cameron et al. (2013) found teachers value PL activities involving working with colleagues, observing lessons and having time to share ideas. Collaborative Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has been found to have a positive impact on improvements in teaching and learning, specifically enhanced teacher efficacy, commitment to change in practice and enthusiasm for collaboration (Cordingley et al. 2003). Even so, the authors suggest such approaches can be limited unless they conceptualize teachers as lead learners and emphasize teacher-driven learning directly aligned with the specific context of practice. Furthermore,

the quality of teacher collaboration has been shown to positively influence teacher improvement and student achievement (Ronfeldt et al. 2015).

PL and development for most teachers involves workshops, or staff meetings, often taking place after school at the end of a long school day. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009, p.46) describe these events as the “drive by” workshop model of professional development. Danielson (2009, p.4) describes much of the professional learning provided as “sit ‘n git” sessions and claims teachers become “passive” when they attend such events and don’t learn from them.

There is an assumption that professional development is a good thing and will result in school improvement. The most recent report on the subject from the Teachers Development Trust (2015) confirms this belief in its introduction:

Previous research shows that powerful continuing professional development helps students succeed and teachers thrive. (Coe, Higgins et al. 2015, p.6)

However, there are dissenting views that conclude that investing in CPD does not necessarily result in high quality teaching. A recent research project named Mirage (2015) in the USA, claimed that millions of dollars are being wasted on supporting teachers’ professional development. The research estimates that the three districts they studied spend an average of nearly \$18,000 per teacher per year on teacher development, and the teachers surveyed (over 10,000) reported spending approximately 19 full school days a year participating in development activities. This seems an extraordinary amount of funding and time by British standards.

The Mirage (2015) study found that about one third of teachers improved over a two-to-three-year period after participating in teacher training while 20% got worse. The study also found that school districts are not helping teachers understand their weaknesses, as many of those interviewed believed there was nothing wrong with their performance in the classroom. They rated themselves highly whilst their schools rated them negatively. There was a real mismatch on perceptions of competence

(Mirage, 2015, p.12). There was certainly a mismatch in terms of communication. Furthermore, the research found that most teachers do not appear to improve substantially from year to year despite all of the professional development provided. The evaluation ratings of nearly seven out of ten teachers in the districts surveyed remained constant or declined over the last two to three years. They also found that substantial improvement seemed to be especially difficult for teachers who had been in post for more than five years. Even when teachers did improve, the researchers were unable to link their growth to any particular professional development strategy. No type, amount or combination of development activities appeared more likely than any other to help teachers improve substantially, including the “job-embedded,” “differentiated” variety that many believed to be the most promising (Mirage, 2015). The research findings do not make clear what the evaluation ratings involved.

The Mirage Report concludes that school systems are not helping teachers understand how to improve, or even that they have room to improve at all. It seems effective performance management systems were not in place and teachers were not given clear feedback or information about their strengths and weaknesses in the classroom. Indeed the vast majority of teachers in the districts included in the research were rated “effective or meeting expectations or higher”, even when student outcomes in these districts was poor and below expectations (ibid, 2015, p.15). As a result less than half of teachers surveyed agreed they had weaknesses in their instruction and more than sixty percent of “low-rated” teachers still gave themselves high performance ratings. In short, the Mirage study (2015) concludes that teachers have been bombarded with help, but most of it is not helpful—to teachers as professionals or to schools. Although this is an interesting study it was the only piece of research that I could find that came to such damning conclusions about PL.

Higgins et al. (2015) produced a detailed overview of a number of reviews on what makes great teaching, and their report claims that not all

teachers in England have access to high quality professional development and to the types of activities and processes most likely to impact positively on their practice and student outcomes (ibid, p.10). Higgins et al. (2015) defined effective teaching as “that which leads to improved student achievement using outcomes that matter to their future success” (p.2). They say that defining effective teaching is not easy but the research keeps coming back to the critical point: student progress is the yardstick by which teacher quality should be assessed. Ultimately, they say that for a judgment about whether teaching is effective and is to be seen as trustworthy, it must be checked against the progress being made by students. However, they point to the following as the six components of great teaching (ibid, p.2):

- Pedagogical - content knowledge
- Quality of instruction
- Classroom climate
- Classroom management
- Teacher beliefs
- Professional behaviours

The Higgins et al. report (2105) goes on to discuss how teachers can be assessed against these six components. A review by Timperley et al. (2007) details a teacher knowledge-building cycle, which is a feedback loop for teachers that is associated with improved student outcomes. The Timperley synthesis assumes that what goes on in the teacher learning is similar to student learning. And their findings suggest that teacher learning can have a sizeable impact on student outcomes.

When answering the question about how teacher learning and student learning can be improved the authors suggest that the observation/feedback routine should be structured explicitly as a continuous professional learning opportunity that enables teachers to work on improving student outcomes. (Higgins et al. 2015, p.4)

The examination of the literature on Great Teaching provided a challenge to the claim that teachers typically improve over their first 3-5 years and

then plateau. Instead, the researchers claim that teachers working in schools with more supportive professional environments continued to improve significantly after three years, while teachers in the least supportive schools actually declined in their effectiveness as teachers.

3.2.3 Feedback as a professional learning tool

Higgins et al. (2015) refer to another study that found feedback from classroom observation led to a gain in students' maths test scores in the years following the intervention (p.5). Thus, they suggest that sustained professional learning is most likely to result when:

- the focus of feedback is kept clearly on improving student outcomes;
- feedback is related to clear, specific and challenging goals for the recipient;
- attention is on the learning rather than to the person or to comparisons with others;
- teachers are encouraged to be continual independent learners;
- feedback is mediated by a mentor in an environment of trust and support;
- an environment of professional learning and support is promoted by the school's leadership. (p.5)

On the other hand Danielson (2009) is more scathing about feedback. She claims that feedback, alongside coaching, has attained an unquestioned position as the salvation of professional learning and she writes that "If one acknowledges, as one must, the cognitive nature of teaching, then conversations about teaching must be about the cognition" (p. 8). She says it's not sufficient to discuss, or even critique what a teacher has done; it is essential also to explore the reasoning that underlines these actions and she claims feedback is singularly lacking in this respect. With what she terms the "toxic influence of hierarchy, little is learned by teachers in feedback led by managers"(p.11). Furthermore, Danielson (2009) argues that "if we want teachers to advance in their understanding, they must be the ones to engage in the work of self-assessment and reflection on practice, and then external feedback is

seen as a possible hindrance to that process” (p.11). Moreover, she claims that there are many limitations to the feedback “typically provided”, which need to be considered (p.11). From the teacher’s point of view, the experience of listening to suggestions by a supervisor is a completely “passive one”. Indeed Danielson suggests that the “entire observation or supervision places the teacher in a passive role and this helps to explain why the observation process “yields such little value to teachers” (p.4). Danielson suggests that teachers “endure” the feedback session. However, Danielson is not against all types of feedback but she says it is more appropriate and useful for new and beginning teachers and suggests experienced teachers who are more self-reliant may find such feedback as “patronizing and condescending” (Danielson, 2009, p.11).

3.2.4 Key findings of the Higgins Report on CPD

The key findings of the Higgins et al. (2015) report were that carefully designed PD can have a strong focus on student outcomes. The authors also outline the elements of a carefully designed PD programme, which includes collaboration and peer learning (Higgins et al. 2015, p.8). However, the authors are very clear about what does not work in terms of professional development. These include:

- A didactic model in which facilitators simply tell teachers what to do, or give them materials without giving them opportunities to develop skills and inquire into their impact on pupil learning.
- Professional development which does not have a strong focus on aspirations for students and assessing the impact of changed teacher practices on pupil learning. (p,18)

The evidence cited in the report also suggests that CPD must be long term rather than a one off activity:

To produce profound, lasting change, the most effective professional development lasted at least 2 terms – more usually a year. (ibid, 2015, p.19)

Higgins et al. (2015) found that peer support was a common feature of effective professional development but also confirmed that there is evidence to suggest that access to some form of collegial support is essential for good PL. However, the strongest reviews included in this

overview found that whilst collaboration between teachers is necessary, it alone is not sufficient.

The CUREE Report (2012) is a synthesis of the relevant research and suggested the following models of professional learning for teachers that are more likely to improve student outcomes. These include:

- enquiry oriented learning activities spread over (usually) two terms or more;
- peer support to embed new practices and support risk taking;
- professional dialogue rooted directly in evidence from trying out new things and focused on understanding why things do and don't work in order to build an underpinning rationale (also known as 'professional reflection');
- learning to learn from observing the practice of others; (p.8)

These are all features of Teacher Rounds; however, the following two were not part of the Teacher Round protocols:

- carefully targeted (usually external) specialist expertise including the selection of high leverage strategies, modelling them, the provision of support via observation and debriefing and gradual transfer of control over learning to the teachers involved;
- ambitious goals set in the context of aspirations for pupils

Teacher autonomy and independence in terms of their own professional development is a theme that supports the use of Rounds as part of a CPD programme. Bowe et al., (2015) suggest that less rather than more prescription is required to engage teachers in professional inquiry. This reluctance to prescribe has meant that in previous professional development, where the goal has been to inquire into practice, participants have had a great deal of control over the direction of the inquiry. This autonomy given to teachers has largely been due to findings that teacher engagement is dependent on respecting their professional judgment (Ingvarson et al., 2005). Bowe et al., (2015) argue that teachers are in the best position to find solutions to local problems and to refine the pedagogy of the profession as a whole. However, the authors assert that such a conceptualization of teacher professional learning poses serious limitations considering research which has demonstrated that teachers

are often unable to articulate their best practice in professional conversations (Louis and Kruse, 1996; Grossman et al., 2001; Elmore, 2007). Teachers have little or no experience talking about teaching and learning with colleagues and they need practice and opportunity to do so. The old models of CPD and professional learning are not providing such opportunities. However, the Round models can provide these opportunities.

Having the opportunity to see their peers teach allows teachers to develop the language they need to talk to each other openly and honestly about teaching and learning. As City et al. (2009) put it “a key part of developing and improvement practice is observation” (p.4).

Sharing good practice with and amongst schools is also regarded as an integral part of continuing professional development and Fielding et al. (2005) in a report about the sharing of good practice, argue that:

Policy makers, academics and practitioners tend to agree that spreading good practice from one school to another is important in improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school system. (p.2)

Furthermore, Fielding et al. (2005) comment that practitioners generally welcomed the principle of sharing good practice between schools. The feeling was that approaches to teaching and learning that have been developed by and with other practicing teachers were to be trusted and that they were more realistic and grounded in professional skills and knowledge than programmes that are prescribed centrally (i.e by DFE).

Chew (2013) suggests that adults (in this case teachers) who are given the opportunity to be involved in the process of identifying their own professional development needs, and assessing their own development, experience what Knowles et al. (2005) set out to establish with their original model of adult learning theory. The model assumes adults are self-motivated and self-directed learners and their experiences and knowledge can be shared with others. It also assumes adults are task-oriented, problem solving individuals and learn in order to enrich their

lives by completing specific tasks or solving problems.

Chew asserts that adult learning theory is in keeping with the practice of Instructional Rounds as the Rounds process closely follows the assumptions identified in the Knowles' model. He suggests participants choose to engage in the Rounds process due to self-motivation and their ownership as self-directed learners.

The second assumption included in Knowles' model of adult learning addresses the sharing of experiences and knowledge. Chew (2013) argues that an integral aspect in the use of Instructional Rounds is acknowledging and benefitting from the wealth of knowledge in the room through the varied experiences each individual participant brings to the process (City et al. 2009). The problem solving and "task-orientation assumptions" included in the adult learning theory model are echoed as participants collaboratively establish the focus of the Rounds by identifying a specific problem of practice motivated by the individual needs of the members of the group (Chew, 2013, p.16). Roberts (2012) describes the Instructional Rounds process as a "culturally disruptive" (p.126) practice because it is so different from the normal methods of adult learning in schools. A collaborative culture where there is trust in the leadership and in each other must be present in a school before the process can be introduced.

Currently, most observations that take place in schools are supervisory and are about evaluation and Rounds contrast with these processes on a number of dimensions, the first of which is learning (City et al. p.39). Rounds are essentially an inquiry process. Teachers participating in Rounds should expect to learn something themselves whereas in supervision and evaluation, only the person being observed is expected to learn. Furthermore, the authors make the point that Rounds are not about "fixing" individual teachers but are about understanding what is happening in classrooms (ibid, 2009, p.37).

City et al. (2009) argue that the practice of participating in Instructional Rounds creates a “structured format” by means of which teachers enter into professional dialogue with their colleagues reflecting on the individual and collective work they have observed together and the data they have collectively gathered within the school or a number of schools. They assert that by participating in Instructional Rounds, professionals will “look at classroom instruction in a focused, systematic, purposeful and collective way” (p.165).

Collective efficacy, which is a teacher’s ability to produce a desired or intended result, improves student performance and creates a work environment that builds teacher commitment to the school (Brinson and Steiner, 2007; City, et al. 2009). One of the suggestions stemming from research as to how leaders can improve collective efficacy is by creating opportunities for teachers to collaboratively share skills and experience. (Brinson and Steiner, 2007, p.3). Rounds provide this opportunity as well as providing a real learning experience in the context of the classroom. This real learning experience involves a genuine task embedded in real work experiences which enable learning to take place through the reflective action and practice of solving a specific problem presented within the context of the participants’ classroom. Instructional Rounds tries to model the relationship between individual learning and collective learning by putting people in situations where they have to develop “common norms and a common understanding” about the conditions that produce their success (City et al. 2009, p.165).

Although time tends to be an ongoing issue, having time and space for PL in the regular school timetable is important (DeLuca et al. 2014). This includes time for group meetings and peer observation, for which teachers may need to be released from their classrooms as well as time to develop, discuss, reflect, apply, practice, review and revisit new learning (Opfer and Pedder, 2011). Intensive and sustained PL over long periods of time has also been shown to be more effective (Yoon et al. 2007).

3.2.5 *A summary of the relevant findings on Continuing Professional Development Research*

The aim of PL is to help teachers reflect and develop new ways of teaching. A great deal of money is spent on providing learning opportunities for this to happen. However, the literature indicates that most of PL does not reflect the fact that teachers learn from each other and does not facilitate collaborative working. The topic and format of the PL is normally decided on by senior leaders and is around whole school priorities rather than on individual needs. The model often depends on experts or on lead practitioners and best practice. Establishing the effectiveness of PL on student outcomes is problematic but great efforts are made to evaluate and justify it. In a context where everything that happens in schools is measured it seems important to establish the value teachers place on working together to improve their practice. As Del Prete (2013) argues, teacher learning is as important as student learning and needs to be regarded as such.

3.3 What is a Round?

There are two main types of Rounds currently used in schools. *Teacher Rounds* are associated with Del Prete (1997, 2010, 2013) and *Instructional Rounds* are proposed by Elmore (2004) and City et al. (2009). Both have similar basic elements and are based on clinical or Medical Ward Rounds that have been common practice in teaching hospitals for many years as a way of training doctors around a patient's bed. Rounds in education are designed to support collaborative teaching and learning practice in the classroom.

Del Prete (1997, p.2), in his first article on the subject of Teacher Rounds, argues that what distinguishes a Round from other professional development activity is that it occurs in the "actual context" of teaching and learning and that it draws on and encourages investigation and reflection on teachers' and learners' experience.

3.3.1 *Teacher Rounds V Instructional Rounds*

Teacher Rounds are different from Instructional Rounds in that they involve teachers from one school rather than a number of schools across a network. They are made up of classroom teachers rather than managers or senior leaders and are therefore more collaborative and intimate than Instructional Rounds. The host teacher decides the focus of the Round by identifying a problem of practice and formulates the round inquiry, which is a set of questions or directions on what to look for, to listen to or ask for in the course of the round lesson. The host teacher invites colleagues (who make up the Round group) to visit her/his classroom and observe the lesson. In many cases trainee teachers (pre-service) are involved and occasionally university staff and/or other partners are invited to participate (Del Prete, 2013).

Following a pre-Round briefing meeting before the actual Round (observation) the Round group visit the classroom, look closely at what is going on and take detailed descriptive notes. The host teacher will have given them a list of aspects to focus upon and will have provided the team with the lesson learning intentions. During the post-Round discussion the individuals in the Round team describe exactly what they see going on in the classroom. However, a vital element of Rounds is that they are non-judgmental. They don't have a set of criteria or a tick list to refer to and they don't try to evaluate or make judgments about the quality of the teacher or the lesson. Instead they describe exactly what they see and hear without seeking to interpret it. Rounds are fundamentally descriptive and analytic, not evaluative (City et al. 2009). They don't tell teachers what they need to do. Best practice is not mentioned because it is agreed that there is no agreed definition of what best practice looks like.

During the post-Round discussion the Round participants feedback to the host teacher and may ask a number of questions in the form of 'wonderings'. The aim is to help the teacher reflect so they can find new ways to address the problem of practice and share the learning across a

school or a network (in the case of Instructional Rounds). Round protocols are used to provide a structure for open discussion and for agreements about confidentiality. This debriefing session keeps the analysis on specific and factual descriptions and, in the case of Instructional Rounds, provides a detailed picture of teaching and learning throughout a number of schools in the network, without identifying individual teachers (Fowler-Finn, 2013). The Instructional Rounds members conclude their work by making a set of recommendations to address the problem of practice and improve learning (City et al. 2009). Teacher Rounds are personal to individual teachers and do not involve setting targets or next steps. That is up to the individual host teacher concerned. Teacher Rounds are seen as a professional learning activity for individual teachers and are not designed to audit teachers' practice or to report on teaching across a whole school.

Del Prete (2010) strongly asserts that Teaching Rounds put teaching and learning at the center of the school. They help develop shared understandings of what learning that engages students fully looks like and what leads to it. He suggests Teacher Rounds can unpack the complexities of large numbers of students who are very different by bringing many eyes and ears to the process and this can lead to greater insight on how to work within it. He argues Teacher Rounds are:

a means for sharing, inquiring into, and advancing practice and, not least, for developing the habit of doing so. They are the key ingredients in the development of the professional learning cultures within partner schools and the partnership as a whole and in the development of the MATs (*Master Level Trainees*) as teachers. They often combine with other learning practices to make professional learning a multifaceted and continuous process with real classroom impact. (p.51)

Inquiry into student learning and teaching practice in its actual context is an essential component of Teacher Rounds and are what make the practice different from other forms of professional development. Troen and Boles (2014, p.21) concur with this point and argue "students are the beneficiaries when teachers' learning is enriched by grounding

professional development in the daily particulars of teacher practice”. The authors base their comments on their own experience but have no scientific research to back up these assertions. Measuring the outcomes of Teacher Rounds over a short period of time (especially in terms of outcomes for students) is notoriously difficult.

Although the Round teacher is the one who gets most benefit from of the debriefing process (through feedback from colleagues) the process means that Round participants also gain through close observation of the teacher and learners as well as deep reflection that they can relate to their own teaching. Therefore, Rounds form part of the CPD for all teachers involved.

Troen and Boles (2014) provide practical information and detailed guidelines for Teacher Round facilitators introducing Rounds in their schools. They argue that the practice of Teacher Rounds is not new and both authors had previously been part of a school-college collaboration to improve teacher preparation and they had begun experimenting in something they called ‘Grand Rounds’ (Thompson and Cooner 2001), which was based on the model of medical school training and emphasized the training of pre-service teachers where experienced teachers (called Master Teachers) taught individual lessons and were observed by trainees. The authors cite Teacher Rounds as a unique form of professional learning. They stress the importance of Rounds as a culture-building practice and argue that Teacher Rounds provide the scaffolding and support that teachers can use, on their own or as part of an organized venture.

Troen and Boles (2014, p. 6/7) describe the many advantages of Teacher Rounds:

- it occurs in the actual context of teaching and learning,
- it draws on and encourages investigation and reflection on teachers’ and learners’ experience,
- it provides a shared experience as a basis for conversation,

- it brings to bear the different perspectives and expertise of different participants in the reflective process.

Furthermore, the authors claim Teacher Rounds meaningfulness lies in the collaborative way in which it involves teachers as professional and adult learners, and particularly in its direct relation to teachers' experience and practice and subsequently on student learning. In addition, they claim Rounds build a professional development community through processes of inquiry and reflection. They argue that Rounds create a framework for "critical collegueship" (ibid, 2014, p.21). Critical collegueship they argue, is a professional development environment that helps teachers expose their classroom practices to other teachers and educators, and enables them to learn by "unpacking authentic challenges teachers face and to think through plausible strategies" (p.21). I found this practical book invaluable in helping me to plan my work in schools, introducing teachers to Teacher Rounds.

3.3.2 Instructional Rounds

Instructional Rounds (City et al. 2009) are very similar to Teacher Rounds but are usually organized by a network or collaborative of schools or by a district (in the USA). Unlike the Teacher Round model, the aim is system wide improvement rather than developing the practice of the particular teachers visited (City et al. 2009; Roberts, 2012). They involve groups of observers made up of Superintendents and School Principals and Administrators, visiting host schools in their network. The Instructional Rounds groups focus on a problem of practice identified by the district or the school and they share their collective observations to agree some next steps to be implemented. Rounds occur in a particular school in several different classrooms, and typically last about 15–20 minutes. Although teachers are involved (they are observed) this process does not really involve peer observation. The problem of practice is decided by the district or collaborative and it is largely a hierarchical model initiated and directed by Principals and Administrators.

Instructional Rounds were originally designed to bring senior colleagues (School Principals, Superintendents and Administrators) back into the classroom in order for them to be better informed when making educational decisions. The view of City et al. (2009) is that Administrators who leave the classroom are rewarded with higher social status and dramatically higher pay. However, the authors argue they lose touch with what is going on in the classroom. Instructional Rounds were originally developed as a structure that opened classrooms to them.

Instructional Rounds are essentially an inquiry process rather than an auditing or supervisory process. They contrast with supervision and evaluation observations on a number of dimensions, the first of which is learning (City et al. p.39). Participants in Rounds should expect to learn something themselves. Rounds provide opportunities for adult learning in the context of the classroom. The authors make it clear that Rounds are not about “fixing” individual teachers but are about understanding what is happening in classrooms and how the system produces those effects, and how the network can move closer to producing the learning they want to see (City et al. 2009, p.37). Similarly, Fowler-Finn (2013) describes Instructional Rounds as an attempt to bring rigor to school improvements, not by blaming teachers, but by focusing on the learning of top-bottom leadership. In his view, Instructional Rounds is essentially about adult learning and teacher development. He argues that by helping to work out and describe what good teaching and learning looks like, Instructional Rounds helps uncover the ways that teachers and administrators can support each other. The authors (City et al. and Fowler-Finn) of both books describe a very teacher supportive practice but the fact remains that Instructional Rounds are initiated and largely run by leaders and those in positions of power who set the agenda and define the problem of practice. Until recently, teachers were rarely involved in discussions as full participants but were on the receiving end of Rounds. This is changing and teachers are now far more involved in the process.

The majority of adaptations of Rounds are based on the Instructional

Round model. Marzano (2011, p.81) offers a step-by-step protocol for the implementation of Instructional Rounds for teachers. He argues the process is teacher-centered and removes student input and the requirement for the host teacher to receive direct feedback from the Instructional Rounds team. In his model, Rounds teachers begin by noting the positive things that they observed and then speculating as to what produced the positive outcome. The observing teachers present what they thought seemed to have happened, and may *wonder* why the observed teacher acted in a certain manner. Then individually and as a Rounds Group they identify next steps for themselves in their own classroom practice.

Marzano (2011) asserts that supervisory and feedback systems in place in many schools and districts do little to systematically enhance teacher expertise (2011, p.1). However, he claims we can enhance teacher expertise through “deliberate practice” (Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Romer, 1993). Deliberate practice involves more than mere repetition; it requires activities that are designed to improve teacher performance, challenge the learner and provide feedback. One of the elements of deliberate practice suggested was an opportunity for teachers to observe and learn from each other. Introducing Instructional Rounds was one way of achieving this aim. Marzano and others (Del Prete, 2013; City et al. 2009) claim that the outcome of Rounds clearly places the work of the learning with the Round teachers and is very contextual with classroom visits and, in the case of Instructional Rounds, problems of practice that are initiated by observing teachers. He concludes that Instructional Rounds’ practices are an effective, professional learning structure to support teachers’ professional learning and subsequent practice.

City et al. (2009) and Roberts (2012) claim that Instructional Rounds are more effective than other similar approaches to collaborative professional learning. Del Prete (2013, p. xv) argues that the overlap between Instructional Rounds and Teacher Rounds is the extent that they are “practices dedicated to understanding teaching and learning by making

the practice inside classrooms more open, visible and understandable”.

3.3.3 Instructional Rounds as a model of system-wide collaboration.

Teacher Rounds are more about individual teacher and school collaboration, while Instructional Rounds are about system wide collaboration. Currently, system-wide collaboration is being heavily promoted as the way forward for groups of schools including academy chains and less formal federations and partnerships in England. The idea is that schools should support each other, avoiding expensive consultants and experts to lead the way on school improvement. A report produced by the Education Development Trust authored by Mumby and Fullan (2016) on the subject of system-wide school collaboration claims that you can't run a whole system, for all students in a region, state or country by relying entirely on exceptional leadership in each school. Furthermore, they claim that “the more things change in small pockets, the more things, overall, tend to remain the same, with the exceptional schools attracting the best talent and the rest left struggling in comparison” (p.4). This argument is countered by Elmore's recent article (2016, p.529) where he questions his own and other reformers' obsession with doing things “at scale” where the problem of practice and the subsequent solutions could be shared amongst all schools. He says that when he wrote this article (1995) he was a believer in “policy-driven reform” (ibid, p.530) when he believed in an “irresponsibly simplistic and schematic view of human learning and development”. He has since changed his mind.

Mumby and Fullan (2016) argue that system-wide school collaboration is the key to unlocking teacher potential and talents. However, Hattie (2016) stressed that we need to be careful that networks do not become the latest silver bullet to resolve all education's problems. He explained that system-wide collaboration is highly focused and precise work and he sees networks as a means to an end that is to strengthen the leadership and collective efficacy of teachers to make a difference in the learning of all students. Furthermore, the authors (ibid, p.5) argue that “building

capacity and developing a sense of shared accountability, trust and the right balance between autonomy and connectedness” is hard in any single organization but is much harder to achieve across a group of schools. The authors acknowledge that the task of collaboration “may be even more daunting in the current climate of top-down national accountability measures” (ibid, p.10).

In conclusion, Mumby et al., (2016, p.6) set out what they describe as the “critical success factors” for effective system-wide school collaboration. These are very similar to those proposed by several other authors including Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace and Thomas, (2006) and Lieberman (2012) who provides a shorter but similar list of essentials and will be referred to later on in this chapter.

3.3.4 Medical Ward Rounds

We are told that the Rounds models described in this literature review originated from the traditional practices used in teaching hospitals (Del Prete, 1997, 2013; City et al. 2009). Medical Ward Rounds have been used for many decades as a way of training doctors and as a means of sharing expertise between professionals with the ultimate goal of improving patient diagnosis and developing a care plan. Ward Rounds have traditionally been hierarchical, involving an experienced consultant surrounded by trainee doctors discussing a patient’s medical condition around the hospital bed. The consultant was seen to be the expert and the interns were there to learn. This professional training occurred in context around the hospital bed rather than in a lecture theatre and this fact made Rounds stand out as a different approach. It was this aspect of the Rounds model that led to the adaptation of the model for training teachers in the classroom.

There are many different models of Medical Ward Rounds used in hospitals as Rounds evolved over time and increasingly involved numerous other professionals, other than doctors in the process. Therefore, senior nurses and other specialists and professionals who had

something to contribute (social workers for instance) might be part of the Ward Round team. The primary function of Ward Rounds is that professionals collaborate together to decide the best diagnosis and treatment for patients and to take their views and feedback into consideration (Cantillon and Sargent, 2008, and Sokol, 2009).

Del Prete (2013) makes a comparison between Teacher Rounds and Medical Ward Rounds. He argues that both processes aim to “uncover practice – to make it more transparent and accessible” (p.xv). Furthermore, he asserts it is also a means for “sharing knowledge about practice and considering jointly problems of practice” (p.xv). Like a Medical Round, a Teacher Round incorporates multiple perspectives to bring more know-how to bear on the questions regarding practice when they arise. Also Teacher Rounds “occur in context, in real time” (p.xv). However, Shulman (2004, p.258) is less than enthusiastic with this comparison. He points out “The practice of teaching involves a far more complex task environment than does that of medicine”.

Knowing the individual is important to both teacher and physician, but teaching is complex precisely because a teacher is faced with many learners and their various differences, whereas a physician normally can focus on one patient at a time (Del Prete, 2013, p.xvi).

Despite the perceived success of Medical Ward Rounds they are no longer being used as frequently as they once were in our hospitals. This is accounted for by changes in working practices and the pressures of capacity and staffing levels and other changes in the way hospitals are currently run. A joint report from the Royal College of Physicians and Royal College of Nursing (Kirthi et al. 2012) aims to encourage the medical profession to revitalize and revisit the Ward Round process as a valuable tool in improving patient care and sharing best practice. Thus, the report and subsequent British Medical Journal (BMJ) articles (BMJ 2008: Cantillon, 337: a1961, BMJ 2007; Sokol, 2009 338: b879, BMJ 2008; Ker et al. 2008, 337: a1930), offer guidelines on how to run

successful and effective Ward Rounds with clear protocols deemed to be an essential part of the process.

In order to find out more about Medical Ward Rounds for myself I met with two very senior consultants in a London Teaching Hospital, who were very involved in the training of new doctors. Both confirmed that the practice of Ward Rounds had almost disappeared in terms of using them as a learning process. However, many consultants still used them to visit patients with resident doctors and others to assess a patient's treatment and progress.

Schostak and Levine (2012, p.1) agree that the Ward Round is central to healthcare practices, to good professional practice and to safe quality care for patients. They conclude that there is no one single Ward Round practice but many. Each consists of a set of "sophisticated engagements in highly complex multi-dimensional activities" and promote the value of "ward scripts" and "considerative" (ibid, p.3) clinical practice as a way to get the most out of a Medical Ward Round. They conclude that getting a grasp on the processes and functions of Ward Rounds is vital to professional healthcare practices, but they say practice variation makes this task difficult. That many of these engagements are described as intangibles and cannot be explained, (Fish and de Cossart, 2007), add further difficulties. The script is not a bolt-on addition to the existing Ward Round practices, neither is it a single entity, rather it can take many forms with many components (Schostak and Levine, 2012, p.1). I am not sure if such scripts were ever developed or used in practice.

There are numerous papers and articles that promote the use of Medical Ward Rounds and give advice to professionals in the field on how to carry them out so that they are effective and have an impact on patient wellbeing (*BMJ* 2008;337: a1930; Ker et al., 2008; Sokol, 2009). However, the most recent report produced by Kirthi et al. (2012, p.2) draws much of the Ward Round literature together but states that there is a "paucity of quality indicators" to guide best practice in modern hospital environments. This is an important point because the NHS (like

Education), is driven by targets and accountability measures, and it is vital to provide evidence that one practice is more effective in having an impact on patient care than others. Trying to find ways of measuring the impact of implementing Medical Ward Rounds (as with Teacher and Instructional Rounds) is not straightforward but nonetheless needs to be addressed. Schostak et al. (2010, p.10) conclude that there is no question that CPD can take place in the workplace but the question is can CPD in the workplace be systematically assessed? This may be one reason why Ward Rounds are not usually part of on-going professional programmes for experienced doctors.

Kirithi et al. (2012) and subsequent articles (*BMJ* 2008;337: a1930) propose that the aims of Ward Rounds is to improve the quality of care for patients by gathering the views of a multi-disciplinary team (not necessarily all doctors). However, the report makes clear that the use of Ward Rounds as a training opportunity for doctors appears to be a secondary purpose. There is little evidence in the literature of Medical Ward Rounds being used to provide on-going training and development for experienced doctors. This is very different from the use of Rounds in education where Rounds involve both trainee teachers as well as experienced teachers. Transferring the lessons learned from Medical Ward Rounds to an educational setting is a challenge, as the focus is not always about learner outcomes (as in Lesson Study) but is more about what the teacher and students are doing and saying, rather than on the measured educational performance of students.

The question of hierarchy in Medical Rounds needs to be considered. Medical Rounds normally contain hierarchies of knowledge, experience and status among participants but there is no question about where the power lies. The Consultant is seen as the person in charge and gives opportunities for the junior members to learn from the expertise and experience of the most senior member of the team. This hierarchy is rejected by Teacher Rounds (Del Prete, 2013) and supposedly by Instructional Rounds (City et al. 2009) although I would argue that this is

a hierarchical model. Philpott and Oates (2015) argue that rejecting the hierarchy of Medical Rounds means that Teacher and Instructional Rounds are not based on the model of Medical Rounds from which they claim to derive their efficacy. The authors conclude that this means that the rationale for them cannot be borrowed from their claimed association with medicine. Claims of efficacy, therefore, have to 'stand on their own two feet' through the production of empirical evidence for the effectiveness of Instructional or Learning Rounds themselves (Philpott and Oates, 2015, p.53). This study is an attempt to provide such empirical evidence.

Roegman and Riehl (2012, p.926) conclude that the use of Medical Rounds as a framework by Instructional Rounds has come from anecdotes, visits and conversations with doctors or mass media portrayals of Medical Rounds and that the relationship between Instructional Rounds and Medical Rounds is not a close one nor one that has been thought through in any detail.

3.4 Other adaptations of Round models

Rounds have been adapted in various forms with varying degrees of success in the USA, in Australia, South Africa, and Canada and also in Scotland. In this section I briefly describe the research carried out and the outcomes.

3.4.1 Learning Rounds in Scotland

Although Rounds have been introduced and established as part of regular CPD programmes in many parts of the world, they have not been used to any great extent in England and Wales. However, there has been a pilot project in Scotland (Scottish Education Report, 2011) over a number of years, although this has not been widely publicized nor shared to any degree.

As part of the International Thought Leaders programme, established by the Scottish Government in 2005, Professor Richard Elmore spoke on the

model of Instructional Rounds at a National seminar in 2007. This seminar was attended by Head teachers, and other senior education professionals, who were very inspired by what they heard. As a consequence the National CPD Team, in collaboration with the Scottish Centre for Studies in School Administration (SCSSA) was invited by the Scottish Government to develop a similar approach, which would be relevant to Scotland. Subsequently, Learning Rounds were championed by the SCSSA and the National CPD team and were described as a system of non-judgmental, evidence-based group observation, which encourages those taking part to view their performance and approach from a new perspective.

The Scottish Learning Rounds Report (May 2008 - 2011) brought together the feedback from local authorities and schools including interviews with participating staff, from active engagement by the team with a range of educational establishments and from focus groups at local and national level over the period 2008 – 2011. An overview report (Education Scotland, 2011, p.2) estimated that 24 (out of 32) local authorities had engaged in Learning Rounds but the full extent of participation is unclear as “many educators have taken this forward without engagement with their local authority or with the national CPD Team. Word of mouth has been a prime driver in its adoption”.

The Scottish Learning Rounds Report (2011) concludes that involvement in Learning Rounds has been a very positive experience in its own right and has implications for individual and collaborative CPD. They argue that its main objective was to influence collegiate practice and related CPD. However, the conclusion was that the focus of any subsequent activity must have implications in relation to pupil gains over time. The report acknowledges that involvement in Learning Rounds does not produce an instant positive result but it does lay the foundations for medium to long term planning which relates CPD activity to determined outcomes.

Philpott and Oates (2016) carried out a piece of research looking at the effectiveness of professional learning communities with particular attention to Learning Rounds in Scotland. The authors had also published a detailed literature review around the development and introduction of Learning Rounds (2015). This research looked at the effectiveness of PLCs in promoting teachers' learning and pupil achievement. The authors (2016, p.220) comment on the "conspicuous absence in comparison of Learning Rounds to Instructional Rounds is the lack of attention given to developing a "rich problem of practice". This they argue is treated more briefly in Learning Rounds as "the theme of the observation is agreed by the group" (ibid, p.220). The authors conclude that the lack of attention given to this area, and the change from theory of action to plan of action, could result in practice in Scotland that focuses on observation and debriefing at the expense of other equally important parts of the Rounds process which therefore limits the horizon of Learning Rounds practice to technical improvement without necessarily developing deeper understanding (ibid, p.220).

The findings of the research carried out by Philpott and Oates (2016, p.230) suggests a lack of clarity about what the intended product (Allen 2013) of Learning Rounds was supposed to be. They argue that much of it seemed to be "audit activity" (ibid, p.229). Therefore, they suggest the product would be teachers' generating knowledge of whether other teachers were implementing existing prescriptions of practice (ibid, p.228). There was also some indication of teachers gathering isolated techniques or activities for themselves so the product would be an increased "toolbox of techniques" (ibid, p.229) for individual participants. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the lack of a clearly articulated problem of practice or theory of action left little "affordance for teachers to generate a product in terms of a new understanding of practice and this also limited the ability of teachers to move from individual learning to systemic learning" (ibid, p.229). The researchers concluded that it was not clear that the teachers had identified a "deficiency" or an area for improvement in practice that Learning Rounds was intended to address.

Therefore, there seemed to have been an expectation that learning would emerge from the process but it is not clear what that learning would relate to. This, the authors claim, could reflect Allen's (2013) observation that teachers can become more interested in the processes of Professional Learning Community than with their outcomes. The authors also note a reticence on the behalf of participants to speak openly and honestly during post-round discussion for risk of offending each other. They felt this limited the discussion in some of the schools in the sample.

Philpott and Oates (2016) also argue that the outcomes of their research provided many examples in the teachers' discussions of uncertainty about the protocols of Learning Rounds, which they interpreted as indicating a lack of familiarity with underlying intentions of the protocols. This would point to a lack of clarity on behalf of the implementation team and means that teachers were the recipients of another idea or innovation or good idea that had come from above. If they did not fully understand the what and the why of Learning Rounds they were unlikely to be committed or convinced by the process.

Philpott and Oates (2016, p.230) describe the reticence of teachers in their study of Learning Rounds in Scotland and an "unwillingness to challenge views" of other teachers. The authors claim that a certain amount of effort was expended on ensuring that no one would be offended by the ways that observations were recorded. They suggest the lack of external input into the Learning Rounds through the use of wider educational research and theory made the community too closed with no external source of alternative interpretations or views evident. The authors suggest reference to appropriate academic literature would have been an "affordance for teachers to be more critical and discriminating in their observations of classroom practice" (p.230). A similar view is expressed by Gore et al. (2016) in their large randomized study on Quality Teacher Rounds.

Finally, Philpott and Oates (2016, p.230) conclude that the model for growing Learning Rounds in Scotland did not provide for ongoing support

once the initial training had taken place. In some cases there was no initial training as schools picked up the practice from one another. This meant that appropriate support could not be given to move practice forward. I was unable to find any schools in Scotland currently using Learning Rounds as part of their PL programme. This does not mean they don't exist but means they are doing this in isolation.

There is a growing literature, which shows that Rounds have been adapted for many different purposes. Some examples of different adaptations of Rounds are shown below. Many of these adaptations have been around the preparation and development of pre-service teachers.

3.4.2 Learning Rounds (Virtue)

In 2004, Virtue developed an inquiry project to help better prepare a group of pre-service teachers for their work with English Language Learners. He combined a Teacher Rounds approach with ethnographic observation (Frank, 1999) to help them see beneath the surface of school life and to better understand the kinds of multi-layered transitions that middle level English Language Learners navigate on a daily basis. Virtue, (2006, p.5) claims the project illustrates how a Rounds approach and ethnographic observation may be integrated with pre-service field experiences in order to help interns see beneath the surface of daily life in schools so as to better meet the needs of all students in their classrooms. Virtue (2006, p.5) makes the claim that all who have engaged with Learning Rounds report that its success has come from the gains in “collegial practice”, which have followed and the breaking down of teacher isolation that is a feature in many schools. However, the focus on the learning experience of students is different from either Instructional Rounds or Teacher Rounds and is more akin to Lesson Study models. Despite this ambiguity, Virtue claims Learning Rounds have offered many participants real insight into their own practice and that of colleagues.

3.4.3 Grand Rounds (Thompson and Cooner)

Thompson and Cooner (2001) developed a process called Grand Rounds, which is primarily about pre-service teachers observing Master Teachers. They were developed as part of a collaborative of schools and a university (as with Del Prete's partnership at Clark University). The model appears to involve only pre-service teachers as the primary learners and Master Teachers as the ones who are observed. This does not fit the Teacher Round or Instructional Rounds models, which do not rely on expert teachers as the ones to be visited by Round Groups. However, as with Clark University, one of the benefits of introducing Rounds as a professional learning tool to pre-service teachers is a way of giving them an authentic collaborative experience, working together and opening their classroom doors to each other.

3.4.4 Instructional Rounds as a tool to establish the effectiveness of AfL (Assessment for Learning) strategy implementation

De Luca, Klinger, Pyper and Woods (2015) carried out research to examine the implementation of a professional learning project aimed at building knowledge and skills in assessment for learning (AfL) within two school districts in Ontario, Canada. The research examined the value of a two-tier Instructional Rounds professional learning model. The authors claim this model was unique because it engaged both teachers and principals in collaboratively learning and implementing AfL strategies in order to develop systemic capacity in assessment. Findings from this study report positive changes in teachers' and principals' conceptions and implementation of AfL as well as on the value and challenges of Instructional Rounds as a professional learning model. The paper concludes with a discussion on developing systemic capacity in AfL through an Instructional Rounds model of professional learning. In this case Instructional Rounds, it appears, were used as a way of checking and assessing how well AfL strategies were being used in the classroom which is not in the spirit that Rounds were designed for.

The DeLuca et al. (2013) research focused on Instructional Rounds as a

PL model, which the authors claim adheres to several of William's (2011) principles of embedded AfL. The authors claim Instructional Rounds engaged teachers and principals in a practical application of AfL in which they must set learning targets, identify success criteria, engage in a collaborative learning process and monitor and improve upon their own learning. The authors suggest the aim of engaging in Instructional Rounds was to build and sustain a professional culture that systemically analyses, inquires and improve the work of educators (Elmore, 2007, Marzano, 2011).

The research (ibid, 2013) concluded that for Instructional Rounds to be an effective mechanism to support professional learning, it must also benefit other teachers not directly involved in the project and suggest the Instructional Rounds project must provide for diverse entry points into the professional learning process. However, they make no suggestions about how this might be achieved. Similar, to other experts in the field (Coe, Higgins et al. 2014; Cordingly 2015; Timperley 2007) the authors make the point that current conceptions of AfL are complex, and educators cannot be expected to develop such knowledge and skills quickly. Therefore, short-term professional learning models will not be successful if they only exist within a school for one year or term. Furthermore, the authors conclude that there is a need for ongoing support and opportunities for teachers to share and explore their learning (DeLuca et al. 2013, p.136). These points concur with the findings of the Coe et al. (2015) report on 'What Makes Good Teaching'.

3.4.5 Education Rounds (Roegman and Riehl)

Another piece of research carried out by Roegman and Riehl (2012) was a qualitative study that examined the Education Rounds model in a graduate-level teacher residency programme in New York City. The researchers analyzed how a cohort of twenty pre-service teachers framed their teaching practice and reflected on opportunities for learning through Education Rounds. Findings suggested that the Education Rounds process highlighted gaps in pre-service teachers' understandings of how,

when, and why they should use particular strategies in the classroom.

The Education Rounds model was designed as a potentially powerful mechanism toward the end of the pre-service teachers' residency. The purpose was for residents to learn how to use descriptive observations of classroom practice to support themselves and their peers in investigating and improving their teaching practice. The residency programme initially adapted the Education Rounds model to include only teaching residents and programme staff, without involving mentor teachers. This decision was intentional because some of the programme staff did not want Education Rounds to create a sense of anxiety among residents if they were observed and critiqued by experts in front of their peers (Roegman and Riehl, 2012).

The researchers conclude that Education Rounds cannot be viewed as a stand-alone practice. In supporting the development of an inquiry stance (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999), they claim Education Rounds must be purposefully integrated into teacher education curricula as part of the many learning experiences in which pre-service teachers make sense of practical tools (Grossman, Wineburg and Woolworth Grossman, 2001) and of strategies of teaching in relation to broader visions of practice. Furthermore, Education Rounds could be viewed as one of many opportunities for pre-service teachers to build "an empirical" understanding of learners and a capacity to analyze and reflect on what occurs in their classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 1994, p.22). This view is in line with the views of Del Prete at Clark University where Teacher Rounds are used as part of the teacher education programme, which they can carry with them into their working lives. This was evident in the schools I visited in Worcester, Massachusetts, which were part of the Clark University partnership. Many of these schools were now staffed with alumni from Clark University and many were now principals. Teacher Rounds were being used in all of them as part of the PL programme for all teachers.

3.4.6 School Innovation Rounds (SIRs)

Moran (2014) developed another variation of Teacher Rounds. This new model developed field-based learning and was called School Innovation Rounds (SIRs). This model was concerned mostly with training pre-service teachers. The reason for introducing Rounds in this context was a pragmatic one. Australian teacher education programmes include professional school experiences as a means of enhancing pre-service teacher understanding about teaching and the profession. However, there was a lack of places available in schools and an unpredictable quality of placements. Moran argues that some teachers are time-poor, are not good models of effective teaching practice, and/or lack the skills of articulating their practice. Therefore, SIRs were introduced as a way of providing that experience. The findings from two years' of research suggest that while the SIRs programme cannot negate all the difficulties associated with ensuring quality placements, it does provide some solutions that assist in improving the professional experiences of pre-service teachers.

Moran (2014) concludes that overall, *SIRs* have successfully created opportunities for pre-service teachers to observe, reflect, critique and discuss current models of pedagogical excellence. The Rounds have exposed pre-service teachers to “authentic and effective models of pedagogy and innovation” (p.82) and provided them with opportunities to “observe, discuss, reflect and critique on-site and back on campus” (p.82). The pre-service teachers involved could identify that they had begun to understand the importance of teachers adapting and changing their teaching strategies as required by the needs of the student population, and that hearing of the teachers' experiences when adapting to new pedagogical approaches was helpful even if those experiences were challenging. Also, that there had been some improvement in their understanding the importance of teamwork and collaboration among staff. The SIRs model has served a practical purpose in this case but it does not in my view fit the Instructional Rounds models but is a broad adaptation. No mention is made of protocols used or around voluntary or compulsory participation.

3.4.7 *Quality Teaching Rounds (Gore et al.)*

Jennifer Gore and her colleagues in New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory have been researching teaching and Rounds for many years (Bowe, Gore and Elsworth, 2012) and Gore et al. (2012, 2015, 2016). They argue that improving the quality of teaching through the professional development of teachers is a global concern. Gore et al. (2012) claim that Quality Teaching Rounds bring together three key approaches to professional learning that have the potential to meet the criteria for effective professional development. They cite the three approaches that constitute the Quality Teaching Rounds as:

- professional learning community,
- Instructional Rounds and;
- Quality Teaching.

The authors suggest that together the three could potentially address the need for simultaneous and sustained attention to individual inquiry and collegial inquiry within a coherent programme if professional learning is to be effective. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of a strong pedagogical framework and “adherence to principles of effective professional development in systematically avoiding the weaknesses associated with many approaches to pedagogical improvement” (Gore et al. 2016, p.356) and called their approach to teacher professional development as their “reassembled” Quality Teaching Rounds. This approach combines the strengths of PLCs that are: attention to local context, community, and applicability, and Instructional Rounds: attention to evidence and collaboration but, crucially, adds a particular pedagogical framework called the Quality Teaching Framework. This combination of features was designed to both guide teachers in critical analysis of the quality of their teaching and generate collegial support among teachers through engagement in an enterprise directly “oriented at professional learning and enhanced classroom practice” (ibid p.356).

Conducting Quality Teacher Rounds is a very structured process and involves teachers (and school leaders and/or student teachers) working in PLCs, typically in groups of four to eight. A Round is comprised of three sequential sessions that occur on a single day. The first session engages teachers in discussion of a professional reading, typically selected by one of the participating teachers. The aim is to develop a shared basis for their professional conversations and learn more about one another's beliefs and values about teaching and learning, thus enriching their conversations and strengthening the shared basis for analysis. The reading session affords teachers the opportunity to bring ideas and perspectives that they value to the group thus encouraging breadth of knowledge and professional autonomy (ibid, p.357). This model is different from Teacher Rounds in that school leaders are involved and also in the fact that there is a set reading task as part of the process.

The second session involves classroom observation, in which one PLC member teaches a lesson that is observed by all other members of the PLC, to provide a shared basis for discussing teaching and learning. Over a period of several weeks, every PLC member takes their turn to host a Round. This is different from the Instructional Round model where Principals and Administrators do not teach and are not seen to teach. In each Round, teachers reflect not only on that lesson, but how it relates to their own practice and to teaching at their school in general.

The third session involves all PLC members, including the host teacher, coding and then discussing the lesson using the Quality Teaching framework (p.357). This is a very different approach to other Round models. The aim is for all participants to experience and describe what happened in the classroom, as a basis for their collaborative analysis of teaching practice more broadly. The authors claim that the Quality Teaching Framework facilitates analysis at a level of "specificity" that is intended to quickly engage participants in rich conversations, guided by a particular conception of good teaching and learning (p.358). Gore et al. (2016) provide us with a clear explanation of how the Quality Teacher

Framework came about which I am not detailing here, but they claim the framework offers a “comprehensive account of teaching, rather than being narrowly focused on a single problem of practice or part of practice. It is designed to look at teaching holistically and comprehensively” (p.357). Again this is different from other Round models in that teachers and host teachers do not identify their own problem of practice. The authors claim that the conceptual breadth of the Quality Teaching framework is critical, in helping teachers to navigate the daily complexities of teaching, while its three-dimensional structure helps make the complexity more conceptually manageable.

Finally, Gore et al. (2016) suggest that the Quality Teaching Rounds approach is “unapologetically directive about the substance of inquiry and analysis” (p. 359). They claim that using the Quality Teaching Framework means that the substance is not as open as is favoured in many other collaborative approaches. However, they say neither is it closed in the way of much conventional professional development, which tells teachers what to do. Rather, the framework expands the range of issues to be addressed by drawing teachers’ attention to aspects of practice they otherwise might not notice (ibid, p.359). At the same time, it provides a comprehensive set of issues for analysis and provides concepts and language with which to engage in rich professional conversations.

Quality Teacher Rounds are based on the Instructional Rounds model but the main difference with other models as explained above, is that they are closely associated with the Quality Teaching Framework, which sets out what good teaching should look like. Using this pedagogical framework, Gore et al. (2016) carried out an extensive randomized research project on Quality Rounds in 2015. The data from this research indicated significant impact on the quality of teaching, the level of productive collaboration among teachers, and student outcomes. Interviews with teachers and principals concur with these positive impacts, with many describing Quality Teaching Rounds as the most powerful professional development in which they have participated.

The analysis of findings from this large body of research demonstrates that their approach to the development of teaching, called Quality Teaching, together with a Quality Teaching Rounds approach provided (Gore et al. 2016, p.27):

- measures of teaching quality that are both based in research and resonate with teachers.
- a powerful framework for enacting a research-based clinical approach to teacher development (Cordingley, 2013; Furlong, 2014), providing concepts and language with which to engage in deep discussions about teaching practice and how to refine it;
- a mechanism for ensuring strong professional and social support for teachers at all stages of their careers.

In the conclusion to this large scale research project Gore et al. (2016) claim that participation in Quality Teacher Rounds not only improved the quality of teaching amongst participants but also the morale of those teachers. The authors assert “the particular qualities of the Quality Teacher Framework and the ways of using it in the context of Quality Teacher Rounds, as outlined in the three ‘mechanisms’ addressed above, are critical to the effects produced” (p.27). The authors conclude that the Quality Teaching Framework develops “inquiry habits” and productive ways of collaborating with colleagues in the assessment and refinement of teaching. In this way, they suggest the approach strengthens rather than diminishes the intellectual and professional aspects of teaching (Evans, 2014).

3.4.8 Professional Learning Rounds (Mansfield and Thompson)

Mansfield and Thompson (2016) also carried out recent research on the value of collaborative Rounds for teacher professional learning in Australia. This study investigated the value of a collaborative Rounds-based approach to what they called Professional Learning Rounds in three small primary schools. Professional Learning Rounds are based on the Instructional Rounds model. This study was carried out in three catholic primary schools and looked at the effectiveness of professional development and professional learning. These sites were selected

because of the unique challenges associated with supporting PL for teachers in small schools.

Mansfield and Thompson (2016, p.21) claim the findings showed participating teachers reporting that their involvement impacted positively on their teaching, self-reflection and classroom practice. Furthermore, they argue that the process supported teachers, regardless of experience, in building awareness of how they conducted lessons, and highlighted opportunities for improvement, refinement and consolidation (p.21). In contrast to teachers' previous experiences of PL, the authentic nature of the Rounds process increased their 'buy-in'. The authors point out that the 'immediacy' about their learning increased the value and relevancy of the experience as it stemmed from, and informed their daily work (ibid, p.22). Collaboration was seen as valuable because working together on a shared problem of practice enhanced the shared learning and expertise of the network. In conclusion, the authors claim these findings are aligned with research highlighting the benefits of authentic, collaborative professional learning, that takes place in the real world of classroom teaching (Wideen et al. 1998; Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 2011; Opfer and Pedder, 2011; Cameron et al. 2013).

Mansfield and Thompson concluded that Rounds proved to be an effective mechanism for reinvigorating mid-career teachers but claimed it was not effective in supporting teachers who are struggling or who are inexperienced. Unlike Gore et al. study (2016), which showed positive effects of Quality Teacher Rounds for early career teachers, this study raised questions about the suitability of being observed for early career teachers. Mansfield and Thompson (2016) also wondered about the utility of Rounds for teachers who were struggling in multiple aspects of their teaching.

Another finding of this research was that the part of the process teachers found most challenging was identifying and framing the problem of practice and then working out avenues for continued development (ibid

p.26). In addition, the role of the facilitators in this study to drip feed teachers and scaffold teachers' learning was seen as critical to the success of Rounds which highlighted the importance of school/university partnerships.

During this research study student performance data were not collected, so the impact on student learning could not be quantified. The authors give two reasons for this; "firstly measuring the effects of a change in instructional culture on student achievement requires a longitudinal approach, and secondly, given the messy or noisy nature of classroom interactions, making causal claims about interventions is difficult, and requires a much larger sample than this study" (ibid p.27).

3.5 Teacher Rounds as a Joint Practice Development

A recent guide produced by the National College of School Leadership (2012) point out that Joint Practice Development (JPD) is about making school-based professional development more effective by thinking explicitly about how it is structured and facilitated. The authors define JPD as learning new ways of working through "mutual engagement that opens up and shares practices with others" (ibid, 2015, p.7). The guide claims JPD "captures a process that is truly collaborative". The report concludes that working closely with a colleague in a non-threatening context can enhance professional competence and stimulate valuable reflection about one's own practice. According to the teachers involved in the research, Joint Practice Development is seen as a very powerful in improving practice.

Hargreaves (2012) describes JPD as a joint activity, in which "two or more people interact and influence one another – in contrast to the non-interactive, unilateral character of much conventional sharing good of practice" (p.9). He notes that "it is an activity that focuses on teachers' practice, what they do, not merely what they know" (p.9). Finally, he says "it is a development of the practice, not simply a transfer of it from one person or place to another, and so a form of school improvement"(p.10).

He stresses the critical element of the development as what distinguishes it from traditional CPD. Hargreaves notes that JPD requires “partnership competence – social capital (reciprocity and trust), collective moral purpose and evaluation and challenge” (p.12).

An element of JPD involves structured peer observation between teachers, often linked to joint planning and improvement in triads or pairs through lesson study-type models. The two other elements include the involvement of students and using research evidence and focused enquiries on specific themes across schools. The similarities to Rounds are many.

Fielding et al. (2005) remind us that traditional approaches to CPD are largely based on transferring knowledge or ‘best practices’ from an expert presenter to his or her audience but research shows that this is rarely effective. By contrast, Joint Practice Development is a process by which individuals, schools or other organizations learn from one another.

Rounds offer a very practical structure that enables teachers to work collaboratively together to improve the practice of teaching. It provides clear protocols designed to overcome teacher reticence (Timperley 2007) to talk about teaching and learning in an open and honest way so that they can learn from each other. Teacher Rounds involve teachers identifying their own problem of practice and to ask for feedback from their colleagues. Traditional PL is directed and often delivered by senior leaders and/or experts and ignores the fact that teachers learn best from each other.

3.6 Professional Conversations

Teacher Rounds promote and enable conversations and professional discourse. Professional conversations are not just chat but need careful planning and orchestrating. Earl and Timperley (2009) say that a professional conversation is a shared commitment to revealing and unraveling teachers’ individual practice. They argue that such conversations are not just a support group talk, but are an exploration of

intent and impact, and the process demands “honesty, rigor and respect” (p.3). Indeed the literature is rich with authors commenting on the importance of teachers talking to each other. For instance, Hattie (2013) notes “One of the major messages from Visible Learning is the power of teachers learning from and talking to each other.” (p.116)

Furthermore Danielson (2009) argues that conversations about practice constitutes a critical vehicle for professional learning. However, she points out that professional conversations between teachers and administrators and amongst teaching colleagues occur within the context of the schools’ organizational, power and hierarchical structure (p.15). The power structures can and do have a major influence on the effectiveness of the professional conversations that take place. This effect is a negative one as conversations can be stilted. Lieberman (2012, p.473) argues that the capacity to engage in “honest and disclosing talk” is of critical importance to developing teachers, and commitments of time and the conditions that support collegueship and trust are critical.

Teachers need the opportunity to talk and to learn together. Every teacher has experienced the beneficial impact of professional conversations about the craft of teaching. And yet, read any policy on CPD, and you’ll not find systems, protocols or theory that give appropriate status to what Danielson (2009, p.11) considers “an essential technique to promote professional learning among teachers”. She goes on to say that these conversations may be undertaken by teachers and administrators, teachers and formal teacher leaders (instructional coaches), or amongst teachers as colleagues (p.11). However, in all cases, they need to be conducted in such a way to “respect the professional judgment of teachers and as a vehicle to explore ways to enhance student learning” (p.11).

Senge (2000) asserts that organizations are only as good as the quality of their conversations. It is his view that professional conversation makes every member of the organization a learner. Earl and Timperley (2009)

attempt to clarify the meaning of professional conversations. They argue that what distinguishes a professional conversation is a shared commitment to revealing and unpicking the reasons behind teachers' practice. Furthermore, they argue that this is not a mere support group talk, but is a joint exploration of intent and impact that demands honesty, rigor and respect. They argue that in order to ensure the conversations remain professional and effective, protocols are needed.

City et al. (2009) in drawing together the model of Instructional Rounds as related to wider research on PL and school reform argue that there is broad agreement that the success of curriculum or school reform depends on the successful professional development of teachers (Garet et al. 2001; Guskey, 2002; Stoll et al. 2007). Large scale empirical studies of professional development agree on the features of professional development that promote impact:

- it is sustained and intensive;
- it focuses on specific curriculum subject matter;
- it is integrated into the daily practices of the school;
- it is consistent with larger goals (for example. school or wider);
- it involves active learning and it is collective.

(Garet et al. 2001; Boyle et al. (2004); Penuel et al. 2007).

Instructional Rounds are consistent with many of these features. It is intended to be sustained, collective, integrated with daily work, involve active learning and should be coherent with longer term plans and developments. It is also considered to produce collective knowledge, to be culture building and to be disruptive of existing educational cultures and power relationships. Although it is not always apparent, Instructional Rounds also advocate the use of external inputs.

The one factor contributing to impact that neither Instructional Rounds, Teacher Rounds, nor Learning Rounds (in Scotland) emphasizes is a focus on specific curricular content. Both Garet et al. (2001) and Penuel et al. (2007) find that professional development has more impact when it

focuses on teachers' knowledge or teaching and learning in relation to specific curricular content rather than generic teaching approaches or generic pupil skills. The focus of Instructional Rounds on 'content' as part of instructional core overlaps with this concern but the requirement is not as precise as that articulated by Garet et al. (2001) and Penuel et al. (2007). In addition, empirical data on Learning Rounds gathered by the authors Philpott and Oates, (2016) suggest that Learning Rounds often focuses on generic teaching and learning issues such as sharing learning outcomes and using peer assessment.

3.7 Summary

This review focused on Rounds as a form of collaborative Professional Learning activity. There are many examples of the ways Rounds have been adapted to achieve different purposes. All of those included in this review have had positive outcomes in terms of teacher learning. I have not come across any examples where Rounds have been introduced that have not been considered successful.

Research around PL or CPD is outlined in some detail and suggestions are made about setting up and sustaining PLCs that allow teachers to work collaboratively. However, there is no definitive evidence to say that such communities impact student standards. Yet the positive impact on teachers is well documented in this chapter.

An important aspect of PL is the ability of teachers to talk meaningfully to each other without fear of causing offense or upset. Therefore, the focus on professional conversations is an important one. The performance culture mentioned in this chapter means that many teachers fear being judged and this inhibits open conversations. Teacher Rounds protocols are non-judgmental and facilitate teachers in developing a language that is not based on Ofsted criteria or senior leadership team tick lists. Teachers participating in Teacher Rounds become part of a PLC that is self directed and confidential to the members of that community. These aspects alone make them very different from other types of PL.

Chapter 4 Methodology and Methods

4.1 Introduction

The two literature reviews preceding this chapter outline the research into collaboration and collegiality in schools and Rounds as a professional learning activity. Although Rounds have been widely used in different countries across the world and in Scotland there is little empirical evidence to establish the effectiveness, or otherwise, of the process. Establishing a link between Teacher Rounds and student outcomes is not possible in such a small study and I have therefore, not followed this line of analysis as a focus for this study and have not attempted to establish such a link. Instead I have focused on the outcomes for teachers. However, I also made a decision not to try to measure the impact of Teacher Rounds on the quality of teaching because this would involve measuring and judging teaching against specific criteria. With this in mind I concentrated on gathering participants' experiences of the process and their views of the outcomes for them as individual teachers and as a group.

In this chapter I describe and explain the methods (techniques and procedures) used to collect and analyze my data. I provide a detailed outline of how I went about introducing Teacher Rounds into schools and how I worked alongside teachers to implement the process, to gather evidence and to record my observation of what was happening. Teacher Rounds have not been researched in any detail and are virtually unknown in England and Wales, although Scotland introduced Education Rounds in 2008 (See Chapter 3).

The diagram below outlines the timeline for this research study.

Table 1: Methodology - Outline of Process

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8
Scoping process (March 2015)	Planned the research process	16 teachers in three schools volunteer	Semi-structured interviews with participants	Teacher Rounds begin	Post round discussions following rounds	Focus group meetings	Coding and analysis
Visit to Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts USA to meet Professor Tom Del Prete and his team and to see Teacher Rounds in action in a number of schools	Ethical consent paperwork submitted. (Date) Contacted 20 schools December 2015 Visited schools & met HT of schools that showed an interest. Presentations about TR to teachers in four schools (one school drops out)	Sign Informed Consent Forms Contracts for working together agreed. Training on TR protocols – after school sessions. Dates agreed for first cycle of Rounds	Recorded on digital recorder. Transcribed Dates – mostly in week preceding the first round but some happened during the round cycle.	Host teacher prepares the problem of practice and Round Sheet Pre-round meetings – at 8 am on day of the round Researcher participated in all rounds	Researcher facilitated all post round discussions. Recorded on digital recorder and transcribed	(group interview) in the three schools	

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 The research question

This study is guided by one main research question, which simply asked: What happens when teachers participate in Teacher Rounds? I was interested in finding out if and how participating in Teacher Rounds helped individual teachers improve their performance in the classroom and, if it did, how this contributed to the wider collective development of teaching across the school. Implicit in the research question is whether teacher collaboration improves practice. Teacher Rounds can be viewed (Ellis et al. 2015) as a structured, systematic approach to collaboration and as a professional learning activity. The focus of this research what happens during the process, rather than the measurable outcomes in terms of measurable school improvement. I set out to introduce Teacher Rounds as a professional learning activity, to teachers working in three different schools. I wanted to find out if the process was useful for them and if so what was useful about it. What did they learn?

Holiday (2002) refers to two paradigms in research and suggests that the qualitative and quantitative paradigms represent very different ways of thinking about the world. Kvale (1996, p.1) says that “If you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk to them?” This qualitative study on Teacher Rounds involves teachers talking in a variety of situations, including interviews, post-Round discussions and focus group sessions. There was a lot of talking.

4.2.2 Theoretical perspectives

Two theoretical perspectives inform this study. These are Foucault’s Panoptic theory and Adult Learning theory.

4.2.2.1 Panoptic theory and performativity

This study is influenced by the writing of Michel Foucault in terms of power and discipline. In particular, his image of the panopticon, which is a social theory originally developed by Foucault in his book *Discipline and*

Punish (1995). This is described in some detail in Chapter 2 Section 2.3.1. Foucault viewed the panopticon as a symbol of the disciplinary society of surveillance. The result of this constant surveillance is according to Foucault a type of invisible discipline as each prisoner (or teacher) self-regulates, in fear that someone is watching their every move. The ever-visible inmate, Foucault suggests, is always "the object of information, never a subject in communication" (1995, p.198).

Perryman (2006) argues that the experience of constant inspection in her school (in Special Measures) meant teachers felt they needed to modify their behaviour in a permanent way. This is because the "constant pressure acts even before the offences, mistakes or crimes have been committed" (Foucault, 1977a, p. 206). This is true in many schools even those judged as good or outstanding where teachers are constantly monitored and checked. This results in teacher self regulation – they behave as if they are constantly being watched even if there is nobody else in the classroom.

This image is helpful because it clarifies the way schools have developed into very hierarchical organisations where power and discipline are imposed on teachers through a variety of mechanisms. When looking at collaboration through Teacher Rounds it is important to understand the feelings of teachers who feel they are constantly being watched to ensure they are following school policies. This may (or may not) act as a barrier to collaboration.

4.2.2.2 *Adult Learning Theory*

This study is also informed by Adult Learning Theory. Kolb (1984) (drawing on previous work by Kurt Lewin quoted in Greenhalgh (2018, p.36) proposed that adult learners learn in cycles consisting of four phases that feed into one another:

- Concrete experience; the learner encounters a new experience or situation

- Reflective observation: the learner contemplates the meaning of the experience.
- Abstract conceptualization: reflection gives rise to new ideas, or a modification of an existing concept or schema.
- Active participation: the learner applies the new idea or concept in practice.

This description essentially describes the Teacher Round processes. Furthermore, Kolb argues that this adult learning cycle tends to progress much more quickly when people discuss things with fellow team members (ibid, p.36). The post-Round discussions, as part of the Round protocols (Chapter 3), allow participating teachers to make better sense of what they have observed.

Knowles et al. (2005) established a model for Adult Learning Theory which assumes: adults are self-motivated and self-directed learners; their experiences and knowledge can be shared with others; adults are task-oriented, problem solving individuals and learn in order to enrich their lives by completing specific tasks or solving problems. This model supports the collaborative principles and structure of Teacher Rounds (Del Prete 2013) and Instructional Rounds (City et al. (2009).

All of the participants in the Rounds groups were volunteers and thus were self-motivated and self-directed learners. They volunteered to participate because they viewed the process as a form of professional development where they would learn new skills and improve their teaching skills. There are some disadvantages to relying on volunteers because I had no influence over the make-up of the groups – they were self-directed. Ideally, the Rounds groups would be made up of teachers from different curriculum areas or phases (in primary schools) with varying degrees of experience in teaching. I was also unable to control the gender or ethnic make-up of the groups.

As part of the Round protocol the participants spent their time in the Round lesson gathering evidence about what the host teacher and pupils

were doing. They paid particular attention to the problem of practice identified by the host teacher and were guided about who and what to look at more closely when they were in the lesson. This evidence was shared with the host teacher and Round participants during the post Round discussions and made up the bulk of the data.

All the participants in three schools were self-motivated with a desire to collaborate and learn with and from each other. They wanted to become better teachers and they felt that they would learn more from their colleagues than from some external expert. This supports adult learning theory (Knowles, et al. 2005; Leonard, 2002; MacKeracher, 2004).

The Round participants wanted to share their learning with their colleagues in the school and they wanted others to have the opportunity to experience the Round process. During the Round process they shared freely during each phase of the process and often commented on the benefits of working collaboratively with their colleagues. They appreciated the way the process had provided the opportunity and the language to engage in professional conversations with their colleagues.

Chew (2013) referring to Knowles et al. (2005) suggests that a crucial component of any design for adult learning is that the personal goals of the adults involved need to align with the focus of the learning, providing a stronger context for the development of knowledge. He goes further and claims that adults given the opportunity to be involved in the process of identifying their own needs, considering directions for learning and assessing their own development experience what Knowles et al. (2005) set out to establish with their original model of adult learning theory. Teacher Rounds involves teachers identifying their own problem of practice and taking ownership of their own learning and thus fits with Knowles' adult learning theory.

Knowles' model of adult learning also addresses the sharing of experiences and knowledge. An integral aspect in the utilization of instructional Rounds is acknowledging and benefitting from the wealth of

knowledge in the room through the varied experiences each individual participant brings to the process (City et al. 2009) but in the Teacher Round model this is not so obvious. However, Del Prete argues that Teacher Rounds are a means of “developing [teachers’] practice individually and collectively” (2013, p. 1 and *passim*). However, a question raised by Ellis et al. (2015) was what was the relationship between individual (teacher) and organizational (school) development in the claims for the potential of Rounds? Instructional Rounds is clearly a system-wide collaboration between different schools whilst Teacher Rounds are more individual and intimate. Nonetheless, Del Prete saw the process as one that could be shared with a wider audience. However, adult learning theory proposes that the individuals involved will still only learn what they want to learn while participating in the process (Knowles, et al. 2005; MacKeracher, 2004).

Teacher Rounds involves teachers learning alongside each other in the context of the classroom and MacKeracher (2004) focuses on the need for adult learning to be contextual. While observing others during Rounds, teachers reflect on their own practice and that of their colleagues without making judgments. Teachers are then able to apply what they learn to practical situations in their own classrooms. Thus, they become adult learners.

Adult Learning Theory is relevant to this study because Teacher Rounds are about teacher learning rather than student outcomes. Valuing that learning for its own sake is important for teachers who always put their students first. Teachers learning from and with their peers

4.3 Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretivist epistemology (King and Horrocks, 2010). Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make

sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. A naturalistic study is where the researcher carefully observes and records behaviour over a prolonged period of time, in its natural setting, while interfering as little as possible with the subjects or phenomena. Teacher Rounds take place in context, in the classroom, which is a natural setting for a teacher.

Interpretive research might aim to uncover how people feel about the world and make sense of their lives from their particular vantage points as in the qualitative interviews carried out as part of this study. They conversed with each other during post-Round discussions and focus group meetings, which enabled participating teachers to share their experiences and understandings. Interpretivism perceives experience and understanding as seldom straightforward. Schutz (1962) suggests that what we might see as facts become open to levels of interpretation and searching for one overarching truth about the reality of how we live our lives is misplaced. Instead, we have “multiple realities” (p.5) or different interpretations.

4.3.1 A formative intervention rather than a research design?

The research methodology used in this study does not fit neatly into one particular category and could be described as a formative intervention and as Participatory Action Research (PAR) involving teachers in inquiry into their own practice. This study is not a design experiment and there was no hypothesis to test which is why it could be regarded as a formative intervention (Engeström 2011) as understood in cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) and reflects on the key differences between this intervention research tradition and design-based research.

Ellis, Gower, Frederick, and Childs, (2015) examined Rounds from a methodological perspective. We consider Rounds in the context of formative interventions informed by cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) and sociocultural theories of learning and development. The

paper examines Rounds alongside Developmental Work Research (Engeström 2007), an activity-theoretical approach to practice-development based on the Vygotskian principle of double stimulation (Vygotsky, 1974). Using the language of CHAT, Teacher Rounds might be understood as an instrument for examining problems of the practice of teaching. The Rounds protocol is seen as a tool for teachers' learning within a school-based activity system, which is donated to participating teachers with an invitation to appropriate its structure, language and values (Ellis et al., 2015). In this sense, Rounds are a mediating tool that teachers can use to work on the object of their activity, that is, an aspect of classroom teaching and their students' learning. The authors (ibid) concluded that while Rounds might be a useful way of encouraging collaborative learning, there may be a preceding step in which the conditions for collaboration and safe spaces for learning and dialogue are developed within the school and suggests this is a role for school leaders. However, introducing Teacher Rounds will challenge the normal power structures and hierarchies in schools (Foucault, 1991). This issue is developed in the literature reviews where the role of school leaders is primarily to create a nurturing school culture.

The positive aspects of cultural CHAT are that it is both developmental and research. It is about development of practice from the perspective of the practitioner. However, Ellis et al. (2015) suggest that there are important differences between the CHAT approach and Rounds that need to be considered when developing the Rounds process as an enabling intervention and to understand the relationship between practice-development and research. There are three areas in which Ellis et al. (2015) think further clarification and elaboration of the methodology of Rounds would be useful. The first is the relationship between individual and collective practice, which the authors argue is a perennial concern for CHAT also. This question addresses how developing the teaching of an individual teacher can have wider impact on their colleagues, their department, and their school. The authors question the possible relationship is between individual practice-development and collective or

organizational practice development? The second question addresses the role of theory in the process of Rounds; the usefulness of abstract, propositional knowledge, and how this might or might not take the development of a practice forward (Ellis et al. 2015). CHAT does not argue that abstract concepts alone will improve practice but CHAT does suggest, though, as did Vygotsky (1974), that by bringing people's own ideas into contact with some 'scientific' (academic) ideas then you can develop mature concepts, a hybrid of abstract and spontaneous concepts. Finally, the authors argue that CHAT over-relies on and over-emphasizes theory. It claims that it is through the insertion of theory that people's perceptions are changed and new futures are possible. In this piece of research and intervention there was no emphasis on theory when it came to introducing and implementing Teacher Rounds and therefore theory played no part in helping participants work out answers to their own questions.

Ellis et al. (2015) point out that Teacher Rounds does not identify itself as a research methodology but rather as a method of professional development for teachers and school improvement. It does not see itself as simultaneously developing practice *and* theory. It does not make a claim for being a specific form of research and development, for being applied research. Even though it may align with an overall approach that could be described as practitioner research it is primarily offered as a professional development or school improvement tool. In the event, after a lot of thought, I decided that the design of my study was more aligned to the PAR model rather than the formative intervention model.

4.3.2 Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Participatory Action Research is recognized as a more inclusive form of inquiry (Stringer and Genat, 2004) and can be viewed as a way of bringing participation into action research (Elden and Levin, 1991). According to Minkler and Wallerstein, (2003) PAR is not a method of conducting research but rather an orientation to research. PAR arises

from two research approaches: action research (AR) and participatory research (PR).

PAR is an approach to research in communities that emphasizes participation and action. It seeks to understand the world by trying to change it, collaboratively and following reflection. PAR emphasizes collective inquiry and experimentation grounded in experience and social history. All formulations of Participatory Action Research have in common the idea that research and action must be done with people and not on or for people (Reason and Bradbury, 2008; Chevalier and Buckles, 2013, Brock, and Pettit, 2007). The approach promotes the grounding of knowledge in human agency and social history.

Hall (1975) suggests that participatory development is a process through which stakeholders can influence and share control over development initiatives, and over the decisions and resources that affect themselves. Generally speaking, participation is a collective action aimed at achieving a common objective – it means taking part and getting involved. The main task of the facilitator is therefore to encourage, prepare and involve people in a process or activity (Hall, 1975).

4.3.3 Participation theory and research

PR is a process that combines research, education, and action. Teachers Rounds involves teachers as participants and therefore, participatory theory as a conceptual framework is relevant to this study. Participation theory draws on the paradigms of critical theory and constructivism and may use a range of qualitative and quantitative methods (Baum et al. 2006). Participation theory seeks to understand and improve the world by changing it. It's a collective, self-reflective inquiry approach that researchers and participants undertake, so they can understand and improve upon their practices, in this case, in the classroom. The process of PAR should be empowering and lead to people having increased control over their lives (Minkler et al. 2003). Empowering teachers

challenges the usual power structures in schools and this issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 and Chapter 6.

Hall (1981) identified the goal and characteristics of participatory research as structural transformation and its target of focus is “exploited or oppressed groups; immigrants, labour, indigenous peoples, women” (p.7). The author suggests people in the community or workplace control the entire research process, including identifying the problem to be studied. Hall observed that, “Although those with specialized knowledge/training often come from outside the situation, they are committed participants and learners in a process that leads to militancy rather than detachment” (ibid, p.8). Participatory research entails the mobilization of people and enhanced awareness of their abilities and resources. Whilst teachers may not obviously appear to be oppressed, this study indicates that they do feel a lack of control over what and how they teach (Chapter 5 and 6). Involving them in a PAR study could be risky for the school and Senior Leadership Team as it could end up ‘mobilizing’ teachers and giving them more of a voice in their profession.

PAR differs from conventional research in three ways. Firstly, it focuses on research whose purpose is to enable action. Second, PAR pays careful attention to *power relationships*, advocating that power be deliberately shared between the researcher and the researched, blurring the line between them until the researched become the researchers. This was an important issue in Teacher Rounds, where the issue of equity was clearly part of the protocols. Thus there were no experts. The participants become partners in the whole research process by identifying their own problem of practice (the research topic), data collection, and analysis and deciding what individual action should happen as a result of the research findings. Thirdly, PAR advocates that those being researched should be actively involved in the process.

4.3.4 *Participatory Epistemology*

A participatory epistemology is a theory of knowledge, which suggests that meaning is enacted through the participation of the human mind with the world. PAR draws on the paradigms of critical theory and constructivism and may use a range of qualitative and quantitative methods. Crotty (1998) argues that while interpretivists place confidence in the authentic accounts of lived experience that they turn up in their research, this is not enough for critical theorists who see in these accounts voices of an inherited tradition and prevailing culture. Critical theorists use critical reflection on social reality to take action for change by radically calling into question the cultures that they study. This critical edge is central to PAR (Bryant and Jones, 2016). The authors suggest that the hallmark of positivist science is that it sees the world as having a single reality that can be independently observed and measured by objective scientists preferably under laboratory conditions where all variables can be controlled and manipulated to determine causal connections. By contrast PAR suggests that the observer has an impact on what is being observed and brings to their inquiry a set of values that will exert influence on the study.

Participatory research draws heavily on Freire's (1982) concept of praxis, which flows from the position that action and reflection are united. Participatory Research sees that action and reflection must go together, even temporally so that praxis cannot be divided into a prior stage of reflection and a subsequent stage of action. Through praxis, critical consciousness develops, leading to further action through which people cease to see their situation as a reality susceptible of transformation. This transformative power is central to PAR. As quoted in Baum, MacDougall, and Smith (2006), Freire's concept of praxis flows from the position that action and reflection are indissolubly united. It is from this position that Freire observes that reflection without action is about talk rather than action and action without reflection is action for action's sake. In the same vein, PAR sees that action and reflection must go together, even temporally so that praxis cannot be divided into a prior stage of reflection and a subsequent stage of action. When action and reflection take place

at the same time they become creative and mutually illuminate each other.

4.3.5 Power and empowerment in terms of Participatory Action Research

Power is an underpinning concept that is crucial to PAR which aims to achieve empowerment of those involved. Labonte (1990) conceptualises empowerment as a shifting or dynamic quality of power relations between two or more people; such that the relationship tends towards equity by reducing inequalities and power differences. Foucault's (1977b) position on power is particularly relevant to PAR because he sees power as a result of the interactions between people, of the practices of institutions, and of the exercise of different forms of knowledge (Chapter 2). This is very relevant in terms of Teacher Rounds where power distance emerges as either a barrier or strength to successful implementation. As mentioned previously the role of leadership is key in creating the right culture for participation in Teacher Rounds. The Rounds themselves treat all members as equals and recognizes that there are no experts in the group. Equity for all members of the Rounds group is key to the process.

4.3.6 Teachers taking an Inquiry Stance

Childs, Burn and McNicholl (2013) argues that practitioner research can provide an affordance for agency because it can give teachers an authoritative basis for their views. Furthermore, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) assert that teaching is defined primarily by what teachers do when they are not with other teachers. When teachers are evaluated, it is individual classroom performance that is scrutinized. The isolation of teachers at all stages of their careers is well documented (Goodlad, 1984; Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Lortie, 1975) and it is clear that schools typically provide little time for teachers to talk, and share ideas with colleagues (Little, 1987; Lytle and Fecho 1991). Isolation acts as a deterrent to collaboration by secluding teachers from each other and creating a cycle in which teachers may view teacher research as hazardous – a high stakes game in which collaboration comes at the

price of exposure and loss of autonomy (Lytle and Fecho 1991).

The joint construction of knowledge in teacher-research communities is not a neat or process that leads to consensus (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1991b). The authors argue that when teachers are working together to construct greater understanding about teaching, their conversations are recursive and reflect and create a fluid, changing view of knowledge. However, the authors argue that true reform depends on members of the teaching profession developing their own systematic and intentional ways to scrutinize and improve their own practices. Furthermore, the authors claim that when teachers themselves accumulate data and share it across school and community contexts, they not only “change their relationships to the brokers of knowledge and power in their schools, but also in the university, and even in the corporate community” (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993, p.103).

The methodology that informs this study is PAR and this has enabled participating teachers to ask their own questions and to come up with their own solutions through personal and joint reflection. The aim of the process was to bring about change in the way teachers are involved in examining their own practice and that of their colleagues. Teacher Rounds is a process of teacher development and learning and is not a methodology in its self. This study tracks the intervention where teachers learned about the Rounds process and protocols and then applied them. The lessons learned form the basis for the findings.

4.4 Methods

4.4.1 Scoping the Teacher Round process

Although it was not possible to carry out a pilot study because of the logistics of securing a school, I did make a visit to Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, in order to observe Teacher Rounds across a number of schools. Teacher Rounds were defined by Professor Thomas Del Prete, who agreed to host my visit and to take me to schools

in the University partnership using Rounds as part of their professional learning programmes. Del Prete (1997, 2010, 2013) has been using Teacher Rounds since 1994 when he was at Harvard. I decided it was necessary to see Rounds in action for myself before I attempted to introduce them. This I did in March 2015.

Professor Del Prete founded and supports the continuing development of Clark's partner school collaborative, made up of six schools in the Worcester area – a mixture of elementary and secondary schools. I was able to visit five of these schools during my visit. The Clark partner school collaborative is dedicated to the joint development of learning cultures and practices that serve the students in "Main South," a diverse and low-income area of Worcester. The partnership is committed to developing exemplary models of urban teacher preparation, professional development and school reform, and to learning from the effort. Professor Del Prete developed the Teacher Rounds model as a classroom-based collaborative learning model for teachers. The collaboration between the University and the schools aimed to build a Learning Community through developing Teacher Rounds and they have been using them since 1994. Del Prete adapted this concept as part of an overall effort to engage university and school teachers and prospective teachers in reflective dialogue on children's learning and teaching practice.

He makes the following point:

In our professional development school collaborative 'Rounds' have become more and more a customary and expected part of professional learning. They reflect a shift in the professional learning culture of these schools – a shift towards a process of open, active, and continuous expansion of professional knowledge. In such developing learning centered schools, adults, no less than children, strive to learn how to learn together and how to make their learning continuous and fruitful for themselves and their learning community. (1997 p13)

Clark University's Teacher Education Department led by Del Prete is one that is driven by a vision of collaboration. Pre-service teachers are encouraged and are expected to collaborate with each other. Rounds are

part of the fabric of the department and are integral to everything that happens.

The University works with a small number of schools in the local Worcester area. They have a strong relationship and a large number of teachers and principals of these schools, most of whom have been trained at Clark University and were deeply committed to the concept and process of Rounds. They believed in collaboration and collaborative learning. For this reason, Rounds were part of a professional learning package for these schools. It was made clear that Rounds did not stand alone, but were considered to be integral to the schools' ethos, culture and professional learnings.

Worcester is a socially deprived area and all five schools we visited were 'urban' schools with around 80% free lunches. Poverty is a big issue and all the schools provided breakfast and all had clothing banks so they could help to kit out children who needed warm clothing. The Principals and teachers working in these schools were very committed to their role. They had high expectations of students and of each other. They worked collaboratively with each other and there was a culture of mutual respect amongst teaching staff.

Many of the Teacher Rounds I participated in were with pre-service teachers but I also witnessed experienced teachers using Rounds and spoke to others who use Rounds frequently as part of their professional learning programme. I also had the opportunity to speak to three principals of these schools and gathered their views about the benefits of the Rounds process.

During my visit to schools and in discussions with Professor and his faculty members, we looked at various examples of problems of practice developed by host-teachers and they explained it is very hard to get this right (a bit like writing good learning objectives) and takes practice.

I was able to participate in seven Rounds in five schools over the duration of my visit. This included elementary and secondary schools. This meant that I took part in pre-Round meetings, in Rounds and in the post-Rounds discussions. This way I was able to see the Round protocols being used and was able to experience Rounds for myself.

During the pre-Round meeting (before school for about 15 minutes) the host teacher explained how they went about identifying and developing their problem of practice and they gave clear guidelines to participating teachers about where to place themselves in the classroom and what they wanted individuals to focus on particularly. Students in all schools had been warned that a group of teachers would be visiting the classroom, which was something they were quite used to. In some classrooms we were placed with different groups of students, in others we were placed around the edge of the classroom near to particular students. In one elementary school we were asked to participate in an activity with different groups of Grade 1 (Year 1) students. The Rounds groups tried to be as unobtrusive as possible and carefully listened to what was going on. Throughout the lesson we made notes about what was happening but made sure we did not try to interpret or comment on what we thought was good or bad.

The post-Round meetings were held immediately after the lesson, or in some cases after school, and were facilitated by a member of the University staff or the school coach/instructor. The host teacher opened the sessions by sharing their perspective on the lesson. The meeting was then opened up to the Rounds group and we commented on the aspects the teacher had identified in the problem of practice outlined on the Round sheet. We described things that we had seen and heard. Comments made were not judgmental but questions posed were voiced as 'I wonder what might happen if...?' Participants in Teacher Rounds were asked to come away with three positives, three wonderings/might be better if, and three takeaways. These are all shared at the post-Round discussion. The Professional Coach collects these from everybody in the

Round group. Between six to eight teachers may sign up to participate in a Round and all those interested are usually freed up to participate. Cover is provided and they hire supply teachers if they need them. Teachers are required to complete 150 hours of CPD every 5 years, which can be individually audited. Teacher Rounds are counted as part of these CPD hours. Teachers must volunteer to take part and cannot be coerced into joining a Rounds group. I was told, in each school, how important this was.

Host teachers reported that they found the process very helpful and they felt encouraged to reflect on what had happened and to use the reflection to help plan the next lesson. Teachers said the process, which they had used many times, helped them to reflect on their own practice and that extra pairs of eyes and ears helped to make sure nothing was missed. They said they found the process of Teacher Rounds helpful as a professional learning tool. The fact that the professional learning took place in context in the classroom made the experience especially valuable. Similarly, having the opportunity to reflect on the lesson with their colleagues and to exchange ideas and experiences was something they really valued. One teacher when asked what she gets personally from the Round process told me she values having another set(s) of eyes and an opportunity to learn from each other.

In another school the Round we participated in was planned by the year 9 Grade team. They had collaboratively planned the lesson and series of lessons. The host teacher was part of the grade team and the Rounds group were from the same team. In this case they planned to observe two or three lessons (all planned together) before they held the final post-Round discussion. The Teacher Round Sheet outlined the context (in detail) and the lesson goals and objectives as well as the problem of practice. The group initiated these Rounds as part of their normal professional learning and the school supported them by providing lesson cover for teachers as needed.

Teachers told me that in their school all teams meet twice a week and often plan Rounds to help them find solutions to tricky problems. The school is constantly worried about scores from State Tests. If the scores go down, there are high stakes because they receive federal funding which can be taken away if results are poor, so it is important to encourage and enable teachers to continue to collaborate as this, they believe, helps develop quality of teaching.

Another school we visited was a Magnet School, which means they are open longer and teach an additional two hours a day and consequently, teach eight hours a day. The school had previously been in trouble due to poor results and was forced by the State to agree to a package of improvement measures. Part of this agreement was that all teachers should take part in Teacher Rounds. The school is now going from strength to strength and results are rising steadily. However, that said, it is hard to correlate this success down to any one programme or process. The leadership and faculty (teachers) believe that Rounds play a significant part in helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The role of leadership came up in our discussions at the University and in all five schools. All of the principals we met were alumni of Clark University and their vision was one of collaboration and partnership. They saw Rounds as integral to this vision and to the work of the school. The principals do not participate in Rounds as they feel it conflicts with the appraisals they have to do and judgments they have to make about teachers. They claimed Rounds are only possible because of the supportive culture of the schools, which is based upon trust and collaboration. Rounds are now part of the professional learning and performance management package in all five schools.

When asked how they knew if Rounds are effective and have an impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning, the principals all agreed that it is difficult to give a measurable outcome of impact but one principal linked them to teacher 'professional standards' which require teachers to

work collaboratively. Participation in Rounds is recorded and counted as part of teachers' professional learning hours, as part of their professional portfolio. He told us teachers often organize Teacher Rounds themselves but there is a Professional Coach who sorts out the logistics of the Rounds such as providing cover for teachers engaged in the Rounds process. The biggest constraints are time for teachers to complete Rounds and the subsequent post-Round briefing. External pressures around testing and accountability measures sometimes mean Rounds have to be deferred. However, the commitment to collaboration was very strong.

Finally, Professor Del Prete and I critically discussed the issues that I needed to consider when introducing Rounds in a pilot school. These included:

- The culture of a school – is it open and supportive of teachers?
- Is there trust between teachers and the Senior Leadership Team? (SLT)
- Is there a punitive culture of judging/grading lessons that will get in the way of introducing the Rounds process?
- Are SLT willing to help facilitate and set up Rounds without necessarily participating in them?
- Are schools using a peer-coaching model, which is a good starting point for teacher Rounds?
- Establish what is in it for individual teachers, for students and for the school?

Furthermore, we considered other issues I raised that would need to be included in my research plan:

- How often should Rounds happen? How many teachers should be involved?
- How much time would be needed to prepare teachers to introduce Rounds in a school?

- The problem of practice – should these be whole school issues or an individual teacher focus?
- Time and cost of having teachers working together to preparing Round sheets and individual problems of practice.
- Time to develop whole school protocols, which need to be carefully thought through and agreed and implemented.

My visit to Worcester and Clark University to see Rounds in action was very helpful in allowing me to understand the Rounds process and to reflect on my next steps in designing my detailed research plan. I am hugely grateful to Professor Del Prete and his team at Clark University and to the many teachers in their partner schools for sharing their experiences and their practice with me. They gave freely of their time and I really appreciated their spirit of collaboration and partnership. I recorded the details of my visit in a reflective journal and used this together with a number of books (Del Prete 2010, 2013 and Troen and Boles 2014) to develop my research plan.

4.4.2 The research plan

The original plan was to find four schools to participate in the study. The number of participants involved would be decided by the number of teachers who volunteered but I was looking for between five and seven participants in each Teacher Round group, in each school. This would mean that potentially up to twenty-eight teachers might make up the sample. In the event, three schools and sixteen teachers took part in the research.

In order to secure the schools needed for this research many London schools were considered. I emailed twenty schools that were within a reasonable distance to my home to introduce myself, and my proposed research. I was aiming to involve one primary school and two or three secondary schools. The reason for this was all of my experience as a teacher and head teacher has been in secondary schools and I was

familiar with the way they worked. My experience of primary schools was limited to my work as a Governor and as an Education Consultant, therefore, I was drawn primarily to the secondary sector.

4.4.3 Research Ethics

I considered the ethical implications of what I was proposing at every stage of the process. I was concerned about taking an ethical approach in my planning of the study to satisfy the University's ethical guidelines (Appendix 1). In addition, I needed to feel confident that I was approaching the work with integrity, and demonstrating care for those who would volunteer to participate.

The study was approved by the Brunel University London Research Ethics Committee and was based on the Universities Code of Research Ethics and the BERA (2011) Guidelines. In addition, I was guided by the checklist of principles outlined by Cohen et al. (2011 p.103-104) who make the point that securing access and consent is not simply about setting up entry arrangements at the start of the study. Instead, the authors suggest that consent requires continual negotiation and discussion with the participants throughout the course of the study. Furthermore, BERA Guidelines (2011, p.5) comment:

The Association takes voluntary informed consent to be the condition in which participants understand and agree to their participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway.

All participants were provided with an Information sheet (Appendix 2) and the ethical consent form and checklist (Appendix 3) and I went through these with teachers at the initial presentation and before people volunteered. Those who wanted to volunteer were asked to sign and return the Ethical Consent Form (Appendix 3) prior to the training session, interviews and any involvement in Teacher Rounds. This meant that they had more than a week or two weeks (different in each school) to decide if they wanted to participate. Participants were informed that they could choose to end their participation and withdraw from the study at any

time. Informed consent means making clear how the research will be carried out and how it will be reported:

Researchers must take the steps necessary to ensure that all participants in the research understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported. (BERA Guidelines 2011, p.5)

All data collected were treated confidentially. Transcripts of the interviews and post-Round meetings and focus group meetings made up the bulk of the data and were stored on a password protected computer; hard copy information was stored in a secured personal office at my home. Participants' identification was protected and I used pseudonyms when the data were presented in the dissertation. All data will be destroyed three years after completion of the study.

The schools and participants have been given fictitious names so that neither the school, nor the teacher can be identified. However, it is possible that individual teachers could be identified by those who know them well, such as their head teacher or senior managers. Students do not form part of the research but individual students/pupils are named in many transcripts as teachers talk a lot about them during the post Round meetings. However, I have made sure that they are represented by a letter or pseudonyms only. Students were not asked for their consent because they were not subjects of the research.

During training, the Round participants agreed (through a contract – see Table 3) that confidentiality was a priority - what happens in the Round stays in the Round. However, we agreed that in the event of an unsafe situation or safeguarding issue then such issues would need to be reported (BERA Guidelines, 2011, p.8).

4.4.4 Ethics and Participatory Action Research

Manzo and Brightbill (2007) argue that PAR can be “more riddled with dilemmas than any other forms of research” (p.39) and point to the

following issues:

- Participants anonymity cannot be guaranteed in community group work;
- Giving participants a voice can reveal “survival strategies” to those that oppress them;
- Shared control over the researcher’s process “creates ethical conundrums that emerge throughout the process and which are not easily predicted at the outset.

The authors point out that:

Participation will not, in and of itself make research ethical; the approach can be deployed to support a researcher’s pre-existing agenda, or to further the interests of a particular group. (p.39)

While the choice of appropriate norms of ethical conduct is rarely an either/or question, PAR implies a different understanding of what consent, welfare and justice entail. For one thing the people involved are not mere “subjects or participants”. They act instead as key partners in an inquiry process (Manzo and Brightbill, 2007, p.39).

By definition, PAR raises new questions and creates new risks over time. Given its emergent properties and responsiveness to social context and needs, PAR cannot limit discussions and decisions about ethics to the design and proposal phase. Norms of ethical conduct and their implications may have to be revisited as the project unfolds (Chevalier and Buckles, 2013). In the event, this did not happen in this study because it was never raised as an issue.

Specific risks associated with this study are that individual teachers could be identified by their headteachers or principal. This is a particular issue for those from small schools. Teachers were very frank when discussing their experiences during one-to-one interviews, post-Round discussions and during focus group meetings. I have tried to lessen this possibility by giving schools and individual teachers pseudonyms.

4.4.5 The role of the researcher

My role as researcher, facilitator and participant raises various ethical issues:

Researchers engaged in action research must consider the extent to which their own reflective research impinges on others, for example in the case of the dual role of teacher and researcher and the impact on students and colleagues. Dual roles may also introduce explicit tensions in areas such as confidentiality and must be addressed accordingly. (BERA Guidelines, 2011, p.5)

I was very aware of my different roles in carrying out this research and I discussed the issues on several occasions with the Rounds groups and with my supervisors. I made sure that participants understood which role I was fulfilling and when. This did not appear to cause any problems during the study or the analysis. I made sure that none of my comments or feedback during post Round discussions are included in the results section and I made sure that my feedback was given last so there was less danger of my influencing any of the group.

As the researcher and facilitator of Teacher Rounds in the three schools, I was very much immersed within the study and I discuss the limitations this presented in this Chapter 7. I attended and participated in every meeting, every Round and every interview. Furthermore, I participated in all the post-Round discussions. However, I have made sure not to include any of my own comments in the findings and analysis.

My role as researcher was as trainer, Round participant and facilitator of post-Round and focus group discussions. As Rounds were introduced as a professional learning activity and a PAR inquiring into their own practice, it was my responsibility to inform the school and the volunteers about the Teaching Round process and protocols and to carry out the training. Furthermore, I was a full participant in all aspects of the process. This way I was learning about the application and implementation of Rounds and I was able to observe the group dynamics and each individual participant.

As the groups became more practiced with giving feedback it was

decided (in discussion with the group) that the post-Round meetings would start with a short feedback from the host teacher about how the lesson went followed by feedback from each teacher particularly with regard to the problem of practice identified by the host teacher and concluding with their wonderings and learning. Wonderings provided the opportunity for teachers to wonder what if.... and the learnings were what teachers had learned or taken away from that lesson.

With the agreement of each group I took on the role of a Round participant in the classroom and then fed-back in the same way as the rest of the group. However, I always provided my feedback after all other members of the Round groups had given their feedback so as not to influence them in any way. It could be argued that my participation was not helpful in terms of maintaining a distance between the researcher and the participants, but it did help to promote discussion.

4.4.6 The schools

There were three schools involved in this study. What follows is a brief description of each school. The names of the schools have been given pseudonyms so they cannot be identified.

It is important to note that in this section and those that follow I am invoking the language of Ofsted in my presentation of the schools in my sample. This matters in terms of my own research because schools appear to have adopted a way of working that they believe will ensure a positive Ofsted outcome (See section 4.2.2.1). Teacher Rounds are non-judgmental and therefore provide a very different experience for participating teachers. Teacher Round protocols initiates a very different language to talk about teaching and learning but it has to be remembered that the language of Ofsted is the one that schools and teachers are currently accustomed to.

St Martha's School (School A)

This is a two-form entry primary school with a religious affiliation. It is a

popular school that is very much part of the church community. The school is rated 'Good', by Ofsted and attainment and results are high. Teachers tend to stay at the school for a number of years and recruitment is not an issue. Many of the Teaching Assistants have been in post for many years and live locally. The school is multi-ethnic and multi-lingual although most children come from the same faith group. Teachers in the school were entirely white and were predominantly female, as indeed were the Rounds group. The Rounds group was made up of a range of teachers from most year groups and with a wide range of expertise and experience.

In St Martha's School, Rounds took place on a Friday morning and were followed immediately by the post-Round discussion. Each teacher in the Rounds group took a turn to host a Round. The first Round took place on February 2016 (Table 1) and the final one on June 2016. The training session with volunteer teachers took place in early February.

Over the course of two terms each teacher hosted two Rounds and participated in almost all of the Rounds and post Round discussions. There were one or two exceptions where teachers were out of school on a visit. The final focus group meeting with the participants took place at the end of June.

The school managed to cover the lessons of the Rounds group by using Teaching Assistants and carrying out Rounds when the regular assembly took place on Friday mornings, which allowed us to do the post-Round discussion straight after the Round. All teachers participating in Rounds were interviewed as part of the research.

Boathouse School (School B)

Boathouse School is a large girls comprehensive school. It is rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and results are consistently high. The school population is multi-ethnic, with a predominantly Muslim cohort. However, the school itself is secular. The large number of teachers at the school and indeed in the Rounds group had a wide range of expertise and

experience. Although a relatively large number of teachers in the school were from different ethnic minority groups, the Rounds group ended up as mostly white British and Irish. Although 40% of teachers in the school were male teachers only one man joined the group.

Boathouse School chose Thursdays as their Rounds day as this was the easiest day for cover. Following the first Round they decided to have two Round observations in one day and this was the way the group proceeded to operate. The training session took place in February after school and the first Round took place in early March. The final Rounds took place in early June and the last Focus Group session took place at the end of June. Interviews took place mostly prior to the first Round session or within the first weeks. However, one interview did not take place until the final session due to pressure on the teacher's time.

Cover for teachers involved in Rounds was provided by colleagues or supply teachers. The assistant head who was part of the Rounds group made sure lessons were covered and that participating teachers knew where we were meeting and when. She helped to keep the project on track and she was the person I liaised with in terms of organizing dates. The full involvement of a senior leader was an exception and is one I discuss in more detail in the section on participants.

Kings Castle School (School C)

Kings Castle is a large mixed comprehensive school with a very multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-faith population. The teaching staff reflected (to a certain extent) the diversity of the student population. However, the five teachers who volunteered to be part of the Rounds group were all white British and only one was male. The school was rated 'Requires Improvement' by Ofsted despite the fact that results in public examinations and progress measures was rising year on year. This led to a lot of stress and anxiety amongst staff.

Kings Castle also chose Thursdays as their Round day but these varied over time. This school was harder to keep on track as there appeared to

be so many conflicting priorities that got in the way of agreeing Round dates. I think the reason for the difficulty was that the deputy head who had invited me into the school was not part of the group and although he organized the cover needed, he did not liaise between members of the group and me. Therefore, trying to communicate with the individual group members and trying to get definitive dates and times for lessons proved to be difficult. No one person felt they could take a decision as everybody had different responsibilities and priorities. The first Round took place on mid-March 2016 and the final in mid-November. The summer term was a bit chaotic for various reasons, so the second cycle of Rounds did not take place until the Autumn term.

All three schools have been given a pseudonym and are also identified as School A, B and C so that quotations included in the results and analysis chapters can be tracked back to the teachers and schools.

4.4.7 The participants

A very important part of the Teacher Round protocol is that teachers must volunteer to participate. They could not be coerced or forced to participate. None of the Rounds participants had previous experience of Teacher Rounds and they had never heard of them. Following my presentation to teachers in schools I had to wait for teachers to volunteer and therefore could not choose participants. Although I asked for the opportunity to talk to all teachers in all the schools, I had to leave it to the leadership team to decide what worked best for them. Two of the schools were particularly mindful of teacher workload issues and did not want to impose yet another meeting on them. In these two schools, teachers were given a brief description of Teacher Rounds (by one of the senior team whom I had sent information to) and about the research and were invited to a further meeting with me. However, in the primary school I was able to meet with all teachers in the school at one of their staff meetings. However, in all three schools I was able to present my power-point, either to the whole teaching body or those who were self-selected, and to then ask for volunteers.

During my presentation I explained to teachers that the project would not be ideal for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and suggested they did not volunteer. The reason for this was the nature of Teacher Rounds would mean teachers exposing themselves, warts and all, and my view was that NQTs might not be resilient enough to cope with this exposure so early in their career. In addition, I had no knowledge of any of the participants prior to the research project and I did not know, and could not anticipate how they would connect together as a group. In any event, in one school (Boathouse School) one NQT volunteered and took part.

Following the presentation, those who were interested and wanted to volunteer were asked to give their names to the senior manager with responsibility for CPD. Following that meeting a training session was set up within the following two weeks. Consent forms were given out at the original meetings with teachers so they could see what they would be signing up to and they were asked to think carefully before signing them and were asked to return them to me immediately before the training session.

A breakdown of participants in all three schools is provided below:

Table 2: A breakdown of the participants in each school

St Martha's School – Primary and Infants School (School A)

Teacher	Gender	Years Teaching	Ethnicity
Toni (A1)	Female	4 years	W/B
Mary (A2)	Female	5 years	W/B
Zoe (A3)	Female	5 years	W/B
Theresa (A4)	Female	15 years	W/B
Sandra (A5)	Female	10 years	W/B

Boathouse Secondary School (School B)

Teacher	Gender	Years Teaching	Ethnicity
Christine (B1)	Female	13 years	W/B
Ellie (B2)	Female	2 years	W/I
Carol (B3)	Female	6 years	W/I
David (B4)	Male	2 years	W/I
Aoife (B5)	Female	1 year	W/I
Gill (B6)	Female	13 years	Other

Kings Castle Secondary School (School C)

Teacher	Gender	Years Teaching	Ethnicity
Sonia (C1)	Female	8 years	W/B
Adam (C2)	Male	16 years	W/B
Zoe (C3)	Female	6 years	W/B
Cassie (C4)	Female	6 years	W/B
Rita (C5)	Female	6 years	W/B

Subsequently, the research sample was made up of sixteen participants. Fourteen of these were female and two were male. The age range was between 23 - 49. All the participants were white British or White Irish with one colleague identifying as other.

Because the participants were volunteers I was unable to influence the diversity of the Teacher Rounds group. The primary school involved only had a few male teachers and were predominantly white British. The two secondary schools were more multi-cultural and had more male teachers, although female teachers were in the majority. It was not clear why more men and more minority ethnic teachers did not volunteer to participate and this was not an issue I was able to investigate. I am aware however, that my sample was not necessarily representative of the teacher population in most London schools. I recognize this as a limitation of the research but it is not one that I could influence. However, sixteen participants, located in three schools in London provided a wealth of data to help answer the research question. None of the previous studies cite gender variation as significant.

4.4.8 Securing the sample

The first step was to secure enough schools to participate in the research. I emailed an introduction letter (Appendix 4) to head teachers in fifteen London schools outlining the research project and asking for an appointment to come and visit the school to discuss it in more detail. In addition, I also approached five schools where I already knew either the head or deputy head. The fifteen schools approached blindly via email, where I had no previous contact with the Head or Deputy, did not respond to my emails. I did not follow up because I had secured commitments from enough schools to make up my sample.

I followed up all invitations to visit schools that were interested in learning more about the research project. This entailed visits to six schools and meetings with head teachers and their senior leader with responsibility for professional development, and going through the process of Teacher

Rounds and the possible implications for the schools. The main barrier identified was the need to cover the classes of members of the Teacher Round group. Head teachers also wanted to know what the expected outcomes of Teacher Rounds might be and how they would (or not) improve the quality of teaching and furthermore how this would lead to raising student achievement and attainment. However, I was unable to give them a definitive answer to this question, as there had been no large-scale research to measure this. Thankfully, I was able to persuade head teachers to give me the go ahead because they liked the fact that Teacher Rounds would offer a professional space for teachers to work together on a collaborative project.

One school that was very keen to be involved finally decided it would not be possible because staff moved between two sites (a couple of miles apart) and it would have been impossible to provide the cover needed for Round participants. Two other schools that were considering getting involved dropped out following meetings with me and in the case of one school, following an initial training session. One of these schools withdrew because they realized they did not have the capacity to participate. They were dealing with many difficult issues and it could be said that they were firefighting and were prioritizing the most difficult issues first. The leadership team was very keen to be involved but only three teachers volunteered.

In another school, once again the leadership was keen to be involved and seven teachers volunteered after my presentation on Teacher Rounds. However, once we had completed the training and when it came to agreeing dates teachers could not agree on specific dates and times to host Rounds. Furthermore, there was very obvious distrust amongst the teaching staff and the senior team. This was due to some degree, by the fact that in an attempt to bring about rapid improvement the head teacher and leadership team had focused on monitoring and close scrutiny rather than on developing teachers at all levels. Whilst there was a lot of support for teachers who were struggling and judged to be requiring improvement

or worse (according to Ofsted criteria) there was not much else in terms of development for those who were perceived to be competent or good. The head teacher and senior team of that particular school was very keen to move away from graded observations. The school was looking for some way to enable teachers to observe each other in a useful, structured way but was unsure about how to go about it.

One of the volunteers to participate in Teacher Rounds was the Union representative of one of the main teacher unions and he expressed very cynical views of the project during his interview. When some of the group asked if they could operate separately from the Associate Senior Leader who had also volunteered, it became clear that this was not the ideal context to implement Teacher Rounds. The conditions in that school were not conducive to this particular research project where trust was an essential element for successful implementation. Therefore, I decided, in agreement with the head and deputy not to go ahead. This left three schools in the research project. This experience made me further consider the importance of a flat leadership structure when introducing Rounds. It became obvious that the presence of a perceivedly more powerful or important participants has a deleterious effect.

My meetings with the teachers who were interested in participating in the study in the three schools took place after school in January and February 2016. When teachers were gathered – either as a whole school group of teachers or a self-selected group, I went through the prepared PowerPoint with them and answered all their questions about the amount of time involved and the possible benefits to them as professionals. The teachers who then wanted to proceed and volunteer were asked to inform the Deputy Head or senior member of staff in charge of Professional Development. They were given two weeks to think about this decision before deciding, and this ensured they did not feel pressurized to agree.

All participants were asked to sign Ethical Consent Forms attached to the checklist (Appendix 3) and agree to be interviewed by me, (if possible) prior to the start of the Teacher Rounds. Volunteers were told that they

could drop out at any time (see section 4.4.3 on Research Ethics). In Boathouse School there were eight volunteers but two dropped out after the training session. The reasons they gave was that one had discovered she was pregnant and therefore had other things on her mind, and the other teacher said the time commitment for involvement in the research was too much as she had such a heavy workload. This left me with six participants. One was an assistant head and this was the only school where a member of SLT took part. The role of leadership and power dynamics in the Rounds team is something that will be discussed later in this thesis. There were no other drop-outs during the course of the research project. However, one teacher in King Castle School left the school in order to take up a new role in another school, after the first cycle of Rounds.

4.5 The Teacher Round protocols

The Round is where teachers visit each other's classrooms. Although I use the word observation from time to time I am very aware of the negative connotations associated with the word. Therefore, when talking about Round observations we simply use the word Round. However, when talking about formal performance management observations, teachers use the word observation.

The protocols are clearly outlined by Del Prete (2013) and were ones I observed for myself when I visited Professor Del Prete in Clark University, Although Del Prete recommended a long lead-in in terms of giving teachers an opportunity to hone their observation skills by watching video clips and discussing these in detail the pressure on teachers' time did not allow this to happen.

In retrospect, the biggest problem for the teachers was learning how to concentrate and record what they saw and what they heard during Round observations, and to make no attempt to interpret it or to judge it. This is what makes Rounds different from the usual performance management observations. The Rounds groups were not expected to be experts and

were not required to provide advice to the teacher. Rather they had to play back what they had seen and heard in the classroom, with particular feedback on the problem of practice identified by the host teacher. Teachers had to break old habits in terms of the Ofsted style of formal observation and feedback.

Although the training sessions were short the groups learned how to use the protocols as they became involved. More information on the training sessions is provided below. The group were reassured that if they somehow got it wrong during a Round or post-Round discussion it would not be a problem. We were learning to use the protocols together.

4.5.1 The contract for working together

Once the volunteers were identified, dates were set to do the training for each group. These took place after school and took about an hour and a half. The training involved agreeing a contract for working together, understanding the protocols, developing a Rounds Sheet and identifying the problem of practice, observing a lesson without using technical jargon or Ofsted criteria and giving feedback during the post-Round meeting. Teacher Rounds were a new concept for all the participants and it was important that they were all fully aware of what would happen during a Round and how feedback would be given. The aim of the contract was to establish trust amongst the Round groups. Bryk and Schneider (2002) have written extensively about the importance of trust when setting up a community of learners (See Chapter 2). Similarly, Hipp and Huffman (2007) argue that teacher collegiality is related to the quality of the relationships among teachers, including respect, trust, and positive, caring relationships. The contract agreed with teachers involved in this study was one way of agreeing what the respect and trust and confidentiality would look like in each school so that all participants could sign up to it.

The contract was a very important part of the process because many of the participants were anxious about the process of being observed and

needed reassurance that Teacher Rounds were not part of the accountability processes and they would not be judged or graded. Contracts were individual to the group and they all differed slightly. However, the main aspects common to all were confidentiality, sensitivity to each other, an agreement to listen to each other and to be open and honest. A breakdown of elements included in each contract is shown in Table 3. I repeatedly reminded each group about the need for confidentiality and stressed the importance not to leave Round Sheets or observation notes lying around the staffroom or elsewhere. However, this did not prove to be a problem as confidentiality was something that all participants took very seriously.

4.5.2 The training sessions

The training involved learning how to use the Teacher Round protocols and how to produce a Round Sheet and to identify a problem of practice. The agenda for the training session is included in the appendices (Appendix 5). Training sessions were planned to last no more than an hour because they took part in teachers' own time after school. Although, I would have liked to have a longer lead in time as Del Prete (2013) suggests we had to work within the time constraints of the institution. However, we agreed that we (the researcher and Rounds group) would learn on the job. If we got it wrong we would learn from our mistakes.

Preparing the Round Sheet and identifying the problem of practice was a large part of our training session. During training we looked at many examples of Round Sheets including the problem of practice that I had brought from my visit to Clark University. Despite the examples and guidelines given, participants found it difficult to prepare the Round Sheet but this got easier as we went through the two cycles of Rounds. I agreed to review the draft Round Sheets prior to their being sent out to the rest of the group, and many of the host teachers who were the first to host the group in their lesson did take up this offer. However, due to time pressures most teachers sent out the Round Sheets the night before the Round observation. The pre-Round meeting in the early morning was

used to go through the Round Sheet and to talk through the problem of practice. Increasingly, host teachers named individual students who they had concerns about and wanted feedback about.

An example of a Round Sheet and problem of practice is included in the appendices. (Appendix 6).

4.6 Data collection

The specific instruments used to collect the data included:

- Interviews with participants (n16)
- Post-Round discussions (n30)
- Focus group meetings (n3)

The instrument of choice for this research is the human observer (Rounds teachers). Because the Round observers were the principle observers every attempt had been made to prepare them for their role as Round observers. However, time for this preparation was short and we had to learn as we went along.

4.6.1 Interviews

I was able to develop my interview questions following my field trip to Clark University where I was immersed in Rounds for five days. I piloted my interview questions on three colleagues who were or who had been teachers. However, these were mostly teachers who were or had been senior leaders and as such they were not the best sample for a pilot. The interviews were semi-structured and varied a little as I went through the questions. The individual interviews were designed to gather information about the teachers and to establish their feelings about key areas of their experience that were relevant to the research topic. However, Breakwell (1990) comments:

The interview approach relies heavily upon respondents being able and willing to give accurate information. (p.81)

As far as I know participants did give accurate information in terms of telling me about themselves, but many of the questions were about their experiences and feelings and where there was no right or wrong answer.

Rorty (1979) emphasizes how we constitute knowledge through conversation and social practice. This is important for qualitative interviewing as we become increasingly aware of the constructive nature of social interaction and the part played by active subjects in making sense of their experiences (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003b). Interviews helped me to engage with the research participants individually in a way that questionnaires or focus groups could not. Also they were a very flexible research tool, which could be used to gather a range of different types of information, including factual data, views and opinions, personal narratives and histories (Atkins and Wallace, 2012). The interviews provided the opportunity for dialogue, which allowed me as interviewer to probe and clarify and to check that they had understood correctly what was being said. Atkins and Wallace (2012) remind us that this requires us to honour our guarantee of confidentiality and to handle the data in a way which is consistent with an ethical research framework.

Interviews with all participants took place mostly prior to the implementation of the Teacher Rounds process but due to time constraints these stretched into weeks and even months. The interviews were not planned to answer the research question but rather to get to know the individual participants and to establish a context for the research. However, in the event, the interviews provided a lot of useful information that has been included in the Results Chapter. Reassurances were given about the confidentiality of the interviews so that teachers were able to speak freely within the known challenges of such open-ended research to support honesty and openness.

Interviews were conducted in a private room where there were no interruptions and where the conversation could not be overheard. The interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and an hour depending on

how talkative the interviewee was. Interviews were semi-structured, however when deciding on interview questions it was important to gather data about the age and gender of each participant and to find out how long they had been teaching. The main part of the interviews was about formal performance management observations – how often and how useful. A list of the interview question is included in the appendices (Appendix 7).

I had to be careful when carrying out interviews not to express my own views or to lead the interviewee. However, this was difficult because of the nature of the questions and the feelings and emotions that emerged as the interviews proceeded. I was empathetic to what interviewees were saying and interviews sometimes developed into discussions. However, I always made sure that I returned to the original questions during the interview. King and Horrocks (2010) advise that the interviewer should try to avoid responding to what the interviewee says in a way that suggests she is making a judgment about their position. They suggest that judgmental comments are problematic for two reasons. First they may have the same effect as a leading question. Second, they may harm rapport, by putting the interviewee on the defensive. The only way I was able to avoid falling into this trap was through constant reflection and awareness of possible pit-falls.

The unstructured interview has been described as “seductive” (Silverman, 2001, p.344) because it can draw people in, often for the wrong reasons. However, its form originates from psychiatric and therapeutic fields, such as Freud, Jung and Rogers' work in free association. These approaches have since been used in social and educational settings (Cohen et al. 2011). However, Miller et al. (2004) suggest that the qualitative interview is neither a “romanticized view of seamless authenticity” emerging from narrative accounts nor is it a “counselling session for either the researcher or participants” (p.126). Interviews range through a continuum, from structured, through semi-structured, to unstructured (or focused) interviews (Bryman 2001, May 1997). The structured interview is

at the quantitative end of the scale, and more used in survey approaches whilst semi-structured and unstructured interviews are used by qualitative researchers, with the interviews characterized by increasing levels of flexibility and lack of structure. (Edwards and Holland, 2013). A considerable range of qualitative approaches use semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Jennifer Mason (quoted in Edwards and Holland, 2013) argues that, despite the large variations in style and tradition, all qualitative and semi-structured interviewing has certain core features in common:

- The interactional exchange of dialogue (between two or more participants, in face-to-face or other contexts).
- A thematic, topic-centred, biographical or narrative approach where the researcher has topics, themes or issues they wish to cover, but with a fluid and flexible structure.
- A perspective regarding knowledge as situated and contextual, requiring the researcher to ensure that relevant contexts are brought into focus so that the situated knowledge can be produced. Meanings and understandings are created in an interaction, which is effectively a co-production, involving the construction or reconstruction of knowledge. (Adapted from Mason 2002, p.62).

Gill et al. (2008) define the semi-structured interview as an approach that has several key questions which help to define the areas to be explored, but also allows the researcher the flexibility to pursue an idea in a response in more detail giving a medium between structured and unstructured interviews. This type of interview was most appropriate for the purposes of this research.

All interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and subsequently transcribed by the researcher.

4.6.2 The Round and post-Round discussions

The post-Round meeting was where the professional conversations occurred (Earl and Timperley, 2009; Danielson, 2009). Foucault (1996)

suggests discourse changes the way we think about key concepts and ourselves. The protocols associated with Teacher Rounds encourage and enable teachers to have a discourse around what happens in their own classrooms. The fact that this discourse is not influenced by senior leaders and the power dynamic is not in play is an important one that plays into Foucauldian ideas in relation to power and power redistribution. The Round protocols requires participants to use positive language and this is a deliberate attempting to dissociate Rounds from the 'laden and power-inflected language of Ofsted.

The post-Round discussions were more than professional conversations; whilst teachers did talk about the teaching and learning they had seen and heard in some detail, they also talked about their feelings and emotions and about their doubts in their own ability as teachers. Teachers used their Round notes to feedback on what they had seen and heard. In order to keep the conversations focused, I facilitated and chaired the discussion and tried to get participants to adhere to the protocols. In most cases this was manageable but occasionally people would interrupt when it was not their turn, making it very difficult to make sense of the discussions. Therefore, I decided to ask participants to feedback one person at a time and tried to discourage cross-group discussion at this stage.

Another issue was the Rounds group continued to use some judgmental language about what had been happening in the classroom. For instance, they often described children as being engaged or described teachers' actions as being good. The groups became better at avoiding this language as we worked through the Rounds cycle, but we never managed to completely eradicate this type of language. However, this type of evaluative language was always positive in nature and was used because they wanted acknowledge the teachers' good practice.

The post-Round discussions were recorded using a digital recorder and subsequently transcribed (some by a transcriber and some by the

researcher) and form the bulk of the data set for analysis. There are thirty post-Round transcripts.

4.6.3 The Focus Group Meetings

Following two cycles of Rounds I met with the Rounds groups in all three schools for a final focus group meeting to discuss the Teacher Round process and what had happened during the period of time they had worked together as a group. This was in fact a sort of group interview where I led the discussion by asking a series of questions about their experience. Group interviews have been used in social research to explore a wide range of issues and more recently in education (Lewis, 1992). King and Horrocks (2010, p.61) suggest the data produced in group interviews can reveal the social and cultural context of people's understandings and beliefs. Furthermore, Blumer (1969) explains:

A small number of individuals, brought together as a discussion or resource group, is more valuable many times over than any representative sample. Such a group, discussing collectively their sphere of life and probing into it as they meet one another's disagreements, will do more to lift the veils covering the sphere of life than any other device that I know of. (p.41)

The situation where people are interacting as part of a group is seen as more naturalistic and much closer to everyday life than the individual lone interview. King and Horrock (2010) suggest that group interviews can encourage recall and re-evaluation of their existing positions. The authors claim that stated views can often be amplified, qualified, amended or contradicted when expressed as part of a group interview. Frey and Fontana (1993) suggested distinct methodological justifications for deploying group interviews in social research. These include "Exploratory, Pretest, Triangulation and Phenomenological" (p.23). In the case of this research the purpose of the group interviews (Focus Groups) was to revisit the data collected from interviews, and post Round discussions and to gather additional data leading to more rigor to the data collection process.

I wanted to examine what participants had learned about the process and during the process, and what they had learned about themselves. It was agreed by all three groups to draw together some of the main lessons learned and issues uncovered and to identify the possible next steps for the school. I produced this report (looking at transcripts of interviews, observation feedbacks and focus group meetings) and the group amended and agreed these before they were emailed to the Head and Deputy. The three focus group meetings were lengthy discussions that were recorded and transcribed and form part of the data set to be analyzed.

4.7 Analyzing the data

Verbatim transcripts were made of the interviews and post-Round discussions and focus group meetings. I transcribed all the interviews directly from my dictaphone and was able to check the accuracy of what I was transcribing as I went along. I used a professional transcriber to help me transcribe nearly half of the thirty transcripts from the post-Round discussions. However, I went through these carefully using the Dictaphone to ensure they were accurately transcribed.

A thematic analysis approach was used as an analysis method and focused on identifying patterns and meaning across the data set that helped provide answers to the research question. Using this method patterns are identified through a rigorous process of data familiarization, theme development and constant revision and comparison. There are different ways of approaching thematic analysis and I decided on an inductive way as opposed to a deductive, semantic or latent way. The inductive way is a means of theme development that is directed by the content of the data.

The approach to thematic analysis involves a six-phase process:

- **Familiarisation with the data:** This phase involves reading and re-reading the data, to become immersed and intimately familiar with its content.

- **Coding:** This phase involves generating succinct labels (codes!) that identify important features of the data that might be relevant to answering the research question. It involves coding the entire dataset, and after that, collating all the codes and all relevant data extracts together for later stages of analysis.
- **Searching for themes:** This phase involves examining the codes and collated data to identify significant broader patterns of meaning (potential themes). It then involves collating data relevant to each candidate theme, so that you can work with the data and review the viability of each candidate theme.
- **Reviewing themes:** This phase involves checking the candidate themes against the dataset, to determine that they tell a convincing story of the data, and one that answers the research question. In this phase, themes are typically refined, which sometimes involves them being split, combined, or discarded.
- **Defining and naming themes:** This phase involves developing a detailed analysis of each theme, working out the scope and focus of each theme, determining the 'story' of each. It also involves deciding on an informative name for each theme.
- **Writing up:** This final phase involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts, and contextualising the analysis in relation to existing literature. (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.87)

Following advice from Miles and Huberman (1994) I started familiarizing myself with the data early on. This was the start of my analysis. This was important because there was a lot of data to make sense of. My data set consisted of transcribed interviews (n16), transcribed post-Round discussions (n30) and transcribed focus group meeting discussions (n3) and I needed to plan the analysis carefully. Trying to make sense of this volume of qualitative data was daunting and in the event it took many months. I started the process by dividing the data into three separate groups; Interviews, post-Round discussions and focus group meeting so that I could identify emerging themes. I went through each transcript line-by-line and wrote notes in the margins assigning initial codes where appropriate. This was the start of the process to identify themes and codes. An example of an annotated transcript is included below:

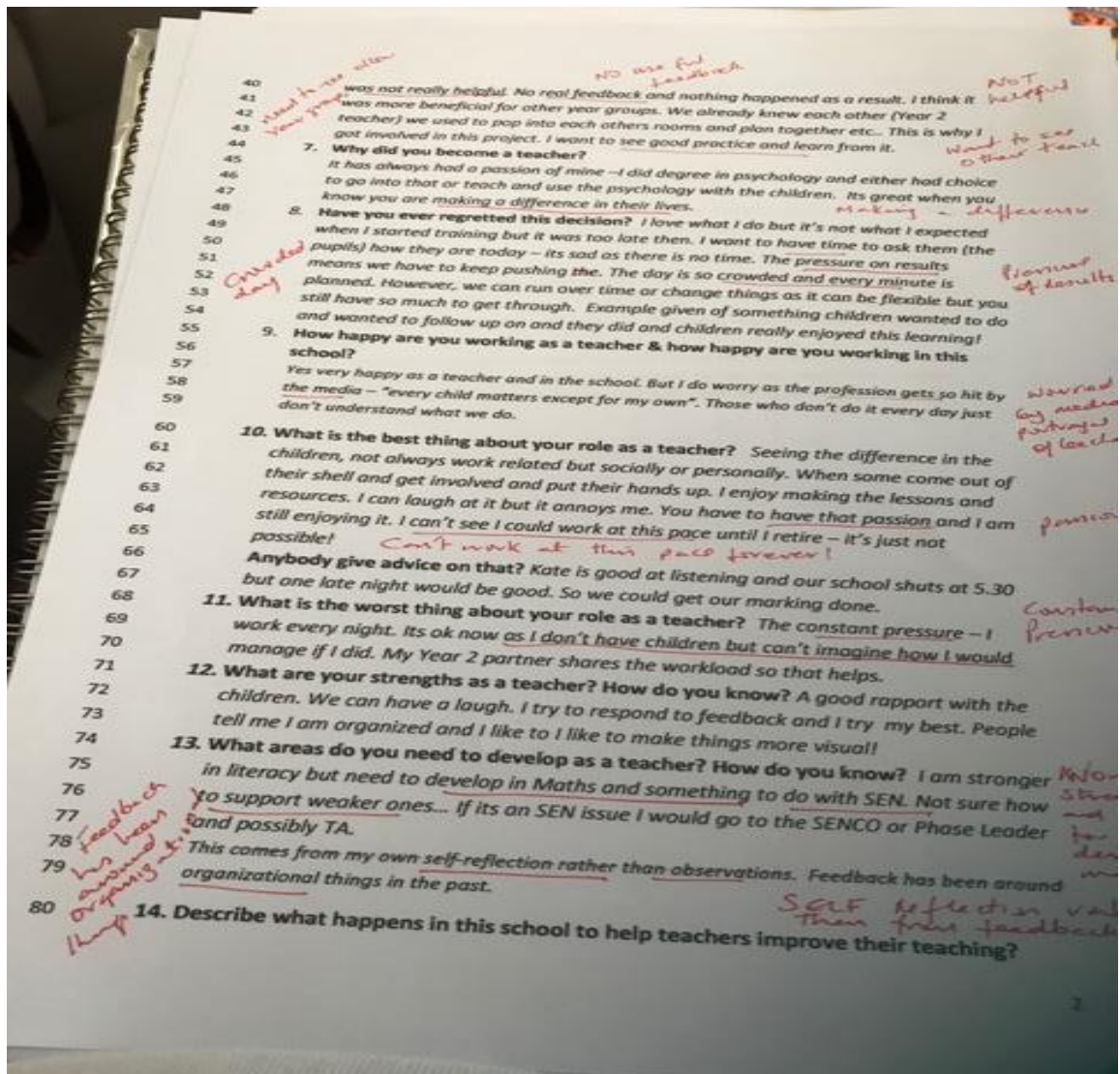


Figure 1: Annotated transcript to identify themes and sub-themes

I then moved on to producing Contact Summary Sheets (Miles and Humberman, 1994) for each piece of transcribed data. The purpose of these was to start to summarize the main points included in each transcript and to assign initial codes. Creating the Contact Sheets was time consuming but helped me to become even familiar with the data and to start organizing it into useful categories. It must be noted that in the event these were not one-page summaries but rather five-or-six page summaries. An example of a complete Contact Summary can be found in the appendices (Appendix 8) but a one-page overview is included below:

Figure 2: Extract from a Contact Summary Form – School A – Interview

<u>Type of contact</u>	<u>School/Venue for Meeting</u>	<u>Date: January 2016</u>
Interview with Round participant	DH Office	
PAGE	SALIENT POINTS	THEMES/ASPECTS/CODE
	<i>Describe what happens in this school to help teachers improve their teaching?</i>	
	When I struggled my partner teacher helped me but I got signed off for stress – all a bit difficult to talk about. Lots of Chinese whispers about what was happening to me. Nobody wants to upset anybody so things not said but whispers happen. I would try to help my other year teacher but there seems to be no formal plan of support. There is no forum.. Everybody is so busy I don't want to waste people's time. It will be nice to work together with the Rounds group...	<p>Honest reflection/confession Difficult to talk about Nobody wants to upset anybody No formal support structure Everybody is so busy</p>
	<i>What in your view is the best way for teachers to improve their practice?</i>	
	I hate formal observations and would rather people dropped in on a monthly basis and formal hour long observation as I find it so stressful Its one of the reasons I joined this group. You are not in a ridged timetable – things can go with the flow..	<p>Formal observations stressful</p>
	<i>What was the best CPD you have ever had? Describe it? How did it change your practice?</i>	
	Going into other schools – a few times we went to watch other teachers teaching phonics and standing back and observing. Good but no time built in to talk or set up networks with other teachers. As an NQT we had that opportunity to do that.. Training here is very structured – someone at front talking to us, I like this as it means I am not worried about being picked on. But I am useless at sitting and listening all day.	<p>Watching others teach best CPD but no time built in to talk or network NQTs have these opportunities Training is v structured. Someone at front talking to us.</p>

I completed a contact sheet for every transcript and generated a list of thematic categories emerging from (i) interviews, (ii) post Round discussions and (iii) focus group discussions. It was obvious from the start of the process that the different groups of data yielded different information and raised different issues. The interviews were very much about feelings and emotions expressed, whilst the post-Round discussions were centered around children and teaching strategies observed and the focus group meetings were focused on what happened when teachers participated in the Teacher Rounds process. I decided that I was going to be concentrating on the experience participating teachers had during the Rounds process rather than the outcomes in terms of pupils. For instance the vast majority of themes emerging from post-Round discussions were specifically about strategies teachers were using in the classroom for example; questioning, group work/paired work and children's learning strategies and so on. I decided that I was going to concentrate on the process of Teacher Rounds rather than particular aspects of teaching and learning and so I disregarded or put aside much of this data. However, some of these topics are included in the results chapter but only in context of the process of the discussion amongst colleagues. The data from the post-Round discussion was very detailed and very large and I had to disaggregate the topics that were discussed where teachers were describing what they had seen and heard in the Round (about teaching and learning strategies) to the experience of teachers participating in Rounds. However, as teachers became more confident with the process the post-Round discussions did reflect the experiences and feelings of the teachers involved. These have been included in the results chapter and include discussions about the importance of trust and good relationships and the feelings of guilt experienced by many of the teachers.

I identified the themes and sub themes in each piece of data and wrote them down in various tables on my computer and then on post-it notes. I did this for the three categories of data and originally identified them by colours to show what had been said in each school. I also included a

note of which Round or interview or focus group they were said in. I worked on refining these lists over and over until I was satisfied that the themes I had identified would be appropriate in helping me answer my research question.

Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that generating categories in this way is the approach of a “more inductive researcher (who) may not want to pre-code any datum until he or she has collected it, seen how it functions or nests in its context, and determined how many varieties of it there are..... the analyst is more open-minded and more context-sensitive” (p.58). As themes were generated, I tried using post-it notes for each category of data (interviews, post Round discussions and focus group discussions) horizontally across the top of large sheets of sugar paper. I then reviewed the sugar paper for each item of the data and came up with a list of themes and sub themes. I used this method to give me an accurate overview of my data and chose post-it notes rather than writing directly onto the sugar paper because I wanted to be able to manipulate the analytic categories until they were arranged in a way that I was happy with. I then created a horizontal axis of post-it notes containing the thematic categories that had emerged. Next, I went back through all the sub-themes and coded each individually, looking for specific pieces of data that fit into the categories on the horizontal axis. I then created a different colored post-it note and then put it on a vertical axis underneath the category heading. This became very complicated as the volume of data increased. Therefore, I used a variety of methods to capture the key themes including lists, mind maps, tables.

A screen shot of some of the post it note process is shown below:

Following this I went back to my spreadsheets and lists for each category of data and spent time drawing out main themes and from there. I have included the document listing the themes and sub themes from three focus group meetings in the Appendices (Appendix 9).

I used an iterative approach in the analysis of data (Cousins and Earl, 1992; King et al. 2007). Data was transcribed and loosely coded using “In vivo” coding, which utilizes specific words or phrases used by multiple participants (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Saldana, 2013). In other words it uses the participants’ own language. However, I also used elements of descriptive coding which summarizes the primary topic of an excerpt (Saldana 2013).

4.7.1 Coding

Coding is not just labelling, it is linking (Saladana 2013). To identify, refine and integrate categories, and ultimately to develop theory, researchers are advised to use a number of key strategies, including **constant comparative analysis** which is the constant comparative method used by researchers to develop concepts from the data by coding and analyzing at the same time (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). The constant comparative method “combines systematic data collection, coding, and analysis with theoretical sampling in order to generate theory that is integrated, close to the data, and expressed in a form clear enough for further testing” (Conrad, et al. 1993, p. 280). Constant comparative methodology incorporates four stages:

- comparing incidents applicable to each category,
- integrating categories and their properties,
- delimiting the theory, and
- writing the theory” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 105).

Throughout the four stages of the constant comparative method, the researcher continually sorts through the data collection, analyzes and codes the information, and reinforces theory generation through the process of theoretical sampling. The benefit of using this method is that

the research begins with raw data; through constant comparisons a substantive theory will emerge (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Theoretical sampling is often used in conjunction with the three levels of coding as described by Strauss and Corbin (2008). During the first level of open coding, sampling is purposeful and systematic; the second level of axial coding incorporates sampling in a more structured systematic approach to help validate relationships among the data; and the final level, selective coding, specifically seeks a more deliberate agenda of sampling to help test and integrate categorical findings until the point of data saturation (Strauss and Corbin, 2008). Data saturation is the point when the information collected in the study becomes redundant (Bogdan and Biklen, 2006). These are the building blocks of the analysis (Saldana 2016). The coding designates the grouping together of instances that share similar features or characteristics with one another. Coding was used to identify the different categories from the research data (Saldana 2016).

I used line-by-line analysis and subsequently numerous descriptive categories emerged. Repeated stages of analysis integrated these smaller categories into higher-level analytic categories. The key themes that emerged are shown below in no particular order:

- Accountability/Performance management
- Professional learning
- Trust and relationships
- Feedback
- The role of leadership
- Collaboration
- Teachers' views of themselves
- The language we use when talking about teaching and learning
- Learning to ask difficult conversations
- Taking risks in the classroom

In the early stages of analysis, coding was largely descriptive. As coding progressed, I was able to identify higher-level categories that systematically integrate low-level categories into meaningful units and

thus analytical categories were introduced. When applying codes I chose labels that utilized words or phrases used by the participants in the study. This method is described as in vivo coding (Saldana,2016).

An example of a coded piece of data is included in the Appendices (Appendix 10).

4.8 Reliability and Validity

The use of reliability and validity are common features in quantitative research and now need to be reconsidered in the case of qualitative research. Since reliability and validity are rooted in positivist perspectives then they should be redefined for their use in a naturalistic approach (Golafshani, 2003) such as in the case of this study.

King and Horrocks (2010) claim that there is no general agreement about which criteria to use when assessing quality, or how to apply the criteria and confirm that some scholars argue against the use of any set criteria at all (Stenbacka, 2001). Thus, the authors argue that this means that we need to develop different quality criteria and quality assessment techniques for different qualitative traditions (King and Horrocks (2010).

Reliability is a concept normally used for testing or evaluating quantitative research, but is also applicable to qualitative research. The most important test of any qualitative study is its quality (Golafshani, 2003). A good qualitative study can help us “understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing” (Eisner, 1991, p.58). The quality concept in qualitative study has the purpose of “generating understanding” (Stenbacka, 2001, p.551). Furthermore, the author suggests that the difference in purposes of evaluating the quality of studies in quantitative and qualitative research makes the concept of reliability irrelevant in qualitative research. According to Stenbacka, (2001) “the concept of reliability is even misleading in qualitative research. If a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion, the consequence is rather that the study is no good” (p.552).

In contrast, Patton (2001) suggests that validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about when designing a study. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.300) use “dependability” (how sound your research is and if it can be replicated) in qualitative research, which is similar to the notion of “reliability” in quantitative research. They emphasize “inquiry audit” (p. 317) as one measure, which might enhance the dependability of qualitative research. This they claim can be used to examine both the process and the product of the research for consistency (Hoepfl, 1997). Clont (1992) and Seale (1999) endorse the concept of dependability with the concept of consistency or reliability in qualitative research. The consistency of data will be achieved when the steps of the research are verified through examination of such items as raw data, data reduction products, and process notes (Campbell, 1996).

4.8.1 Validity

The issue of validity in qualitative research has not been disregarded by Stenbacka (2001) for the issue of reliability. Instead, she argues that the concept of validity should be redefined for qualitative research. Thus, she describes the notion of reliability as one of the quality concepts in qualitative research which need "to be solved in order to claim a study as part of proper research" (Stenbacka, 2001, p.551). The idea of discovering truth through measures of reliability and validity is replaced by the idea of trustworthiness (Mishler, 1986), which is “defensible” (Johnson, 2002, p. 282) and establishing confidence in the findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Creswell (2003) outlines techniques and principles to use to increase the validity or trustworthiness of qualitative research. These include “member checking, rich descriptions, thought-provoking questions, accurate transcriptions, self-reflective on researcher bias, present discrepant information, peer debriefing, and external auditor” (p.196). I intend to use many of the techniques listed to increase the validity of the study.

Reliability and validity are not always applicable to qualitative data and Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest four criteria as direct alternatives to the main criteria used in quantitative research:

- *Credibility* – in place of validity.
- *Transferability* in place of generalizability.
- *Trackable variances* in place of reliability.
- *Conformability* in place of neutrality

There are many criticisms about this formulation as an alternative but they are widely cited by researchers (King and Horrocks 2010, p.161). However, I felt these were applicable to my study.

4.8.2 *Credibility*

Despite advice emanating from the guidance provided on participatory action research and indeed advice around credibility, I did not send transcripts to individual teachers to check for accuracy. This was for two reasons. First of all teachers participating in this participatory action research viewed the project as a way to learn and they saw it largely as a professional learning opportunity. They wanted something that they could apply in their own classrooms and perhaps to other colleagues. They were not really concerned with the overall research outcomes – just those that were personal to them. Secondly, each transcript was between 15 and 20 pages long and I was conscious of the time constraints teachers worked under. Persuading them to respond to emails was difficult enough so asking them to check what they had said in such a large number of situations would have been time consuming and unhelpful in my view. Instead I made sure that transcripts were verbatim accounts of what was said. The interviews were the only times individual teachers were speaking one-on-one whilst the other transcripts were long discussions involving the whole group. I did discuss this issue with my supervisors and we looked at samples of the transcripts and coded a small sample with them to ensure I was making sound decisions about themes and codes.

4.8.3 Transferability

I aimed to collect a large data set during my research in three schools and with sixteen teachers. This data would be analysed and coded carefully so that I could draw conclusions. However, the use of Teacher Round protocols ensured that the process could be transferred from one school and different groups of teachers without any problems. However, the outcomes may be different depending on the school setting and the needs of the participating teachers. This study was a formative intervention as well as a PAR and as such had different purposes. The formative intervention involved teachers learning new ways to learn from each other and had practical outcomes for each individual teacher. The foundations for transferability and confirmability (2007) exist in the detailed descriptions of the Teacher Round process and the data generated through interviews, post Round discussions and focus group discussions. Therefore, it is possible for individuals who were not part of the study to determine whether or not outcomes can be applied based on similarities in other situations.

4.8.4 Trackable variances

Each school involved in this study had a particular context and culture and each participant brought their own experience and their own 'baggage'. Therefore, it was not possible to replicate exactly the same process. However, the Teacher Round protocols do provide a degree of sameness but it is the people, including the facilitator/researcher who will influence the outcomes. In this case the role of facilitator was important to ensure protocols were adhered to so that the experience of participating teachers would be very similar.

4.8.5 Conformability

I have presented sufficient detail of the process of my data collection and analysis so that a reader can see how I have reached the conclusion I did. Stringer (2007) describes conformability as the ability for researchers

to confirm that the described procedures as reported in the study actually took place. All the data is stored electronically which will enable any observers to view an “audit trail” (p.59) of training participants, protocols, data collection, field notes, recordings, and reflective journals related to the study.

4.8.6 The role of the researcher as facilitator and participant

My role was multifaceted in that I introduced the concept of Teacher Rounds to teachers who had volunteered to participate. I acted as trainer – in outlining the Teacher Round protocols and how to identify their own problem of practice and how to look at the classroom in a different way. I also took on the role of facilitator and effectively chaired every discussion other than the pre-Round meeting which was chaired by the host teacher. I interviewed each participant and I transcribed almost half the transcripts myself. All transcripts were verbatim. Those that I employed a professional transcriber to do were carefully checked for accuracy by me. Furthermore, I identified themes and analyzed the data over several readings.

As a trainer as well as a researcher I took part in many aspects of Teacher Rounds. However, I was unable to invite participants into my classroom as part of the process because I did not have a classroom. I did (with the agreement of the group) participate in the Rounds themselves and in the following post-Round discussions. However, I always gave my feedback at the end so that I did not influence the rest of the group and I did not contribute to the focus Group discussions, I just facilitated them. I acknowledge that as in all qualitative research I was able to influence the direction of the study. For instance the questions I chose to ask and the questions that I did not choose to ask are all subjective decisions. However, I approached each interview and each discussion with no preconceived ideas and nothing to prove. The research question was deliberately open ended so that I could capture an emerging set of ideas and feelings about the Teacher Round process. I was a constant presence in all aspects of the formative intervention and

practice development as well as all aspects of the data collection and analysis.

When looking at possible bias on my part I had to confront the fact that I had been a school principal for seventeen years and as such had been at a distance to teachers at the “chalk face”. During this research I was working side-by-side with teachers without any influence of implied or real power issues. Teachers were very open and transparent and I had to look at their experience quite dispassionately and without coming to my own conclusions.

The benefit of working with teachers on a weekly basis meant I got to know individual teachers well and felt great empathy for them and the anxieties they experienced. I made sure I confronted my own bias where I thought it might influence the outcomes of the research. I did this by keeping a reflective research journal and by reading literature on issues that were emerging.

4.9 Summary

The methods and methodology used in this study yielded a vast amount of data that helped me to answer my research questions. The interviews allowed me to meet participants on a one-to-one basis and to hear about their experiences as teachers prior to taking part in Teacher Rounds. The post-Round discussions were very detailed discussions about evidence that was gathered during Rounds and were very specific to what they had seen and heard. The focus group meetings allowed teachers to talk together about their total experience when participating in Rounds.

PAR allowed teachers to take an inquiry stance and allowed them to reflect and research into their own practice. They were able to work collaboratively on problems of practice that were personal to them and were not imposed by a higher power. In an age where teachers are being encouraged to participate on Teacher Action Research this method is one that is relevant and appropriate to introduce in schools.

On reflection, I would use the same methods and methodology if I were to do the research again.

Chapter 5 Results and findings

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter describes the processes of data collection around my research question which asks - What happens when teachers participate in Teacher Rounds? This chapter presents the key findings of the PAR project that made up the Teacher Rounds study. Participating teachers were made aware that their involvement was an opportunity to take part in a professional learning activity that took place in the classroom. They were also very aware that this was a research project that they would be actively involved in.

The chapter is made up of two main sections and several sub-sections. These are derived from the ten themes identified from the data. The first section is how teachers made sense of Teacher Rounds and secondly how they developed strong relationships and trust in each other. These two sections are then divided into sub-sections which break down the main findings and provide detailed examples from the data.

In order to present the data in a coherent fashion I have used direct quotations from transcripts to illustrate different points to answer my research question. The research question is a broad one and as expected the broadness of the question threw up many issues that could not be followed up in this study. For instance, the research is around the process of Teacher Rounds rather than on the practicalities of teaching and learning. Therefore, the focus is on what happened to teachers, rather than what happened to pupils. However, many of the quotations included are about pupils. This is because they illustrate the reflections and thought processes individual teachers went through following a Round. These quotations also help to illustrate the conversations and language used by teachers when discussing teaching and learning.

Data were collected from sixteen teachers who volunteered to participate in the study and is made up of transcripts of sixteen individual interviews, thirty post-Round discussions and three final focus group discussions. Quotations from teachers presented in this and subsequent chapters are labeled with the teacher and school (eg TA1,) the number of Round (R1) or interview or focus group meeting, the date and line number of the transcript so each quotation can be traced back to the original transcript. An example would be (TC3, Round 4, 23.2.2016, L24-30). There are forty-nine transcripts, many of which run to between sixteen and twenty pages therefore I am unable to include all of them as appendices, however, I have included one example of a transcript of a post-Round discussion (Appendix 11) and transcript of a Focus Group (Appendix 12) discussion for reference. I have not included a transcript of an interview as these proved to be too personal to individuals who could easily be identified by those who know them. However, I have included a list of the interview questions (Appendix 8).

Data collected during the study are presented along with some analysis of the data as it pertains to the research question. However, most of the analysis is contained in the next chapter. The main findings are shown below.

5.2 Teachers made sense of Teacher Rounds

Teacher Rounds is an intervention that operates within specific protocols, which have to be learned and followed. Teachers were quick to learn and use these protocols.

5.2.1 They established norms, agreed contracts and used Teacher Rounds protocols

The Rounds groups in all three schools agreed norms for working together. During their training sessions they drew up contracts, which were quite short and to the point. The main elements included in the contracts were confidentiality, sensitivity and listening to each other. I

have extracted information from the data (Individual School Contracts) to form the below.

Table 3: Contracts agreed at each school

St Martha's (School A)	Boathouse (School B)	Kings Castle (School C)
Confidentiality	Confidentiality	Confidentiality
Make no judgments	Make no judgments	Make no judgments
Listen carefully	Listen to each other	Listen to each other
Be sensitive to others' feelings	Being open and honest with each other	Be supportive of each other
Show respect for each other	Arrive on time and be reliable	Turn up to all TR sessions

Confidentiality was the first thing to go on the list for each school. The fact that participants had an “agreed understanding” for working together and were not there to judge each other was a key point to aiding open discussion. Toni made the point very well during the final focus group meeting:

I think in terms of Teacher Rounds as opposed to formal observations it's where we have made a very good relationship between us, makes it a very different vibe as it were em and I think we know because we have an agreed understanding between ourselves that we are not there to judge or to form an opinion on us as teachers; it's more to support each other in identifying areas we might think we need support in and offering as professional advice for each other em and you don't get that vibe from formal observations.

(TA1, Focus Group, 23.6.2016, L25 -30).

The training sessions allowed me to introduce the Teacher Round protocols to the teachers who had volunteered to participate. However, these were very short because of pressures of time and teachers had to practice the protocols as they went along. Teachers were asked to describe what they saw and what they heard with specific attention being paid to the problem of practice identified by the host teacher.

Teachers were asked to describe what they had seen or heard but not to try to interpret it. This proved to be very difficult for teachers to do because they had all been trained in and had experience of a strict accountability model that decided and prescribed exactly what teachers should be doing in the classroom. They were used to using, or being on the receiving end of, judgments made according to Ofsted criteria. As a result, teachers said they suffered from anxiety and stress from being formally observed. For instance, Mary commented during her initial interview on her anxiety around formal observations:

When I came here I had a bad experience – I got satisfactory. I was devastated and it went downhill from there. I get very worried (before observations) and am hard on myself. I sit up all night planning and sometime it still does not go well and I blame myself. (TA2, interview, L20 -23)

Theresa was very clear about the effect formal observations had throughout the Rounds process and she summed these feelings up during the final focus group meeting:

.. before we started this process, I had huge baggage that I have tried to hide. I am horrifically fearful of people coming into my classroom watching me because of previous experiences I just can't shake. And as much as this (TR) has been great and it has lifted my confidence it has made me appear more and a bit more relaxed when I am being observed. I think the real ...destructive damage I will never get over. (TA5, Final Focus Group discussion, 24.6.2016, L161 - 168)

They viewed the feedback they received as negative and unhelpful and they were very clear about the impact on their confidence as teachers. Furthermore, teachers pointed out that the formal accountability and performance observations did not help them to improve their practice. Christine made the point during her interview:

From my own personal experience, I'd say formal observation has minimal impact on improving teaching. (TB1, Interview, 28.4.2016, L231-232)

This point is illustrated throughout the data – in interviews, in post-Round discussions, and in the final focus group meetings. When feeding back to

colleagues, teachers appeared to make a real attempt to be positive and supportive, thus they frequently used positive evaluative comments such as “I liked”, “it was brilliant”, “it was amazing”. Despite my best efforts as facilitator it proved impossible to eliminate these comments in any of the schools. Even though teachers understood this was not part of the Teacher Rounds protocol they felt it was important to demonstrate their support for each other. Teachers were far more successful in avoiding making negative comments when feeding back to colleagues but the following remark was made in the second cycle of Rounds when Aoife commented:

..you asked so many questions it's brilliant, but sometimes you answered them yourself. (TB5, Round 7, 12.5.2016, L502-503)

She started with a positive but then makes a comment that could be seen as negative. However, this actually caused the host teacher to laugh and admit she did indeed answer her own questions. This illustrates that teachers were able to be critical but were able to word comments in such a way that they would be received positively.

5.2.2 They identified their problem of practice

An important aspect of the Teaching Round process is for host teachers to produce a Round sheet and to identify their problem of practice that would guide the Round participants during the Round observation. This process requires a great deal of personal reflection from the teacher. The Round sheet includes the context of the lesson in terms of information about students and about the topic content or skills they were studying. It also includes the specific problem or problems of practice, which usually took the form of specific questions that the host teachers wanted the group to focus on. Increasingly, after the first two or three Rounds, the Round sheet identified individual students that the host teacher wanted the group to focus on.

Del Prete (2013, p.106) describes three levels of Teacher Round Inquiry as:

- Beginning – is about articulating general concerns.
- Developing – is about turning learning goals and practice into questions.
- Deepening - inquiring into learning, curriculum, equity, and practice.

During my research most of the problems of practice were at beginning level and developing levels. There were elements of deepening inquiries in some of the Round sheets but it takes time and practice and a sophisticated understanding of the Teacher Rounds process to get to this level. An example of a Round sheet can be seen in the Appendices (Appendix 6).

Teachers quickly realised that Teacher Rounds was an opportunity to “bring more eyes and ears” to the classroom (Del Prete 2010, p.51) and really focus in on identifying barriers to children’s learning as identified by the host teacher through their Round sheet and problem of practice. In St Martha’s School the problems of practice identified by Mary in the first Round is very similar (almost identical) to that she produced for the second Round. She asked:

Which children are not engaging with the direct teaching? Which children are off task at any point during the lesson? Have any children lost their focus because of other distractions in the classroom? Can children follow instructions without adult support? Do children understand the given task?
(TA2, Round Sheet, Round 3, 26.2.2016)

These questions could very possibly be answered in one-word answers and so could be classed as “beginning”. However, the problem of practice included in Mary’s second Round sheet is identical except for the last question:

Are children working effectively in mixed ability groups or is the range of abilities affecting the results of the activities? (TA2, Round Sheet, Round 8, 10.6.2016)

Evaluative words, such as effective, were used constantly by participants in all three schools, and we discussed what this might mean and what it looked like, how it could be evidenced? How could they evidence if something was effective? I therefore attempted to get teachers to be more explicit in their use of such language.

Mary's identified problems of practice for two Rounds appeared to be very similar even though the first Round was a literacy lesson and the second Round was a numeracy lesson. Her second Round was quite a risky lesson in that it involved children moving from table to table participating in a range of activities, and participating teachers were given very specific instructions about where we should place ourselves (one teacher at each table). Her Round sheets set out the specific context for each lesson and she identified particular children she wanted us to watch. When it came to setting out the problem of practice the questions asked were almost identical. I assumed this was because her pupils were the same as in the first Round and therefore, presented the same barriers to their learning.

However, in the second Round Mary wanted us to look particularly at the groupings of pupils and the effect this might be having on the learning. This was the eighth Round in this particular school as all participants took turns to host Rounds and all were given the opportunity to host two Rounds in the course of the study. When it came to each teacher's second Round they were far more familiar with the protocols and were clearer about what a Round sheet and problem of practice should look like. This was Mary's second opportunity to host and produce the Round sheet so one might have expected a more detailed developing problem of practice at this point. It could be that Mary was not particularly self-reflective or was uncomfortable with the Round process. However, Mary did contribute quite significantly to the post-Round discussions and she reflected carefully on what she saw and heard and she appeared to be at ease with the process. Identifying the problem of practice requires deep

reflection and time. The time element was significant throughout the Round process.

Theresa was the second teacher in her school to host a Round and she was therefore uncertain about what the problem of practice should look like. Nonetheless, she identified the following in her first Round:

Why do the identified children have difficulties in understanding and starting tasks without a fuss? What is happening during direct teaching time? Is the language and teaching unclear? (TA5, Round Sheet, Round 2, 12.2.2016)

In her second Round with the same class but teaching a different subject (Science) Theresa identified a more detailed problem of practice:

How do the children apply their prior knowledge to the new context? Have they used their scientific vocabulary correctly? Who are the leaders and the passengers in group work? Do they enjoy this style of learning by pre-testing to become familiar with the equipment? (TA5, Round Sheet, Round 8, 20.6.2016)

In this case, Theresa has two very different problems of practice and subsequent questions for the Round participants. In the first Round, Theresa was teaching a geography topic, which she admits was not her strongest subject and the second was a science topic, which was her area of expertise. Lesson plans were (due to the new curriculum) more structured than those in the early years where Mary was teaching. This may explain the differences. In addition, by this time she had participated in five Rounds where her colleagues hosted the Rounds so she was clearer about what was expected.

In Boathouse and Kings Castle School, both secondary schools, the problems of practice were more varied because in most cases the classes were different and teachers were teaching within their own specialism. Sonia produced the first Round sheet for the Kings Castle Rounds group. She told me she struggled with deciding on what to focus on and what to include, so on my advice she kept it simple. In the end she decided on one question shown below:

Are the more able and less able students given more opportunities to progress? (TC1, Round Sheet, Round 1, 1.3.2016)

Her second Round Sheet is similar to her first

1. Are the stretch students being challenged? If so what strategies are working and what could I develop?
2. Are all students on task and motivated or am I missing the silent few?
(TC1, Round 8, 13.10.2016)

Both problems of practice are very similar despite the fact that it was a different class from the one she taught in her first Round observation. Sonia continued to focus on more able students, which also happened to be a priority for the school. It might have been that Sonia did not give herself enough time to reflect and think about the problem of practice or it could be that she genuinely felt that the whole school priority reflected her own concerns. Asking the group to identify which students were 'on task' led to discussions about what this meant and pointed to the need for us to be more explicit in our language.

Adam produced a far more detailed Round sheet for his first Round. He refers to the quiet pupils (a group of Muslim girls, all wearing hijabs) and he admits he does not always know their names. He obviously feels guilty about this and the subject comes up in the post-Round meeting and in the final focus group session. The problem of practice is made up of five questions, which would indicate it was a developing or even deepening problem of practice particularly because it "inquires into learning, curriculum, equity, and practice" Del Prete (2013, p.106). Question 2 on Adam's list was:

To what extent am I interacting with/ focusing on the learning of quiet students in the class in order to support their progress?
(TC2, Round Sheet, Round 2, 17.3.2016)

Adam's feelings of guilt about not knowing these particular students' names is explored further on in this chapter.

5.2.3 *They asked questions (wonderings)*

Teachers rarely get the opportunity to talk about teaching and learning other than in the context of performance and accountability or around whole school drives for consistency of practice or an introduction to a new teaching programme. In any event, the topic for discussion is usually organized by the senior team in the school, subsequently teachers have little investment in the discussion (Danielson, 2009, City et al. 2009). The Round process gave teachers the opportunity to talk openly to each other about teaching. It also allowed them to ask questions rather than just accept the status quo. There was no pressure or coercion to be involved in Teacher Rounds and this fact encouraged open discussion.

One of the surprising revelations to come out of the Teacher Rounds research was voiced by Carol during the final focus group meeting:

... there is no one practice to teach in as it's very fluid and actually that is the one thing that does grate me a little bit about formal observations is you are relying on that one person's thinking about teaching and learning the same way that you do. If their philosophy is different it doesn't matter what you think or teach because you have not met their ideology. (TB3, Focus Group Meeting, 23.6.2016, L33-37)

Carol points to the observer's philosophy and ideology and how this influences the feedback they receive. The observer is usually a senior manager and this is an issue that frequently arose during interviews, in the post-Round discussion and in the final focus group meetings.

At the end of the Rounds research, during the final focus group meeting in Boathouse School, Christine, who was the senior leader with responsibility for Professional Development across the school, remarked on one of the problems facing schools:

How you get teachers talking about teaching and this (Teacher Rounds) is a process that allows that to happen. (TB1, Focus Group meeting, 23.6.2016, L190 -191)

She had already alluded to this issue during her initial interview as the extract below shows:

I think getting teachers talking about teaching and learning is actually a bigger challenge, because I think it comes down through the leadership.

(TB1, Interview. 28.4.2016, L258 – 259)

The post-Round discussions, which make up the bulk of evidence in this thesis provide evidence of teachers really talking about teaching and learning in a very structured way but in a very safe environment.

Following the Teacher Round, during the post-Round discussion, teachers fed back on what they saw and heard and to a certain extent on what they felt (in terms of ethos and atmosphere). However, as part of the post-Round protocol teachers are asked if they have any wonderings or a what if? This was where colleagues could query things they had seen and wonder what might have happened if the host teacher had done something differently. This was the opportunity to ask searching questions to help clarify what they had seen or heard or things they did not understand.

The wonderings or questions are not supposed, according to the Teacher Round protocol, to be about offering solutions or giving examples of the way they might do something. However, in the case below Fiona cannot help herself and she suggests the teacher might have paired students differently. She asked a question in the form of a wondering but just in case the teacher might see this as a criticism and be offended, she softens the question with a compliment:

I wonder if there is any way, the way that the SEN students are grouped, I wonder if there is any way the more able students may be with middle of the road students as a group, to encourage the same level of, even though they were making progress, to encourage the same level of progress across the grouping here worked marvelously.

Fiona continued her wonderings and questions:

Is there anyway of stretching the more able more through perhaps separate grouping of them or maybe grouping them with more middle of the road student who they can then teach effectively, but in a way that stretches them?

(TC3, Round 2, 17.3.2016, L224 – 233).

The possible solutions were provided when Fiona started to justify why she is asking the question. Whilst this was not part of the Rounds protocol the suggested solutions were well received by the host teacher because they were posed as a question rather than a definitive solution. Some examples of wonderings and question are shown below.

Table 4 – Some examples of wonderings

I wondered how you could make the students value each other's opinions and ask each other's opinions as much as they do yours, so that yours would be I guess, the ideal world. (TC4, Round 2, 17.3.2016, L249 – 251)
So I wonder if next time they get into that evaluative stage earlier is worthwhile? (TC4, Round 4, 19.4.2016, L236 – 244)
Does Carla often work on her own? She's very diligent, I think she's going to be very creative, but again does she always work in isolation? And what would happen to Isla or Lorna ... or if Suzy were off school (they depended on each other throughout the lesson. (TA5, Round 4, 15.4.2017, L464-468)
I wonder what would have happen if the TA left Robert and Raja during the main teaching, which was quite a lot of the lesson – just left them to discuss it on their own? (TA4, Round 2, 12.2.2017, L173 – 175)

During the final focus group meeting, Zoe said that the Teachers Round process is about being more open to feedback because “nobody is criticizing you” (TA4, Focus Group, 23.6.2016, L83). Instead she said colleagues are trying to support you. When asked how she viewed the process of being asked to identify wonderings during the post Round discussions she argued:

And any of the wonderings are just wonderings they are not you know, criticizing you as a person and I think it really is more about the practice and your problem area that you have identified. (TA4, Focus Group, 23.6.2016, L84 – 85)

5.2.4 *They noticed more*

When teachers first started participating in Teacher Rounds they had a lot to learn in terms of developing observation skills, noticing more and learning a new language for talking about teaching and learning. They had to learn to describe rather than interpret what they were seeing and hearing. They were gathering evidence about what was happening in the classroom. They were in the classroom for the whole lesson and they took notes as they went along. They were able to focus in on the minutiae of the classroom and thus were able to notice things that would go unnoticed during a formal observation by one person. They were also guided by the host teacher's problem of practice.

All of the quotations included in this chapter indicate how much teachers noticed when they participated in Teacher Rounds. The following is a transcript of Adam's feedback to Cassie's English lesson, which was the second Round she hosted. I use it to illustrate the detail that Adam notices and comments on. First of all, he comments on the music that was playing at the start of the lesson:

I noticed how effective the music was for me as well as for them. OK? I think that is something I very often do during period 1 to wake them up is put the radio on so I thought that was brilliant. It was perfect music and it makes such a difference to the start of the lesson. (TB2, Round 7, 3.10.2016, L6 – 10)

Next he notices the fact that pupils were all reading (a starter activity) and he names a number of pupils who were reading well:

I noticed that the vast majority of the kids are readers and are reading. A lot of them. You know Su was very clearly reading, OK and she was really enjoying the book she was reading. Ka was very clearly reading and Ab was reading – these are not just kids staring at a page. Ar came in and umed and ahed a bit and then he was generally reading. All four girls in headscarves were very clearly reading their books. (TB2, Round 7, 3.10.2016, L11 – 17)

Adam knew the class and individual pupils very well and here he particularly notices the four girls in “headscarves” because this is a group of pupils he believes (mentioned in his problem of practice) he does not pay enough attention to in his own classes and admits to not knowing their names. He openly admits he feels guilty about this and it is frequently mentioned.

Adam continued with his feedback describing and noticing which pupils are concentrating on their reading and then he went on to make some very evaluative positive statements about what was happening in the lesson:

I don't know much about English GCSE but I would not have come in as a casual observer and as a teacher and said those kids were C/D borderline kids. The level of conversation and the level of specialist vocabulary they were using and their ability, immediately led me to know, what you are looking for in a paragraph, which is what the examiner is looking for in a paragraph. It showed me you know for me, demonstrated how outstanding progress over time can be made, without being, knowing they could do that. (TB2, Round 7, 3.10.2016, L22 – 29)

He then went on to heap praise on Cassie's lesson:

I felt that your lesson was, you do see them more than I do in RE, but I felt that your lesson was exceptionally intricate in a very subtle way. And I think that was very impressive, em in their learning not just to give you flat praise, I thought that it was very intricate, just from down to ...
(TB2, Round 7, 3.10.2016, L30 – 34)

He then went on to talk about one particular pupil and the fact that he is not achieving well:

So you have a Year 11 class here with a kid in it who practically has just got expelled for beating up someone and kicking ten rounds of shit out of someone at TESCO (*don't include that in the feedback... he laughs..!*) who is given a spontaneous round of applause, to a kid who is achieving. So I think your ability to encapsulate that celebration of success amongst that level of inner city kid is very impressive. (TB2, Round 7, 3.10.2016, L39 – 45)

Adam continued to mention other aspects of the lesson he had noticed and the things he will take away or “nick” from the lesson:

..as I mentioned before fluid use of the wall prompts which you used constantly, the positive atmosphere was purpose and pleasant but also I noticed that you know, it's very focused on ultimately what you want to achieve which is you know to do that. They can hold up what chapter things are in, I so I am not just going to heap the praise – you know those things that you used were very..... things I would want to learn, to nick like... (TB2, Round 7, 3.10.2016, L45 – 50)

When asked if he had any questions or wonderings Adam found it difficult to come up with anything but he did make many positive evaluative comments about all he had observed. Although positive evaluative comments are not part of the Round protocol but it was impossible to eradicate them from our discussions, therefore, I let them go. Adam's positive feedback led him into something he noticed about the pupils' behavior and subsequent observations about Ofsted and he finished with a compliment for the host teacher:

... and they were quite excited about doing and it lead to a bit of rowdiness, but I think that that's good a bit of rowdiness, and I think that that is you know.... You don't know human beings goes off and does what Ofsted expects kids to do... when we are told to do something in staff meetings and go off into a group we have a little two minute chat first, but yet Ofsted never want to see that apparently... like it's not real. What you do is you, I will take away and I will learn that you manage the balance between being human, having high expectations and pushing them but also never forgetting the focus of the GCSE.

Here, Adam suggests that Ofsted interpret what they see and hear in a very clinical way without any of the emotion that is tied up with teaching and learning. His comments suggest that Cassie does not organize her classroom or her teaching according to what Ofsted want but rather what the pupils need.

Another issue that was noticed in two of the schools was around children being observed as being “off-task” during the lesson. Teachers explained

that during a formal observation any child seen to be disengaged or off task would be seen as a negative and could lead to the lesson being judged as inadequate. Carol reflected on this and was surprised by her own conclusion. She noticed pupils “zoning out” but she preempts any suggestion that the teacher had done anything wrong before she clarifies her point as the extract below illustrates:

I was watching two students and this is not a wrong thing they did, it was just my own thinking was triggered, they were working solidly throughout and then towards the end one of them started twiddling with the glue stick lid and zoned out but two minutes later they were back on task. (TB3, Round 1, 10.3.2016, L197-200)

Carol went on to tell the group what she learned from this particular observation:

I learned that in a lesson observation if I was an observer from history, from doing observations in the past I would pick up on that and think they are off task. (TB3, Round 1, 10.3.2016, L200-202)

Furthermore, Carol explained:

Actually it's a human nature thing because even in the lesson there are moments when you sort of dip as a human as you cannot focus for that long. I have learned on reflection there that students do need an opportunity to dip and relax for a second and then we trigger them back on again. I think putting that into an observation mind-set I would not look at that as an off task thing.

(TB3, Round 1, 10.3.2016, L202-207)

Carol's learning means that she will approach formal observations in a different way and will now view students being “off task” differently.

Christine concurred with this thought and remarked:

I said to David this morning that observing is hard, and today really did add to that... What we were looking at today – are students thinking hard or are they panicking? There was no evidence of panic.. so it's actually being aware of what we are looking at.. (TB1, Round 1, 10.3.2016, 211 – 214)

Christine's comment illustrates just how difficult formal observation can be and how interpretations made (especially by those carrying out formal observations) are often inaccurate.

Throughout the post-Round discussions, teachers talked about pupils' concentration and their engagement and they struggled to find ways to be more explicit in their language. Both words are used frequently in feedback and in most debates on teaching and learning. During Teacher Rounds teachers had the opportunity to notice the detail of what was happening in the classroom and with individual pupils and got better at unpacking what exactly pupils were doing. Rounds bring many eyes and ears (Del Prete 2013, City et al. 2009) to the classroom and therefore discussions can be more meaningful. It no longer just becomes one person's opinion but looks at a range of evidence collected by colleagues to try to make sense of what is happening.

5.2.5 They used non-judgmental language

Teacher Round participants had to unlearn much of the language of formal lesson observations, which are carried out as part of the accountability and performance management structures in their schools. This language was based around Ofsted Grade descriptors, which are no longer used during inspections but the terminology still lingers. For instances phrases such as *"Teachers demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use questioning highly effectively and demonstrate understanding of the ways pupils think about subject content. They identify pupils' common misconceptions and act to ensure they are corrected"* (Ofsted School Inspection Handbook 2015, p.53) are only a few of the phrases that appeared in the Ofsted documentation. Leaving this language behind was something some of the participating teachers struggled with and they often slipped back and used Ofsted jargon. However, this got better at as they went through a series of Rounds and post-Round discussions.

Letting go of the formal Ofsted jargon, previously used to talk about teaching and learning was easier for some of the teachers because it meant they were not expected to make judgments on different aspects of the lesson. Cassie raised this issue during the final focus group meeting:

I found it easy to let go of that language because you had given us a lot of prep on the importance of doing that and because we were so evidenced focused and we were writing down what we saw and heard. Not a commentary on what we saw, so that was easy to let go of. (TC4, Focus Group, 18.11.2016, L94-97)

During discussions teachers felt able to say what they thought and felt without considering the possible implications or consequences of such language (as they would need to do in a formal feedback session) as the extract below illustrates:

..... what I liked so much about your lesson, is it was so like easy to make a balls up of it! (TB6, Round 10, 9.6.2016, L36-37)

Here Gill compliments her colleague for planning and teaching a potentially risky lesson and she uses informal and humorous language to make her point. The fact that lessons are not being graded or judged had a profound effect on the conversations following each Round. These discussions were less guarded and open as many of the quotations provided in this chapter illustrate. Sonia comments on this point during the final focus group meeting:

I think part of the reason it (Teacher Rounds) has worked so well for me, although we have a language we are using, it does not seem as regimented as doing observations in a different context. You know comparing what you see in front of you to a set of standards...
(TC1, Focus Group Meeting, 18.11.2016, L57 – 60)

Interestingly, Teacher Standards were not mentioned or discussed at any point in the post-Round discussions of indeed in any of the data collected. I am not sure why this was but it would appear that teachers only look at the Teacher Standards when they are preparing for Performance Management reviews and are set targets around these.

On many occasions teachers were trying to describe emotions they felt when in the classroom. For instance, in the following two extracts teachers describe the fear they sensed (rather than saw or heard) in the classroom. Gill comments on something she sensed during David's first Round.

I thought there was a lot of fear in the room. I thought there was a lot of fear of getting things wrong. (TB6, post-Round 3, 14.3.2016, L425 -428)

A similar comment about a feeling was made by Carol during a post Round discussion. It refers to the second Round hosted by David:

... it felt to me like they are afraid to talk – each time you asked a question it got quieter and quieter. (TB3, Round 9, 9.6.2016, L19-21)

Interpretation and evaluation are not part of the Round process or protocol but as mentioned previously it was impossible to stop teachers making positive comments about what they saw and heard during Rounds. Making positive evaluative comments such as “I like” occurred almost exclusively during the post Round discussions. For example, Carol remarked:

.... I liked where you said ‘You are talking to a mirror’ so it was encouraging her to continue talking it through. (TB3, post-Round 6, 28.3.2016, L200-202)

Another phrase that is repeated often is “It’s interesting”. Teachers used this expression to try to avoid making interpretive or judgmental comments. Ellie used “interesting” in the extract below instead of saying I really liked or something similar:

I did not know that you incorporate science, maths and yeah, health into it, like your maths - air resistance could be ... you know showing them like obviously like swimmers, that’s why wear tight tops and not baggy ones. Even the way they have their hands etc, so I found that extremely interesting.
(TB2, Round 4, 14.3.2016, L405-410)

This lack of judgment and informal use of language when talking about teaching and learning allowed teachers to relax and speak to each other without fear.

5.2.6 They identified connections to the context in terms of whole school issues

Every school had their own priorities and teachers had been told what these were by the senior team. However, they told me they had not internalized these until their experience in Teacher Rounds pointed to them as very real issues across the school.

Stretch and challenge was a whole school priority in Kings Castle School and this is reflected in many of the quotations taken from post Round discussions, included in this chapter. It was also raised by many of the teachers in their Round sheet and identified as their problem of practice. Cassie made another observation during the post-Round discussion for Round 6, which she saw as something that was emerging as a whole school issue and not just specific to the Round lesson she had been in. The issue she raised was about the way pupils use Google and Wikipedia to get their facts for research homework. She was worried that pupils don't question the facts but just accept them as true and accurate. She suggested that this issue needs to be addressed as a whole school issue rather than being the responsibility of one teacher. She commented:

Although I (don't) think these are specific to your lesson maybe there is something whole school we need to look at. A lot of the students seem to have got their facts off Google and Wikipedia or whatever.

(TC4, Round 6, 3.10.2016, L60-62)

She went on to justify her remarks and to ask further questions about what she saw happening and she wondered how this could be tackled as a whole school issue.

In Boathouse School the issue of oracy emerged as a problem across the school. In the focus group meeting at the end of the project Gill remarked.

As a whole school we are told this is something we need to work on academically, we need to work on this, we need to work on that if you have other staff going into classrooms and I think things have come up like group work, oracy and questioning you are

going to get staff on board with school improvement because they can see it and they go into lessons and you can say actually there is a problem and can work on questioning as a team! Rather than you are not any good and you need to work on this... I think in work we don't work in isolation we work together that's my point!
(TB6, Focus Group, 23.6.2016, L253 – 260)

This issue was discussed during many post-Round discussions and the group made recommendations to the head teacher and senior team about ways this might be addressed as a whole school. All three groups wanted to share the learning around whole school issues that they had uncovered during Rounds. They agreed what needed to be passed on and what would be useful to other colleagues and to the school as a whole.

The reluctance of pupils to speak up was constantly discussed during post Round discussions at Boathouse School and this resulted in further discussions about the merits of having children put their hands up or whether the teacher should pick pupils to question. Christine articulated this concern during her feedback and wonderings and she wonders if:

I thought maybe no hands, maybe a bit more random selection you know in that way. (TB1, Round 7, 12.5.2016, L575 – 578)

As we worked through two cycles of Rounds in Boathouse School teachers began to notice more about the way pupils were or were not speaking out in class and they felt this was a barrier to their learning. At various points teachers noticed the way some of their colleagues managed this issue and they shared their practice. Ellie was the person who coined the term “loud and proud” in the first Round she hosted (Round 5) and this was discussed and subsequently adopted by other teachers in the group.

During the focus group meeting Christine points to oracy as something that needed to be discussed as a whole school:

Definitely the girls and the way they speak that is something that I need to take down, not just academic literacy but how they deliver

oracy, whatever we call it but that's something. (TB1, Focus Group, 23.6.2016, L206-208)

In St Martha's teachers realized that they did not have any knowledge or experience of what was happening in other parts of the school, particularly in the different phases of their primary school. However, they felt that now that they have seen and heard for themselves what the curriculum is, and what the teaching strategies employed across the school look like they felt that they could start to 'drop in' different things earlier on and so give pupils time to get to grips with new concepts and ideas. The main example of this is they noticed that children in reception and in early years were very independent but as they got older they lost this independence as teachers tended to spoon-feed them in the bid to prepare them for SATs (Round 2, Round 6, Round 8, Round 10). Theresa put this point very clearly and her thoughts were echoed by the Sandra in the same post-Round discussion.

There is a lot to learn from working with these children – they were really independent. One of them said “what can I use to help me “? and you said 100 square. Making them think I can do this is very empowering for them...you give them all this independence. I notice all this independence around the school and then when they get to Year 5 and 6 suddenly the are asking “am I allowed to turn the page?” (TA5, Round 6, 6.5.2016, L38-43)

This was an issue that the Rounds group felt was very important and they wanted to raise it with other staff in the school so they could all make sure they avoided the trap that pressure to achieve high results sometimes forces them into.

It became clear as we implemented Rounds in all three schools that whilst teachers are focused on improving their own classroom practice they are also team players and are concerned about the whole school performance. They were anxious to share what they noticed and what they learned with their colleagues.

5.3 They developed strong relationships and trust in each

other

Developing trust and relationships within the group was key to opening up conversations and discussions. The structure and protocols of Teacher Rounds, together with the informal language used to describe what teachers saw and heard during a Round and subsequent discussion, ensured that teachers felt able to say what they thought and felt in an environment where trust was established and where there were good supportive relationships. Gill explains this during the final focus meeting as the extract below illustrates:

.... you have six people coming in and they are all saying specific things to you. It's more like a 360 degrees feedback, like a critical friend feedback. It's kind of like you are getting a far broader picture than just one person to see you.
(TB6, Focus Group Meeting, 23.1.2016, L282 -285)

She concluded her reflections on the subject saying the Teacher Round feedback is like a:

.... a mutual therapy session. (TB6, Focus Group Meeting, 23.6.2016, L300)

During all stages of data collection in all three schools the issue of trust and building relationships with colleagues came up frequently, particularly in relation to formal observations and the contract agreed as part of the Teacher Round process. Good relationships and trust amongst the group meant that teachers could say some difficult things to each other. As an example, Ellie obviously worried about her feedback to David after Round 9, which she thought might have been a bit harsh. A short extract is shown below:

I wonder if praise might help them a bit? I also wonder about the interactive board, what do I say about that... I think maybe, you know the way you went over a bit showing two little points I had to keep reminding Fa two across means positive, going down means negative.. would it be good to have it there in case they got confused? (TB2, Round 9, 9.6.2016, L180 – 184)

Ellie justified her wonderings by asking more questions and it was these searching questions and wonderings that showed Ellie had closely observed the finer details about what was happening in the classroom. Her feedback was frank and could be interpreted as critical but the positive relationships within the group meant that the host teacher heard what was said and responded well. However, during the focus group meeting Ellie was very emotional when talking about some of the feedback she got:

.... you do feel and you say 'oh god I should have done that or this', I feel like it's more of a disappointment – it's when the person who comes in to observe you is saying 'you should have done this' do you know what I mean? (*Laughs all round*) it's just like you feel more down in yourself, whereas you think yeah that's a good point or yeah I should have picked that up, when it comes from the Rounds Group. Then it feels like there was, I don't know if you picked up on this or if you thought I was being harsh... (TB2, Focus Group, 23.6.2016, L286 – 292)

Ellie continued to struggle with her own feelings as she justified what she said:

I loved every ones honesty and when we get praise ... one day with David, I was not cruel but I was like "he needs to know" - if you give a bit more praise it would encourage the girls and I felt we were such friends I couldn't do it but he just said 'Yeah let's do it!' it's like every ones criticism you just take it on the chin and improve whereas yeah I feels like there is more trust and you are saying it in a nice way – here you are why don't you do that? Instead of being told by higher powers you are just like.... (TB2, Focus Group, 23.6.2016, L292 – 298)

Ellie's comments indicated that it was the trust and good relationships amongst the Round group that encouraged teachers to take feedback to heart and to act upon it. It is difficult to say if other teachers felt inhibited in speaking quite as frankly as Ellie as I could only record what was said. However, there are many examples of similar conversations within all three groups, which suggests that trust was established and that participants felt safe to speak out.

There was no doubt that teachers participating in the Teacher Rounds process, quickly learned to develop different sorts of relationships and began to trust each other. Adam described the Teacher Rounds process as “a bonding experience”:

I found the process, without being cheesy, I found it a bonding experience as other people have mentioned. I found it very, as a quite long in the tooth teacher of 16 years, I found it quite a refreshing experience and I concur with what everyone else has said about the lack of judgment. We talk all the time about how kids learn from seeing and doing and yet we go into training sessions where we are told to do this, do that.... For me there is nothing that challenges you to reflect and change your own practice than by seeing someone else do it.

(TC2, Focus Group meeting, 18.11.2016, L135-141)

Cassie described a “circle of trust” that has built up and made her a lot more confident in terms of going back and being observed by her line manager:

It’s been a really eye opening experience for me and it’s just a completely different way of getting feedback and reflecting on my own teaching and it’s been a nice and nurturing way of doing it as well. There is that *circle of trust* that has built up and it has made me a lot more confident in terms of going back and being observed by my line manager.

(TC4, Focus Group meeting, 18.11.2016, L102-105)

When talking about the difference between the first cycle of Rounds with the second Round, Theresa commented:

The only thing that kind of went through my head about the process is that when we first did our first round of observations they were very different from our second go, I think that is worth recognizing in our practice is the first time we did it we were very tentative about what we showed to each other about ourselves. (TA5, Focus Group meeting, 23.6.2016, L354-357)

Theresa makes the point that building trust in each other takes time and individuals will get to that point in their own time, depending on their previous experience.

5.3.1 *They were responsive to feedback*

Throughout the individual interviews, during post-Round meetings and during the focus group meetings at the end of the project, it became clear that teachers viewed the feedback from formal observations as being ineffective in improving their teaching (Danielson, 2009). Teacher Rounds were different as the following extract makes clear:

... they were taking full active participation in the day and they were enjoying it. I observed a level of trust – I think as other people have said, the level of trust in you – you had said to them basically ‘you are running this lesson with me overseeing it and then bringing you back’ for what were in effect mini-plenaries. (TC2, Round 4, 19.4.2016, L124-127)

Adam’s description of what was happening is very detailed and he notices every detail about Fiona’s lesson. He mentions the trust pupils had in their teacher. He then went on to explain his comments and he makes distinctions about what was happening and tries to explain why it happened, whilst at the same time making very positive evaluative statements. The lesson involved pupils coaching each other as personal trainers (TC2, Round 4, 19.4.2016, L127-135). He referred his remarks back to the problem of practice identified by Fiona, the host teacher when she asked for this specific feedback. Fiona as host teacher responded:

the feedback was really useful – I am really enjoying this experience, I am getting loads out of it.. it’s fab. (TC3, Round 4, 19.4.2016, L282-294)

She then goes on to pick different aspects of the lesson apart as part of her own reflection. She fully accepts the feedback she has been given and then puts it together with her own reflections and she says what she will do differently next time.

The point about Teacher Rounds is that it is not only the host teacher who hears and owns the feedback but all teachers in the group listen and digest it and then reflect and decide if it is possible to apply it to their own practice. Teacher Rounds are a collaborative group activity and individual learning is shared with the group. Transcripts show that talking through what they have seen and heard during Rounds helps to develop

a greater understanding of what was happening. The group dynamics (Kurt Lewin, 1943, 1948, 1951) were very powerful amongst all three groups. Even though they were all volunteers and came together in a relatively unstructured way, they had agreed norms for working together and they all shared similar values about their roles as teachers. Del Prete (2013) makes it clear that all participants in the Rounds group are expected to be learners and this was the experience of participating teachers.

At the end of each Round the Rounds group were asked to say what they had learned and what they would take away and try in their own classrooms. Rita tells the group what she has learned and how she would act on what she had seen and heard and on the feedback from the group:

what I did really take away from this lesson was actually my favourite part was seeing them bossing each other around and loving the way they are able to instruct each other and be the mini teacher. So I am definitely going to try that and see how I can incorporate that in my lessons because there are times when I let them be the Director but I don't think I do it nearly enough. Because it's clearly working. (TC5, Round 4, 19.4.2016, L180 – 185)

Although this comment is about the pupils it illustrates what the teacher learned from the Round and from the post Round discussion. It also indicates what follow up action Rita will bring to her own classroom as a result of this learning.

Questioning was a topic that came up frequently during post-Round discussions. In Boathouse School, during Round 1 (our very first in the school) questions and questioning were mentioned twenty-three times. The following extracts from Round 1 where Gill, as host teacher, is asked how she found the experience of the Round and this is followed by conversation about questions and questioning in her lesson. Aoife commented on the questioning techniques used by the teacher:

You kept pressing them on different words. You did not just tell them what they meant but explored the meanings with them. (TB4, Round 1, 10.3.2016, L19-20)

Getting answers out of pupils rather than giving them the answers was a much-admired skill that was mentioned numerous times during post-Round discussions.

During her feedback Christine comments on the fact that a pupil put her hand up a number of times but was not picked to answer the question:

Ana was asked a question about 5 or 6 times and Za was asked 5 or 6 times – Su puts her hand up and she is not picked again – I almost wanted to run over but you did not notice it... (TB1, Round 1, 10.3.2016, L108 -111)

This was a vaguely critical comment and Christine expresses her own feelings about wanting to 'run over to the pupil' to comfort her after she had not been picked. I have included these particular quotations to illustrate the type of feedback Round participants gave each other. Although the discussion is about pupils, the feedback could be described as critical because this section is about trust and relationships.

This issue of pupils putting their hands up and not being picked was something that arose in many of the post-Round discussions in all three schools and was something that caused anxiety amongst the group participants. There was a great deal of reflection about this and teachers had various wonderings and 'what if's' such as what would happen if you introduced a 'no hands up' rule? Teachers were keen to resolve this issue and were prepared to discuss different approaches and ideas. The issue was not seen as being one teacher's problem but was something that was relevant to all of them. There was a collective responsibility for resolving it amongst the three groups. The power of strong relationships and trust between participants ensured that teachers could give critical feedback in the form of wonderings.

Christine continued her description of what she saw and points out there were another two girls who were very quiet and not speaking; eventually they put their hands up, but the teacher did not notice them or pick them. However, Christine justified this inaction by saying:

...there were two girls at these tables and I thought you would question them but you didn't! We forget or don't see these things because our minds are so full. (TB1, Round 1, 10.3.2016, L120 - 123)

Christine tries to soften the blow by saying it was something we all do. She normalizes the situation to make the teacher feel better. During Round 7, Aoife comments that she has realized that teachers do not know everything and can't see everything that happens in the lesson:

...as a teacher you literally don't know everything, cos you could be the one person in the whole class and you could see something like that happen. You might see it, that's the thing, you could be in a class but that could happen and you're just somewhere else and it's just hard to deal with 30 students in one area, and you can just be away from them. (TB5, Round 7, 12.6.2016, L526-529)

In this way Aoife attempted to normalize what she has seen in order to avoid hurting Gill's feelings and to make the teacher feel better. David makes a similar point and says you can't ask them all (pupils) a question every time (TB4, Round 7, 12.6.2016, L547-550).

Gill responded positively and honestly saying:

I did not realize that at all. I did not realise I did not ask her a question..
(TB6, Round 1, 10.3.2016, L123)

There was no attempt to justify her inaction and no defensiveness from the host teacher. She accepted what had been said. She took ownership of the feedback.

Ellie addresses the issue of giving pupils time to answer questions when she wonders:

I would have wondered if you had given her more time would she have given you an answer? (TB2, Round 1, 10.3.2016, L161-162)

Ellie suggested that Gill jumped in too quickly and did not leave pupils enough thinking time. The issue came up again in Round 7 which was Gill's second Round as host. David opened the discussion and he asked the host teacher if she left enough thinking time when asking questions and he also mentions pupils who were not chosen to answer questions:

So at one stage Sa put her hand up and she wasn't asked ... like (*inaudible*) was asked. And then the next time her hand only kind of seemed to go half up. And someone else was asked again. But ... so anyway after that ... she seems very quiet but she does seem to be listening...

(TB4, Round 7, 12.6.2016, L99-102)

Aoife comments on the same Round and the same topic:

you asked so many questions it's brilliant, but sometimes you answered them yourself ... if that makes sense. One of them was like 'It's a bit political isn't it?' – so you asked it, but you answered it yourself. So I wonder if you just gave that minute just for them to just kind of think about it themselves.

(TB5, Round 7, 12.6.2016, L500-504).

Teachers have deep anxiety about hurting each other and about saying difficult, critical things to each other. This is due to their previous negative experience, of formal observations and feedback. The result of this could as Timperley (2007) suggests result in "just talk". However, the strong relationships between the groups together with the Teacher Round protocols ensured that difficult conversations and discussions could be had.

When it comes to Rounds Toni argues that it's the feedback that counts as the following extract illustrates:

I think the observation is just the groundwork really. It's the feedback that is the most important bit of the observation because that is how you are interpreting what do I do next. (TA1, Focus Group Meeting, 23.6.2016, L280 – 282)

There is a wide range of research evidence about the positive impact of giving teachers feedback on their performance (e.g. Coe, 1998, 2002;

Hattie and Timperley, 2007; Hattie, 2009) and the thirty post-Round transcript discussions that make up this study illustrate the wealth of feedback provided for teachers from their peers following Round observations. Teachers involved in this research were scathing about the unhelpful nature of the feedback they received from their managers following formal observations. They resented being told what they were not doing as opposed to what they were doing and they felt that targets set following the observation were whole school targets rather than targets that were personal to them. However, they were very positive about feedback they received from their colleagues during the Rounds process. Ellie makes the distinction between feedback provided by senior leaders and that provided by her colleagues following Teacher Rounds:

.... it feels like when you do a formal observation you don't get any knowledge back except from what that person says. Even if they say do this you think how am I going to do it? What and how am I going to fix this problem you want me to fix, yet when we are doing this (TR) you have scope to learn loads of different things. It's real learning. It's learning for you.

(TB2, Focus Group Meeting. 23.6.2016, L354-358)

As the feedback during post-Round discussions comes from teachers who are doing the job day-by-day, teachers take it seriously. They assume that their peers know what they are talking about and their opinions are relevant. In addition, they all have had the opportunity to see each other teach. The process is transparent and it is equitable in that there are no experts, they are all learners. Reflecting together, by listening to the feedback to other teachers in the group and listening to feedback specifically aimed at them, as host teachers, aids that reflection process. Fiona explained how she felt when receiving feedback from her peers:

I still found them difficult even though they were my peers – but I know that because they were my peers and I had seen them teach I was more likely to listen to them when they gave me feedback. So much better than having just one person observing and feeding back because there were more ideas and because I knew their

ideas were based on their practice I found the feedback much more useful. (TC3, Focus group meeting, 18.11.2016, L228-232)

Teachers were very clear that feedback from formal performance observations did not help them to improve their practice mostly because they had never seen the observer teach and they had little respect for them as teachers. They became “passive” (Danielson, 2009, p.4) when receiving feedback and they did not take ownership of it.

The ‘wonderings’ towards the end of the post Round discussion enable teachers to ask questions and ‘what if’s” as a way of coming up with possible strategies and solutions to specific problems raised during the post-Round feedback. Many possible solutions identified as problems of practice were worded as wonderings as they were part of the Teacher Round protocols.

5.3.2 They developed empathetic understanding and adopted an appropriately sensitive register.

Receiving feedback is an emotional experience and participating teachers are very sensitive to each other’s feelings. Therefore, as described above, they found ways to take the sting out of a perceived criticism when feeding back to the host teacher.

One example was where David notices pupils putting their hands up and not being picked but he tries to excuse, or normalize it, as something that can’t be avoided. However, Ellie quite clearly disagrees with David, but before she does she apologizes but goes on to explain:

... I would disagree with what David said, no offence, I do feel that in a class because you are so good at questioning, that everyone should be allowed ... or be able to be asked one question in the lesson. I do, there are only 30 kids and you asked only a small number... (TB4, Round 7, 12.5.2016, L655-660)

Occasionally when teachers had made a comment that could be perceived as negative such “as lots of pupils had their hands up but you did not get to them” they counteracted or justified the comment saying:

..... but what can you do? You are only a one-man band!

(TB2, R10, 9.6.2017, L131-133)

This is another example of teachers making excuses or normalizing colleagues’ practice, even if they were somewhat critical of it. This positive approach was a direct consequence of the negative feedback teachers experience on a regular basis from their team leaders and senior staff and indeed from Ofsted. They expressed their views on this feedback and their response to it during interviews and during the final focus group meetings. Toni explains how important respect for the person giving feedback is:

I think it’s a lot to do with the trust and relationships we have built up because if we decided to say for example, personally I think when someone is giving me feedback and I don’t have respect for them, not as a teacher but just as a leader or anything. I find it really hard to take that feedback on board because I think where is this coming from? Is it because, it is coming from you know from the heart or is it coming from ... just because I have to tick a box to - giving you feedback. I sometimes feel it is about ticking that box to say I must give feedback so that’s it done! (TA1, Focus Group Meeting, 23.6.2016, L274 -280)

Gill made a similar comment about senior leaders observing lessons and about the fact that they make judgments:

I think that is what is troubling about lesson observations you have someone who is ‘higher up’ in the chain than you who you have not seen teach who might be a bit scary or make a judgment or make a judgment about you so I think what has been really nice about this is that you form a relationship with someone who you have seen in the classroom you take into account what they have to say because their bread and butter is really great.

(TB6, Final Focus Group Meeting, 23.6.2016, L241 – 246)

Constant negative feedback from the “higher ups” severely dented and damaged the confidence of participants in their own ability as teachers.

The positive response during post-Round discussions was therefore typical of the relationships and support mechanisms within all the Round groups. In all three schools, teachers were very supportive of each other throughout the Rounds process. However, they did not heap false praise on each other or shy away from asking difficult, sometimes critical questions and posing thoughtful wonderings. Mostly, but not always, they managed not to offer advice or say why not try it this way? This was important because this is what happens after formal observations, where the more senior teachers tell teachers to try doing it this way or that way. Teachers clearly said they don't listen or take ownership of such feedback because they can't mimic other teachers. They were agreed that they had to find their own way of doing things. They needed to decide what worked best for them as teachers and what worked best for their pupils.

5.3.3 They confessed their weaknesses and doubts

When he identified his problem of practice for the first Round he would host, Adam pointed to the fact that he does not always remember the names of the quiet Muslim girls who wore hijabs. His comments indicated that he felt very guilty about this. He returns to this subject during the final focus group meeting:

I have found it particularly refreshing to be able to say honestly, actually I don't know the names of all these kids especially the girls with hijabs, which I would never say in any other observation and for me that's been a real revelation.

(TC2, Focus Group, 18.11.2016, L208-211)

This was a particularly shocking confession in a multi-cultural school, and from a very experienced teacher. Adam was clearly suffering from guilt for not knowing the names of these quiet girls who just got on with their work. The fact that he was able to make such a disclosure to his colleagues in the Rounds group points to the trust he had in them and to the strong relationships they had developed. This admission was important and was positive because Adam had been carrying the guilt for

some time and sharing his perceived failings helped him confront the issue and to talk about it with his colleagues.

Sharing doubts and confessing and sharing weaknesses was a strength of the Teacher Round process because it was only by admitting to these faults that the teacher could truly address the problems with the support of their colleagues.

The other teachers in the group were not surprised by Adam's confession and made appropriate responses to comfort him and to say that this was often the case in their classrooms. Indeed, this was probably the case, but once again the teachers tried to normalize the confession in order to support the teacher. They did this to reassure Adam that this was normal and he had nothing to feel guilty about. In this case, the group felt this issue was understandable because this particular teacher taught almost every child in the school for one hour (actually fifty minutes) a week and could not be expected to know everybody's name. However, they acknowledged his anxiety and his guilt about it. His colleague Fiona reassured Adam at the post-Round discussion that he did have good engagement with all the children in his class. She said:

The way you discuss and speak to them is really clear and all the students and all the girls with headscarves were fully engaged especially Za. She was talking and debating and justifying and everything and that was fantastic.

(TC3, Round 2, 17.3.2017, 117 – 119)

The fact that Adam had recognized the problem and had admitted this to himself and to his colleagues meant that he had been reflecting and had already developed various strategies to address the issue. Simply finding time for reflection through the Rounds process helped Adam to resolve this worrying practice in his classroom.

Another personal admission that emerged was around a particularly difficult to manage special needs students. Ellie talks about meeting the needs of special needs pupils and says that other pupils are losing out.

Her language talking about the topic tends to be negative. She put it bluntly:

... you can't avoid the TA's of the world being in our classes and you try to give them different worksheets so they would know what to do. Sometimes you spend more time with her than others and the class were waiting for you – I really think for those kind of students, there should be additional support. But in the end it's all down to politics and money. But I do feel because other kids are losing out – it's really hard to get a balance.

(TB2, Round 10, 9.6.2017, L146-151).

As a very inexperienced teacher Ellie has quite a negative view of special needs pupils. This is because, as she admits, she does not know how to meet their needs in the classroom and could do with some specific training and support. In an earlier Round she confessed:

I was with U because I sometimes like ignore her because I don't know how to deal with her, cos it is really hard, she ignores me, I don't know how to cope with her, I don't know what to give her ... while you're just brilliant with her Carol, like you just ... you're with her every like step of the way, you have the sheets printed out, it's just ... it's really helpful to see someone (*inaudible 25:16*)

(TB2, post-Round 4, 14.3.2016, L500-502)

It was important for Ellie to make this disclosure because it helped her to focus on a specific barrier experienced by a particular pupil and to look at what other teachers were doing to include her in their lessons. It is probable, that in a formal feedback she would not make this confession, because she did not want to be seen as struggling and therefore, an assumption might be made that she was planning to include this pupil and that she knew a number of strategies to employ. Ellie had problems asking for help from her line manager, and would never have admitted that she had had no experience in meeting the needs of pupils like U. She would have kept her head down and hoped nobody would notice. During the post-Round discussion she felt comfortable enough to admit she was at a loss. It is important for teachers to have safe spaces to talk about their lack of experience or training for managing pupils with different needs as this is the only way they will learn and improve. It is only by exposing our weaknesses and our areas for development that we

can go on to learn and develop as teachers. Cassie points out the importance of coming to Teacher Rounds as equals so that participants can learn from each other and not be judged:

...that's a real benefit of Teacher Rounds – it's not about judging and we are coming at it as equals. I wonder... the context in which we have been doing this is that we are all fairly confident in our teaching, none of us are training, we are all at a certain level and that's worked brilliantly because you feel like you are learning from other people so there is a lot to learn from them and perhaps they have strengths and weaknesses that are different to yours but I think that has been coming at this from a pretty equal starting point.

(TC4, Focus Group Meeting, 18.11.2016, L83 – 89)

In Round 10, in the same school, this particular pupil was mentioned sixteen times during this post-Round discussion as teachers reflected and tried to make sense of what was happening with her and how the teacher managed her often difficult behaviour during the lesson. Opening the discussion on a pupil that obviously caused great concern amongst the group was useful as Ellie was able to see how her more experienced colleagues managed her behaviour and she was reassured that she was not the only teacher experiencing difficulties trying to include her. The problem was shared and discussed because Ellie was brave enough to admit she could not manage her in her classroom. This is the key strength of Teacher Rounds. They enable and encourage teachers to share their innermost fears and worries and so create a supportive discussion forum.

Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs caused some anxiety amongst individual members of the Rounds groups in two schools – particularly when they felt teachers were not meeting their needs in the classroom. Again, Ellie admits she often ignores pupils with EAL needs because she does not know how to help them:

I realized at the end when you had the two EAL girls and input the different words (inaudible) which was really, really nice of them, cos usually when I teach EALs I usually kind of just ignore them a little bit, which is really, really bad. But you really included them and they

really really appreciated it as well, which was nice. (TB2, Round 7, 12.5.2016, L89 – 92)

Ellie knows ignoring pupils with these particular needs is “bad” but she says it anyway. However, having watched her colleague including these pupils had a powerful impact on her. Just reflecting on this aspect encouraged her to plan strategies to support EAL pupils in her lessons in the future.

In another post-Round discussion in the same school, Aoife comments on including pupils with English as an Additional Language needs in her classes. She compliments the host Rounds teacher on her differentiation for EAL pupils. She says:

I have EALs in my Year 8 and sometimes I find myself nearly ignoring them and just hoping that they’d kind of catch up. (TB5, Round 5, 28.5.2016, L275 -280)

The issue of meeting the needs of EAL students also came up in Round 3 and Round 9 in Boathouse School where David was the host teacher. He obviously listened to the feedback from Round 3 because he had changed seating arrangements (following a Wondering in Round 3) and split the two EAL pupils up, to allow them to develop their language skills (TB4, Round 9, 9.6.2016, L302-303). He had listened and reflected on the feedback he had been given previously.

In Kings Castle School one of the main priorities was stretch and challenge and this is something on the minds of the teachers in the Rounds group. Fiona admits that she does not stretch pupils enough:

.... I have students in my class that I don’t stretch them enough, I just get them to be a coach because it’s easy to do, whereas what can we do as teachers to really stretch them? (TC3, Round 3, 13.4.2016, L255-257)

Carol makes a similar confession but this time she is talking about not paying enough attention to the “average children” as she spends so much

time supporting the less able and more able pupils (TB3, Round 10, 9.6.2016, L339-341).

In St Martha's School Zoe says that numeracy is not her strength and she admits teaching it makes her stressed and anxious. However, she tells the group what she learned during the Round process:

I have learned that it's ok to be scared when you all come in (*laughs*) – the thing is that's just not my strength. Numeracy makes me more stressed well not stressed but anxious. (TA4, Round 6, 6.5.2017, L270-272)

In Kings Castle School, Adam confessed that he had a “class from hell” and he suffered a certain amount of guilt about this. He said:

Even experienced teachers and we are all experienced teacher in here have that one class from hell. What would be really nice is if that vulnerability to be open and honest and say this is my least favourite lesson of the week so for this Round we are all going to genuinely going to pick. We don't want to see anyone else and I think that's in this hard area where learning can take place. I know I am different with the classes I hate.
(TC2, Focus group meeting, 18.11.2016, L163-168)

He makes the case for Teacher Rounds being organized around participants' most difficult classes as this is where they as a group have most to learn from.

Guilt features as a fairly common thread in all three schools and indeed in teachers' lives and leads to additional anxiety and stress. However, guilt is a central “emotional preoccupation” for teachers (Hargreaves and Tucker, 1991, p.494) but is not always a bad thing and can even be good for you (Taylor, 1985) who argues “Recognition of guilt is the first step towards salvation”. (p.101)

Teachers participating in this study were committed to the pupils in their care. They were value driven and had high standards for themselves. When they felt they had not done well enough and lived up to their ideas they suffered from guilt:

Teaching involves a moral commitment to serve the interests of students and society. It involves knowledge, expertise and accountability, but it also involves ideals. (Day, 2010, p.114)

Striving for perfection when there is no definitive definition of perfection and what makes a good teacher or good teaching means that teachers are often striving for the impossible and explain why they often were over critical.

5.3.4 They were self-critical

As the extracts from transcripts included in this chapter show, teachers spend a lot of time reflecting even when they are not involved in Teacher Rounds. However, the Rounds process enabled them to spend more time on deep reflection and to share these reflections with each other. There were a lot of comments where the host teacher reflected on what they perceived to go wrong during the lesson, for example (TB4, Round 3, 14.3.2016, L22-23 and TB3, Round 6, 28.3.2016, L17-25). Whilst this can be described as a form of self-evaluation and is to be encouraged, sometimes teachers were destructive and damning of themselves. An example of this was where Ellie tells the Rounds group she had not worked through the planned lesson objectives and she feels it could have gone better and she had planned it to go better (TB2, Round 5, 28.3.2016, L25 – 30).

This was the first Round Ellie had hosted and her reflections on her own performance were extremely negative. She went through a long tirade about what had gone wrong and was viewed by the other members of the group as being as fragile and lacking in confidence. Therefore, one member of the group was quick to step in. In response, her colleague Carol replied:

I completely disagree. I think you're beating yourself up. So I'm going to go through what I saw.... (TB3, Round 5, 28.3.2016, L39-45)

Carol then goes on to outline all that went well during the lesson. She was trying to counteract Ellie's self-destructive reflections on her own performance.

She was really straightforward and although she does not necessarily follow the Teacher Round protocol, she is very direct in her attempt to support Ellie and build her confidence. She asked:

I wonder do you ever think about yourself positively?

Carol went on to outline the many positive aspects of the lesson and concludes by saying:

I wonder do you actually trust yourself to think right actually I've got a good strength here now, I can use that ... rather than just list off all the things you think you've done wrong... (TB3, Round 5, 28.3.2016, L246-257)

Carol's empathy for her colleague's fragile feelings is obvious as she tries to support her and make her feel better about herself.

Gill comes back to this point towards the end of the post-Round meeting. She says:

..... we're too critical of ourselves, and actually I think we need to see how ... we need to look at things and say look this is what we're achieving. And rather than reaming everything off negative... (TB6, Round 5, 28.3.2016, L372-374)

In St Martha's issues of self-doubt emerged during interviews, post-Round discussions and the final focus group meeting. Theresa was someone who had suffered particularly from negative feedback in the early stages of her career so taking part in Teacher Rounds was a big risk for her. During her initial interview she described her early experiences and how this had damaged her confidence. She returned to this topic during the final focus group meeting with the comment:

So yeah I am really a bit of a basket case on this one..
(TA5, Focus group meeting, 23.6.2016, L201)

5.3.5 *They took risks*

Taking risks during Rounds as opposed to in formal observations was a different matter and generally Round participants felt safe enough to plan potentially tricky lessons (*Examples - debate in Round 3, School C, making potions in Round 3, School A, Science pre-testing, Round 7, School A, digestion demonstration, Round 11, School B*). Teachers understood the importance of encouraging children to take risks with their learning and they also understood the need for teachers to model this in the classroom.

During the Teacher Rounds process teachers felt able to take risks and to try something different. This was because they trusted the group not to condemn them if they got it wrong and also the fact that having several colleagues in the room meant that if something did go wrong then the group could help sort it out. In the event, nothing did go wrong and the risks they took in the classroom were positive experiences for the host teacher and for the Rounds groups. This said a lot about the relationships that had developed within the group. Zoe concludes that watching her colleague try something different in the classroom made her braver and made her inclined to try different things in her own classroom. She said:

And watching other people for example Theresa's Science lesson, I really loved all of the practical pre-testing and just watching someone do it actually makes you realize you can make it happen and you can do it as well! Trying different things... being brave like Mary... (TA4, Focus Group, 23.6.2016, L100 -104)

Taking risks and being prepared to get something wrong came up in many of the post-Round discussions usually in terms of their teaching but was also applicable to teachers facing their fears by getting involved in Teacher Rounds. During their initial interviews many teachers talked about the fact that they were terrified about volunteering to participate. Despite the fact that they were anxious about the process they

volunteered in order to face their fears. Carol argues that the real learning comes from the mistakes made by either the teacher or the pupil:

I think my own personal moment in teaching is that the mistakes are almost a golden moment. Where they get to do real learning, so actually we want the mistakes. (TB3, post Round 9, 9.6.2016, L28-30)

Ellie confirms that during Teacher Rounds she was not frightened if she messed-up as the group would not be judging her. She says that after the first Round she just thought that everyone is human. She mentions the expectations of senior leadership, which she says are really hard to meet:

I was like, obviously we were all like friends (*laughs... or I would like to think we were!*) so that made it that bit easier. If I mess up, I mess up, and they won't probably judge as they are my friends! so I felt way more comfortable. I was still nervous, don't get me wrong and with SLT you do have expectations that are really hard to meet.. but after the first one I just thought everyone is human and it's relaxing like I don't get too stressed before them (TB2, Focus Group Meeting.23.6.2016, L89-95)

Finally, Theresa talking about Ellie's adventurous lesson:

you are very brave! No because there are a handful in no uncertain terms. It was really good. (TA5, Round 9, 10.6.2016, L15-16)

Teachers confessed that they 'played the game' during performance management observations. By this they meant that they took no risks and stuck to tried and tested lessons that they knew would tick the right boxes.

During interviews and focus group meetings teachers talked about "playing the game" when it came to formal observations. By this they meant that they took no risks and played safe when being formally observed as part of the performance management process or as part of a department or phase review. Gill said teachers could pick the class they felt most comfortable with or indeed one they wanted more support with when having a formal observation. This way she says they know they are

going to do well in an observation (TB3, Interview, 14.4.2016, L12-17). The outcome of such observations, are high stakes in terms of job security, salary and promotion prospects. Gill described how this makes her feel and says she was always resentful of formal observations because they create a false lesson. She resents the fact that she is expected to interrupt her normal teaching because of the observation. It is not clear if observers wanted to see a normal lesson (they might be redrafting work) or a lesson that demonstrates teaching skills. It may be that the perception of what was expected was different from the reality (TB6, Interview, 14.4.2016, L75-86). Teachers admitted they played the game and ensured that they ticked all the right boxes but were clear this was not a real picture of what happened in their classrooms every day.

5.4 Summary

Teachers participating in this study were very open about their experiences as teachers (in interviews) with each other during post-Round discussions and in the final focus group meetings. They quickly learned to trust each other and were willing to share things they would not previously have shared with senior leaders or other teachers for fear of being seen as struggling or failing. They were very keen to support each other and to normalize some issues raised because they had all had experience of being criticized by senior leaders during formal observations. However, this did not mean that their discussions were “just talk” (Timperley 2007) and they were able to be critical of each other when they felt this was warranted. The protocols and language of Rounds ensured that open and honest discussions took place after each Round. The fact that there was no judgment involved in the Rounds process meant teachers relaxed and did not put on a show for colleagues who were visiting their classroom.

The “higher up’s” (SLT) feature in the feedback provided in this chapter and indicate the often negative perceptions of senior leaders particularly when it comes to formal lesson observations. Many teachers said they had suffered from negative feedback and still carried that ‘baggage’ with

them. These experiences seriously damaged their confidence. Teachers were cynical about the motives of those (Middle or Senior Leaders) observing them because they had never seen them teach and there's was only one persons opinion and feedback was often based on Ofsted criteria and "check-lists". The power and hierarchical structures in schools together with the performativity and surveillance cultures have clearly had a major influence on the way teachers behave and the way they teach and whether or not they take risks in the classroom.

The Round protocols provided teachers with a clear structure and a language that was free from jargon and free from judgment that enabled them to "talk about teaching".

Chapter 6 Discussion of Findings

6.1 Introduction

The intention of this research was to explore what happens when teachers in three London schools participate in Teacher Rounds. The concept of Teacher Rounds was completely new to participants and to schools and was presented as additional professional learning and an opportunity to learn from each other and inquire into their own practice. Teacher Rounds are based firmly on Del Prete's (1997, 2010, 2013) model developed over a number of years. The model is one that was developed as part of a school improvement strategy to enable and encourage collaboration amongst teachers and to support them in their quest to improve their classroom practice.

The findings in Chapter 5 are derived from individual interviews, post-Round discussions and focus group discussions. The views and feedback from sixteen teachers in three schools make up the evidence base.

Teacher Rounds involve a number of protocols (Chapter 3, Section 4.5) that help to develop strong relationships and trust within the Rounds groups and to help teachers to develop a non-evaluative language to talk about teaching and learning. In analyzing the data presented in the previous chapter I will refer to the theoretical framework, the aims and objectives of the study and return to the original research questions. I start by summarizing the learning of participating teachers and go on to discuss the emerging issues that arose.

This study looks at the process of Teacher Rounds and the way teachers invested in it, and learned from their participation, but it also examines their experience as teachers working within a very defined education system.

6.2. Revisiting and reviewing the research problem

The research problem addressed through this research was the difficulty

of improving teaching and learning quality in the context of centralized, prescribed curricula and teaching methods.

The study's objective was to examine teachers' perspectives on Teacher Rounds as a professional learning activity and had four main aims:

- (1) To examine the kinds of learning that might be promoted through an application of the Teacher Round method.
- (2) To investigate potential relationships between individual teacher development and school/department development.
- (3) To consider the importance (or otherwise) of theory and/or abstract ideas from outside in developing practice.

Finally, I wanted to know if

- (4) Teacher collaboration *per se* is sufficient to improve practice.

These aims frame my analysis of the data collected and reported in the previous chapter.

6.2.1 To examine the kinds of learning that might be promoted through an application of the Teacher Round method.

Little (1982) and Lieberman (1990) argue that that the most powerful influences on teachers are other teachers and that teachers learn best from other teachers. Seeing each other teach in different contexts, across curriculum areas and across phase groups was regarded by participants as a very active form of professional learning and development. Rounds provided the opportunity to learn from each other in the classroom. As one teacher said:

I found it even more from watching others in the group teach and being a bit of a 'fly on the wall' really. (TC5, Focus Group Meeting, 18.11.2016, L116)

Being able to transfer strategies from one classroom to the other was a practical way of using what had been learned. My findings illustrate that teachers participating in Teacher Rounds felt liberated to try new ideas

and new strategies and were not so bound up with the need to conform. They were able to try things out very quickly and one teacher told us about going from one Round to teach his own class where he immediately implemented something he had just seen in his colleague's classroom (Section 6.2.6).

Teacher Rounds were different from other forms of professional learning because they take place in the context of the classroom. Furthermore, they are free from the influence and control of senior leadership. Teacher Rounds are directed and owned by the teachers in the Rounds Group. Participating teachers decide their own problem of practice and they decide on what actions or changes (if any) they make in their own classrooms.

During the research period teachers made sense of Teacher Rounds and learned how to use the protocols. They developed a positive language to talk about what they had seen and heard in the classroom and were able to ask difficult searching questions. They grew in confidence as they went into the second cycle of Rounds and subsequently took more risks in their Rounds lessons.

The application of the Teacher Rounds model was an example of adult learning in practice (Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2.1) as teachers accepted responsibility for their own learning by identifying their own problem of practice and they were willing to accept and learn from feedback from their peers even if it was perceived as critical. The literature tells us that teachers are not good at talking about teaching and learning in a meaningful way (Timperley, 2007, Danielson, 2009, Lieberman, 2012) but the positive language used as part of the Rounds protocol enabled teachers to ask difficult questions and for individual host teachers to reflect and come to their own conclusions. In this way Teacher Rounds are a form of peer coaching. The Rounds group do not offer solutions but by providing evidence about what was happening in the Round classroom they enable teachers to reflect on their own practice and make their own

decisions about next steps.

6.2.2 Teachers' learning from each other

The data highlights that Teacher Rounds put teachers in the classroom as inquirers, carrying out participatory action research (PAR) on what works. Del Prete's (1997) original goal at Clark University and its partner schools, was to build a professional learning community, which viewed adult learning as vital to the continuous improvement process. This emphasis on teacher development rather than specific student outcomes was unusual as much of the literature around professional learning communities (Chapter 2, Section 2.7) is focused almost entirely on raising standards as the pay-off for collaborative activity.

Whilst relative poverty still has the greatest effect on pupil performance, the professional learning of teachers is largely accepted as a way of improving pupil outcomes and there is a body of evidence about the teacher practices that have the largest in-school effects upon student learning (Hattie 2009) and professional learning practices that impact most positively upon teaching (Timperley et al. 2007). There is also evidence about the importance of building professional capital within organizations through greater collaboration and cohesion (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012). However, there is no one activity or programme that works – rather a mix of strategies and practices. The participating teachers in this study were dismissive of the type of professional learning opportunities available to them through CPD and they were certain that this did not help them to become better teachers (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1). Teachers said that they did not learn from watching experts or lead practitioners and were in fact daunted by being sent to see such practice. This was because they felt that they would never measure up to it. Instead, they wanted to see a variety of practice and wanted to develop their own style of teaching. The issue of best practice is discussed further on in this chapter and in Chapter 2, Section 2.12.

Whilst teachers were set ambitious goals by senior staff in their schools, Teacher Rounds did not and does not involve setting teachers individual targets or measuring pupil progress. It is the responsibility of the individual teacher to decide on their own next steps and these are not checked on or monitored. This is directly opposite to the normal performance management process in schools. This is a deliberate part of the Rounds protocol.

The data in Chapter 5 shows that a great deal of professional learning experienced by teachers participating in this research fails to connect with their everyday classroom practice (Cordingley et al. 2016). That is, as Joyce and Showers (2002) argue, because the connections between the workshop and the workplace are weak. In Teacher Rounds the professional learning takes place in the classroom and is therefore, more likely to be effective in improving the quality of individual teachers' practice (Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1).

The participating teachers in all three schools decided to produce a report about their professional learning experience for their head teacher and senior team. They wanted to share some of the things they learned with other teachers and leaders who had not been part of the research project. This was not part of the protocol but teachers decided they wanted to do it. An example of such a feedback report is included in the appendices (Appendix 13).

6.2.3 Teachers talking about teaching and learning

Opportunities for sustained professional conversations are rare in schools (Borko, 2004) Researchers (Warren-Little and Currie, 2003; Elmore, 2007; Timperley and Earl, 2009) argue that teachers can make general statements about their teaching or about students' learning but find it hard to be specific. This may be due to the lack of opportunities to have such conversations or it may be because they feel they do not have permission to speak out or as one of the participating teachers said she did not want

to upset anyone by saying the wrong thing. However, the data included in the previous chapter show that post-Round discussions gave individual teachers space and time for reflection and included specific and detailed evidence about what they had seen and heard (that were largely jargon free) as they fed back to the host teacher. Teachers became more efficient at doing this over the two cycles of Rounds.

Using the Teacher Round protocols helped participants talk to each other in a very different way. There was an agreement that no jargon would be used when feeding back to the host teacher after a Round. They had to learn to describe rather than interpret what they saw and heard. They had to present the evidence they had collected. One of the criticisms of Rounds is that they might become cozy or comfortable and not result in meaningful discussion. However, the “norms of politeness” describe by Timperley (2010, p.11) did not result in an “absence of challenge” during post-Round discussions. There was challenge that was voiced through the use of wonderings. However, it is true that during the post-Round discussions teachers were very keen to be supportive of each other and could not help making positive comments to the host teacher following a Round. They found it far more difficult to be critical of each other because they had all experienced negative feedback in the past and they understood the damage this had done to their confidence. However, the use of wonderings as part of the Rounds protocol allowed them to act as critical friends and to say difficult things to each other. Use of specific positive language emerged as an important facilitator for professional conversations during post-Round discussions. Furthermore, the strong relationships and trust amongst the group, and the fact that they were not being judged, encouraged teachers to say what needed to be said.

The data in the previous chapter show that the use of wonderings, as a way of acting as a critical friend and of asking deep and sometimes difficult questions, was very effective during Teacher Rounds. However, Philpott and Oates (2016) describe the reticence of teachers in their study of Learning Rounds in Scotland, to challenge views of other teachers

(Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1). They claim that much effort was expended on ensuring that no one would be offended during the process. The authors put this down to the lack of wider educational research and theory. It is important to note that Learning Rounds are based on the Instructional Rounds (City et al. 2011) model that involves a requirement to find joint solutions to an identified problem of practice. This is not the case for Teacher Rounds where groups are not expected to find solutions. Instead individual teachers reflect on what they have learned during the process and make decisions about what changes they will make to their own practice. Learning Rounds are more geared to solving problems and finding solutions that can be shared across groups of schools.

Philpott and Oates (2016, p.226) refer to the requirement to use descriptive language during Learning Rounds, which was “rarely adhered” to in practice. In my own study, it was the case that teachers often drifted into using evaluative language from time to time and had to be reminded by me as the facilitator that this was not part of the Teacher Round protocols. Describing rather than interpreting and evaluating is a new skill that teachers had to learn during the process. The data shows that they were more inclined to drift away from this protocol when they wanted to praise what they had seen in the classroom. This was a frequent occurrence but it did not stop detailed conversations from happening.

Bryk et al. (1999) found that when teachers engage in peer observation and feedback and open their practice up to scrutiny by colleagues, they learn to ask questions and evaluate their practices in a more analytic fashion. This was certainly true of Teacher Rounds. When setting up Teacher Rounds, it was very important to set out clear protocols around confidentiality, which led to creating a safe environment, and a language to talk about teaching and learning.

Timperley (2007) brings a dissenting voice to the argument around peer observations and peer collaboration. She suggests that when instigating

peer-peer systems like Rounds, there is a danger that levels of ignorance and lack of knowledge are recycled. Mansfield and Thompson (2016) argue Rounds could be a vehicle for sharing mediocre instruction and for Rounds to work they must be grounded in “honest, open, substantive and professional feedback, which at times may be critical but constructive” (ibid, p.26). Philpott and Oates (2016) describe the reticence of teachers in their study of Learning Rounds in Scotland and an “unwillingness to challenge views” (p.230) of other teachers. The authors claim that a certain amount of effort was expended on ensuring that no one would be offended by the ways that observations were recorded. Whilst this was replicated to some extent in Teacher Rounds I would argue ‘wonderings’ enabled my participants to say difficult things. In addition, there is no guarantee that middle and senior leaders are any more successful in passing on good or effective practice to teachers but the data gathered does indicate that teachers have little regard for their advice and don’t trust their knowledge and expertise around teaching and learning (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1). This lack of trust in the hierarchy in schools is worrying as there is an assumption about the perceived power of the SLT as holders of all the knowledge about what makes good teaching. The problem is that teachers don’t believe that SLT know best and often don’t accept their advice and guidance. The question is where does the power lie in this situation? Would a flatter structure and a redistribution of power help to uncover expertise and talent amongst the teaching staff and not seeking this only through formal position roles” (Harris, 2004, p.13)? Harris describes this form of distributed leadership as a form of “collective leadership” (p.13).

The opening quote in the introduction to this thesis was from Christine who asked: “How do you get teachers to talk about teaching?” (Section 1.1) and there can be no doubt that the Teacher Round process was an effective way to make this happen.

6.2.4 Learning how to observe with an open gaze

Four of the teachers in the sample had experience of observing lessons as part of their duties as a senior leader (Christine in School B), and Theresa (School A), Adam (School C) and Gill (School B) as middle leaders. However, all participants had been formally observed on many occasions. During Rounds my participants learned how to observe classroom practice in a different more positive way than they had previously experienced. These hierarchical performance management observations left their mark on participants and they spoke about these negative experiences at different stages of the research process. For example Theresa (School A), Mary (School A) and Ellie (School B) were clearly scarred by the memory of negative lesson observations – even those these happened a number of years ago (Section 5.2.1). Although I describe Teacher Round as an opportunity to engage in an open gaze it could be said that this is more like a directed gaze because host teachers identify their own problem of practice and ask for specific feedback on this. However, this does not exclude other things the observers notice and might want to bring attention to. They saw what they saw and were free to bring it to the table for discussion.

Teacher Round participants learned a new way of seeing the classroom by noticing, gathering evidence, looking for detail, and taking on the challenge of open gaze as opposed to tick lists (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2). Del Prete (2013) argues a Teacher Round provides an opportunity for teachers to practice their observation skills with others. He argues that the multiple perspectives and level of experience represented in the Round groups “ramp up” (p.111) the groups observational powers. This was the case during this study. It was clear during the Rounds that teachers saw different things, even when in the same lesson. This was a key point for the Rounds group to acknowledge. Even with six or seven teachers in the room concentrating on different pupils or different aspects of classroom practice, they missed things. Their descriptions on what they saw differed and the dialogue that took place in the post-Round discussion was used to explore these issues. Del Prete (2013) defines observation:

Observation is a matter of noticing, attending, and relating and is a personalization skill integral to teaching; it is not a matter of evaluation or judgment. (p.111)

Del Prete (2013) argues that we see things through our own predispositions but are also “reflexive” (p.111), which he says, is the mental equivalent to a knee jerk reaction, before we are open and reflective. He explains by pointing out that each Round partner has a similar task based on the Rounds learning focus and problem of practice, yet each has a different perspective depending on their experience and prior knowledge. This was appropriate when it came to Teacher Rounds as these different perspectives meant that the post-Round discussions were detailed and enriched. However, this is also true of formal observations in schools where each observer will see different things and come to different conclusions. The problem is that such observations result in judgments of one kind or another.

Del Prete (2013) claims that the Round process and inquiry, no matter how well defined and focused, cannot fully counterbalance the propensity each of us has to see and interpret in a certain way, through the lens of personal experience. This is why it is important to have Rounds group of between 3 and 7 participants – preferably with different levels of experience and from different phase groups and different curriculum areas. He suggests ways we can guard against observational and interpretive drift. He advises us to approach observation as a matter of restraint as well as conscientiousness (ibid, p.112). He says we do this by giving our full attention to what we see and hear rather than interpret according to our own predisposed view of what is normal or desirable. This was good advice for participants and made us think carefully about how we, as a group and as individuals, approached the Rounds. The more practice participants had in observing lessons using the Round process the more self-confident they became.

6.2.5 Learning from feedback

Danielson (2009) says that teachers become passive when receiving

feedback from their line managers or superiors and teachers participating in this study confirmed that this was the case. They went further and said that they did not learn from such feedback and it did not improve their practice in the classroom. Despite this fact feedback is widely regarded as the most effective way of improving the quality of learning and teaching (Coe, 1998, 2002; Hattie and Timperley, 2007; Hattie, 2009) but teachers participating in this research were very clear that the feedback they received from their line managers and senior staff was unhelpful and made very little difference to their actions in the classroom (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1). Most felt it was a pointless exercise. They were aware that the feedback given was one person's opinion. However, a few teachers (Rita and Sonia in School C) did say that it depended on the person who was doing the observation. Sonia commented:

I like being observed when someone who knows what they are talking about does it. (TC1, Interview, 10.2.2016, L17)

Subject specialism was very important as they felt feedback from non-specialist was unhelpful and generic. They also pointed to the relationship you had with the observer who was normally the Head of Department. Others were able to point out a few examples of feedback that was helpful – but these were the exception. Zoe summed up the feelings of the majority of participants:

no matter how many positives they tell you, its that negative one that you hang on to and you feel terrible afterwards for doing one thing wrong. And you just think oh I missed one child answering three questions rather than just one! You just feel like ahh what do you hang onto then? That's what you remember until the next formal observation. And that's a horrible feeling. We all do it and I know its something we shouldn't do and should focus on the positive but we are all human and we are going to look at negatives! (TA3, Focus Group Meeting, 23.6.2016, L105 – 115)

In contrast in Teacher Rounds feedback is provided by between 5 and 6 teachers and is not about one person's opinion. Teachers (including Christine who was an Assistant Head) were conscious of the unequal power of hierarchy when being formally observed and said they had little

opportunity to engage in an open dialogue about the lesson. If they disagreed with the feedback they felt they were being seen as difficult or as being in denial. The fact that the observer usually set the agenda and identified the focus for the observation meant teachers felt they were being done to rather than being done with. During Teacher Rounds the situation was completely different because the power dynamic was removed from the Round process and teachers were able to participate on an equal basis teachers and were not subject to the same high stakes judgments or evaluations.

The data shows that receiving feedback from colleagues following Teacher Rounds was valued and was owned by the teachers (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1). They readily received feedback from their Round group colleagues, whom they had seen teach. The following comment by Zoe makes this point clearly:

We volunteered for this, it's kind of like you are taking ownership, you want to improve rather than someone telling you, you have to, do this and that.. it kind of gives you a different perspective and you are getting the feedback you asked for this as opposed to I have just had another one tell me what you have to do and say.
(TA4, Focus Group, 23.6.2016, L308-311)

Zoe talks about taking ownership of the feedback given by colleagues following Teacher Rounds. Participants were willing to hear and accept constructive criticism from colleagues because they had confidence in their ability as teachers. This was due to the fact that they had developed strong relationships and trust in each other and also because they were confident that their feedback was coming from a good place and also because there was no judgment involved (Chapter 1, Section 1.2, Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1, and Chapter 5, 5.3.1). It was also because they and their colleagues spent all day, every day in the classroom and were under the same pressures they were under. SLT on the other hand taught for less time during the week and often taught small intervention groups therefore, they believed they could not understand the experience

of classroom teachers.

Fiona argues that lesson observations are false situations and no lesson is perfect all the time. The extract below shows how strongly she feels about this issue:

I think it's a load of rubbish, it's very false, anyone can do an all singing and dancing lesson and the impromptu learning walks are a bit bizarre, I don't really see the point of them. (TC3, Interview. 10.2.2016, L22 – 24)

Teachers talked about 'playing the game' when being formally observed (Section 5.3.1) and make sure they manage to observation process to ensure they get the best outcome. The participants (all of them) agreed that this is something they do to avoid a negative judgment.

Danielson (2009, p.4) concurs with the notion of the futility of feedback from managers. She argues: "Little is learned by teachers in feedback led by managers." Furthermore, she is dismissive of the research that concludes feedback is seen as "the salvation of professional learning". She argues the reason for the uselessness of feedback is due to the "toxic influence of hierarchy, little is learned by teachers in feedback led by managers" (ibid, p.9). Most participants confirmed this view and said that managers usually told them what they were not doing, as opposed to what they were doing in the classroom. Following these observations they were set whole school targets rather than personal targets. Furthermore, teachers felt that the observer did not really understand the context of their lesson and they were giving a personal opinion according to their own ideology (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1). It may be more helpful for teachers if schools reconsidered their hierarchies and power structures, which seem to have a negative effect on teachers. Rounds give teachers an experience of a flatter (horizontal) power structure where they are equal partners while formal performance management processes are top-down (vertical) where teachers are done to not done with. Elmore (2000) argues that school leadership needs to change and needs to be anchored in the work of instructional practice with an increased focus on the

distribution of leadership (Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3). While Elmore is suggesting that leaders need to be focused more on instruction (teaching and learning) he does not go far enough in my view and does not recommend empowering teachers to take more control of what happens in their own classrooms. However, this was written before his change of heart around best practice and doing things at scale (Elmore, 2016) (Chapter 2, Section 2.12). Harris (2004) also talks about distributed leadership which she says concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization, rather than seeking it only through formal position roles (Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3). This is a good point as it became clear during this study that expertise is spread throughout schools and it seems a huge waste of resources to ignore it. Teacher Rounds allows this expertise to be shared and thus it empowers teachers.

Many quotations from teachers included in the data, around the stresses and anxieties of being formally observed, illustrate how difficult and painful the experience can be (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1). Edwards (2014, p.53) describes observation as a “gladiatorial” experience that leads teachers to focus on “competent performances of teaching to avoid being categorized as learners in classrooms”. It is this gladiatorial experience that has led to teachers preparing safe lessons when they were being observed by senior leaders. Teachers talked about “playing the game” (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.5) when it came to formal observations. By this they meant that they took no risks and played safe and planned and executed standard lessons that they knew would get them through the performance management process. This risk-averse attitude was all about self-preservation and arose from the fact that the outcomes of such observations are high stakes in terms of job security, salary and promotion prospects.

6.2.6 Teachers taking risks

Being risk-adverse does not just happen in the classroom but also involves teachers speaking out (or not) when they are in formal school

meetings. Teachers said that they did not want to sound defensive or did not want to upset anybody by expressing dissatisfaction with the system. Mary explained this:

When I struggled, my partner teacher helped me but I got signed off for stress. It was all a bit difficult to talk about. There was lots of Chinese whispers about what was happening to me. Nobody wants to upset anybody, so things are not said but whispers happen. (TA2. Interview, 27-1-2016, L64-66)

They felt they could not have an open dialogue with the person who observed their lesson because they might be seen as being difficult or resistant to change. Therefore, they usually said nothing. Danielson, (2009) argues that discussions during faculty/phase meetings cannot be an honest reflection of professional views if teachers fear “retribution or loss of standing if they express a view that is divergent from the official position” (p.87). She says teachers must feel that it is safe to “take risks and that they are free to explore issues honestly, without fear that their reputation might be damaged” (ibid, 87). However, during Teacher Rounds teachers learned to take risks in their lessons and indeed in their conversations and discussions where they confessed their weaknesses (areas for development) and admitted their perceived failings. This I believe is the key strength of Teacher Rounds.

It is clear from the included in Chapter 5 that teachers found the constant surveillance and monitoring as well as the insistence on compliance and consistency in the classroom as a limiting factor on their practice. The feeling that they were always being watched meant that they normalized their teaching and did not stray from the expected model of teaching and meant they rarely took risks in the classroom. Foucault (1977a) says that surveillance, and normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power where rules are established and judgements are made around the idea of a norm forcing them to follow the rules (Chapter 2, Section 2.6). A very different approach to accountability and performance management is needed if they are to result in positive outputs for teachers.

6.2.7 *Teachers become researchers*

Teacher research is defined (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993) as “systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers about their own school and classroom work” (p.23). The emphasis on intention is in keeping with Boomer’s (1987) argument that to “learn deliberately is to research” (p.5). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) suggest that teacher research stems from teachers’ desire to make sense of their experience – to adapt a learning stance or openness towards classroom life. When teachers take an inquiry stance (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993) they make “problematic much of what is usually taken for granted about culture, learning, language and power” (p.74). They start to question common practice, deliberate about what is regarded as expert knowledge, examine underlying assumptions, interrogate educational categories, and attempt to uncover the values and interests served by the common arrangements and structures of schooling (Beyer, 1986; Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Smyth, 1987; Zeichner, 1986). This can upset the status quo in schools and some head teachers see this as a threat. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) assert that teaching is defined primarily by what teachers do when they are not with other teachers. Moreover, they assert that when teachers are evaluated, it is individual classroom performance that is scrutinized. Lytle and Fecho, (1991) argue that isolation acts as a deterrent by secluding teachers from each other and creating a cycle in which teachers may view teacher research as hazardous. This is because of the high stakes around individual performance management. Participating in Teacher Rounds removes the feeling of isolation and gets teachers into each other’s classrooms without fear of being judged. They allow space and time for reflection and allows them to inquire into their own practice.

There is growing support for the notion that research by teachers about their own classroom and school practices can function as a powerful means of professional development and can also contribute to the

knowledge base of education (Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993, p.85).

However, the authors warn:

Despite its potential, there is widespread agreement that there are no obvious and simple ways to create the conditions that support teacher research and that, in fact, major obstacles constrain this activity in schools and make it difficult to redefine teaching as a form of inquiry.

Teacher Rounds created and provide these conditions for on-going teacher inquiry and action research. There was no disagreement about this in any of the tree sample schools. The problem is that the outcomes are difficult (impossible) to track and measure because it's down to the individual to decide on their own actions and next steps.

Teachers participating in Teacher Rounds became researchers through the PAR model (Chapter 4, section 4.3.2) and were inquiring into their own practice. Teachers viewed their participation as an opportunity to be involved in professional learning, and they were simply part of an inquiry team. The study did not fit in with their preconceived notion of research and was more accessible to them. They did not have to go through the usual stages of research. Although they identified their own problem of practice they had no official data to collect and they had no report to write. It was their research into their own practice. The data shows participants were taking an inquiry stance (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1993) and were put in the position of being learners.

PAR have in common the idea that research and action must be done *with* people and *not on or for* people (Reason and Bradbury, 2008; Chevalier and Buckles, 2013, Brock, and Pettit, 2007). This was important when introducing Teacher Rounds into three schools because PAR involved teachers participating in a professional learning activity and at the same time inquiring into their own practice.

6.2.8 To investigate potential relationships between individual teacher development and school/department development.

Teacher Rounds were designed as a professional learning tool that enabled teachers to learn from each other. What we discovered was that teacher learning is determined to a large extent on the relationships and trust they develop amongst their colleagues and their managers and leaders.

Teaching is a collectivized profession (See Chapter 2, Section 2.3.3) and during the course of the Teacher Rounds study, teachers expressed their negative views on the regimentation around teaching and learning and particularly around assessment. There was an expectation in their schools about teaching in a particular prescribed way. Most had never experienced anything different but clearly found this constricting. The struggle for schools to achieve consistency of practice across the school has taken up a lot of time and energy of head teachers and their teams for many years and has led to (in my view) a rather sterile way of teaching. This aim for consistency and compliance serves the audit and accountability processes, and a surveillance culture where measures are put in place to ensure teachers are following whole school policy on planning, teaching, marking and behaviour, to name but a few. Whatever the case it was clear that my participants felt they have been de-professionalised in the process. Teachers in all three schools were expected to conform and not ask too many questions. The problem is they did not understand why they were doing things the way they did. The professionalism and agency of teachers is discussed further in Section 6.7.

The sample of participating teachers had a collective experience of one hundred and twenty one years. Two had been teaching for over sixteen years, another two had been teaching for over thirteen years. Five others had between been in the profession for between nine and six years. Three others had one or two years experience. Some teachers who had been in the profession for some years described the way the expectations and formulae had changed over the years. For instance at one time Adam (Kings Castle School) said he had been observed by a senior

leaders in his school and was expected to demonstrate pupils' progress in a twenty-minute observation (but this is no longer the expectation). Other teachers talked about AFL strategies or particular reading or writing schemes they were expected to be using at one time. Many had experienced the National Strategies and some were currently delivering mandatory phonics programmes. These expectations appeared to be directed by the head teacher, or from the DFE or from the Ofsted framework, which was and is constantly changing. Wherever the initiative had come from, teachers were expected to implement it without any real understanding of why they were doing it. And this is what they did.

Teacher Rounds provided the opportunity for teachers to see variations within their professional work. Prior to the introduction of Teacher Rounds, participating teachers had not spent much time in each other's classrooms and had little opportunity to learn from each other. The opportunities that did exist were mostly within subject areas or phase groups. There were little or no opportunities for peer observation and teachers were generally isolated in their own classrooms.

6.2.9 Collegiality and trust amongst participants

Collegiality describes a work environment, where responsibility and authority are shared equally by colleagues, rather than managers. It is not about supervision and hierarchy. Collegiality and trust are attributes that most teachers are drawn to. There is a moral purpose that attracts people to the profession because teachers believe that they can make a difference to the lives of students in their care (Fullan, 2003). Working with other teachers rather than working in isolation is something that appeals to them. Teaching is complex (Shulman 2004) and difficult and working with other teachers in a safe environment is an attractive proposition. This was the case when I was looking for volunteers to participate in this research. Teachers who trust each other are more likely to be open to scrutiny and open to support (Lofthouse and Thomas, 2017). While a certain amount of trust existed between participants who

worked in the same school this was cemented and strengthened when they worked together over two or in the case of one school over three terms.

During Teacher Rounds teachers clearly enjoyed working together. Nobody dropped out and they told me they looked forward to the Round days. They particularly valued the open-ended nature of Teacher Rounds inquiry. They were not searching for any one answer, but were open to new learning. They enjoyed having the time to talk to each other about teaching and learning. The participating teachers trusted each other and they trusted the Teacher Round protocols and this meant that they could have an open dialogue with each other around teaching and learning without fear of retribution. Teachers certainly felt less isolated and felt supported by the process. The isolation of teachers at all stages of their careers is well documented (Goodlad, 1984; Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Lortie, 1975). Elmore (2004, p.67) asserts that: "Isolation is the enemy of improvement". Furthermore, schools provide little time for teachers to talk, and share ideas with colleagues (Little, 1987; Lytle and Fecho 1991). The data included in the previous chapter indicates that this was the experience of participants in this study.

Freiberg and Knight (1987, p.3) have a similar view and state teaching in effective schools is a "collective, rather than individual enterprise". This view is supported by Sutton and Shouse (2016), and Timperley et al. (2007) amongst others. Lieberman (1990) and Little (1982) claim that the most powerful influences on teachers are other teachers, but Hargreaves et al. (2010) argue that education policies have rarely built on this fact. They say that the best way of exploiting this phenomenon is through "regular, face-to-face encounters among professionals that focus on the improvement of teaching and learning" (p.23).

Sutton and Shouse (2016) suggest that the structural, cultural and historical factors involved with schooling hinder the extent to which teachers can and do collaborate. They argue that if schools want to

overcome the barrier of isolation they need to work around the “persistent structural constraints to establish a sincere and thoughtful collaborative culture” (ibid, 2016, p.1) then they must approach collaboration differently. How this might be achieved is discussed in the conclusion.

My research findings demonstrate that Teacher Rounds are a form of authentic collegiality as defined by Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) which they say “comprises of evolutionary relationships of openness, trust, and support among teachers where they define and develop their own purposes as a community” (p.227).

6.2.10 *Trust and relationships*

Relationships between teachers in each of the three Round groups were strong. Although they knew each other before they joined the Rounds group once they started collaborating as part of the Rounds group they developed real trust in each other. This was evidenced by post-Round discussions where participants shared very personal and emotional information with the group. Many teachers revealed their perceived weaknesses and concerns during post-Round discussions and subsequently received useful supportive feedback from their peers. Teachers clearly wanted to improve their practice but their self-confidence in their own ability was low. Years of being told what they were not doing right by senior leaders had eroded their confidence over the years. Although Adam (a teacher for over sixteen years) said he did not worry too much about formal observations he claims he does not take too much notice of them either). However, his reflective comments and admission of feeling guilty about aspects of his teaching indicates that his confidence was low (Section 5.3.3). Relationships with senior leaders, was far more problematic because of the accountability and performance structures in our schools and this proved to be a real barrier to effective collaboration. The literature on this issue is covered in some detail in Chapter 2, Section 2.9.

Guilt featured as a fairly common thread to emerge in all three schools. Adam suggests that teachers hosting Rounds should show their “vulnerability” and pick their toughest class to host a Round (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3). Indeed this happened to a certain degree during the second cycle Rounds, as teachers felt more comfortable with the process and with each other. Being able to voice uncertainties and inner most thoughts in terms of classroom practice is not easy in the normal course of the busy school day, so having the opportunity to admit things that make individuals feel guilty is an indication of the bonding experience of the Rounds group. Hargreaves and Tucker (1991) claim that guilt is an emotional preoccupation for teachers and say the feelings of guilt and frustration can be troubling. However, Taylor (1985, p.101) argues that guilt is not always a bad thing and can be good for you and that recognition of guilt is the first step towards “salvation”. On the basis of the evidence of this study I can’t agree with this assertion, as there was no obvious reason for individual guilt and it had a debilitating effect on teachers’ wellbeing causing undue stress. Nonetheless, Hargreaves and Tucker (1991) argue that guilt experienced in modest portions can be a great spur to motivation, innovation and improvement. It is unclear what they mean by modest portions of guilt but some teachers participating in this study appeared overwhelmed by it. However, they all recognized and confronted their guilt by talking about it during post-Round sessions. All participants agreed that they would not have been able to admit the things they felt guilty about in terms of their classroom practice in a normal department or phase meeting or during a feedback session from a formal performance management observation. They would have become passive (Danielson, 2009) and said nothing because they did not want to be seen as struggling or to be judged as ‘requires improvement’.

Teachers participating in Teacher Rounds were extremely reflective. They thought about their own practice and picked it apart. They were without exception, lacking in confidence about their own ability in the classroom. They were self-critical often to the point of destruction. This anxiety and self-doubt was exacerbated by the surveillance (Foucault,

1977a) they were under in their schools. Being constantly watched and monitored described by Foucault (1995) as panopticon (Chapter 2 Section 3.1 and Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2.1) led to normalization of practice and increasingly to self-doubt. This they claimed damaged and affected their performance in the classroom. Teachers said they knew exactly what areas they needed to improve on and did not need a senior leader to tell them.

Perryman (2006, p.148) discusses the notion of “panoptic performativity” to explore the experience of a school in Special Measures as judged by Ofsted. Perryman (2006, p.150) argues that Ofsted is a system which dictates that in order to be removed from special measures teachers must adhere strictly to a rigid and predetermined “recipe” for success and uses *performativity* and *normalization* as its mechanisms. She comments that it is assumed that all schools can follow the same recipe for success, and any deviation from this norm can be an indicator that a school is failing. Perryman argues that it is for this reason that head teachers have used this framework to normalize working practices even though they may not be judged to be in Special Measures.

As a result of the strong relationships and the increasing continuum of trust amongst the groups, participating teachers felt able to confess their worst fears and their perceived weaknesses. The word confession describes the way these admissions were made, except they were not made in secret but open to the whole group. Somehow the teachers concerned felt better by getting these fears out in the open. In response their colleagues were supportive and reassuring. They did not judge and often ‘normalized’ the problem saying it was an issue for them also.

6.3 To consider the importance (or otherwise) of theory and/or abstract ideas from outside in developing practice.

It could be argued that the post-Round discussion is not an informed discussion as there is no external input and no reference to external

research. However, this misses the point, as Teacher Rounds are not about finding whole scale solutions to particular barriers to learning and identifying best practice. Instead they are about teachers finding their own way and deciding what works for them. Teachers participating in Rounds are not attempting to judge their own or their colleagues' practice. Rather, they are about reflection and discussion. Whilst the participants in this research did come to several conclusions about what they were seeing and wanted to pass on what they had learned, they did not see this as a eureka moment and did not claim they had found solutions to particular issues. They recognized that problems and barriers manifest themselves in different ways with different children and in different classrooms and they were able to see a range of approaches that colleagues used to overcome these barriers. However, Teacher Rounds helped them to understand that there is no one-way of teaching and one-size does not fit all. They did not want to prescribe any one way of doing things but they developed the confidence to use a wide variety of approaches in the classroom.

Philpot and Oates (2016) suggest the lack of an external input in terms of theory or expertise was a disadvantage of Rounds but teachers participating in this research were jaded by visiting experts and by being told what and how to teach. Teacher Rounds enabled them to explore and reflect on their own practice and that of their colleagues. They realized that there is no one way to teach and that they had to find what suited them best. Furthermore, they realized that good practice is not always helpful and that looking at a range of practice was a better way for them to develop their own style and methods of teaching. Although, the groups did not express for an external input they did acknowledge that this might be something that could be introduced when they were very familiar with the Teacher Rounds protocols and were ready to develop and adapt them to meet the needs of the school rather than individual needs. Providing academic literature to the Teacher Round mix would have been time consuming and I would have had to anticipate what teachers were going to see and share. The Teacher Rounds process was

owned by participating teachers, they took charge of their own learning which is something they rarely have an opportunity to do. I was very conscious that lack of time to participate was the greatest barrier to implementing Teacher Rounds. Keeping the process as simple as possible was an important element in successful implementation.

6.10 Is teacher collaboration per se sufficient to improve practice?

Chapter 2 (Section 2.6) outlines all the barriers to collaboration as well as the positive aspects. The findings indicate if collaborative projects such as Teacher Rounds are set up and applied according to the protocols set out in Chapter 4 (Section 4.5) they are more likely to help improve practice in the classroom. Collaborative practice does break down teacher isolation but it cannot be enforced or managed by senior leaders.

Del Prete (1997, 2010, 2013) regarded Teacher Rounds as a very effective way of facilitating “positive collaborative working” amongst teachers in the Clark University collaborative of schools, while City et al. (2009) cite collaboration amongst teacher as the answer to the many problems facing the teaching profession. However, collaboration is not easy and there are many barriers. Lieberman (2012) quoting Hargreaves (2007) argues that the public focus on content standards has persisted over the past two decades, as schools are increasingly being held accountable for both what is taught and what students learn and this gets in the way of collaborative and collegial working. The data in the previous chapter shows that the accountability and performance measures used in schools get in the way of collaborative working. Lack of quality time for teachers to work together is also a major barrier to collaboration.

Teacher Rounds were designed as a collaborative professional learning activity where teachers could learn from each other in the context of the classroom. Teacher Rounds puts teachers in the classroom as inquirers, carrying out PAR on what works. Del Prete’s (1997) original goal at Clark University and its partner schools, was to build a professional learning

community, which viewed adult learning as vital to the continuous improvement process. This emphasis on teacher development rather than specific student outcomes was unusual as much of the literature around professional learning communities (Chapter 3, Section 3.7) is focused almost entirely on raising standards as the pay-off for collaborative activity.

The professional learning of teachers is largely accepted as a way of improving pupil outcomes and there is a body of evidence about the teacher practices that have the largest in-school effects upon student learning (Hattie 2009) and professional learning practices that impact most positively upon teaching (Timperley et al. 2007). There is also evidence about the importance of building professional capital within organizations through greater collaboration and cohesion (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012). However, there is no one activity or programme that works – rather a mix of strategies and practices. The participating teachers' in this study were dismissive of the type of professional learning opportunities available to them and they were certain that this did not help them to become better teachers (See Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1).

In many cases teachers spoke about different initiatives such as being allowed to see each other teach or coaching triads were introduced but were dropped after a short time because they did not show any perceived impact on pupil learning. Another issue was the way such initiatives were set up without clear protocols and no guidance was given about how to discuss and learn from what they had seen. Therefore, well-meaning professional learning opportunities were wasted. Teacher Rounds are well placed to fill this gap. The data, particularly interviews, include examples where teachers have been organized into collaborative groups or coaching triads (School C) and another example where teachers picked names out of a hat and then observed each other (School A):

A year ago we picked names out of a hat and went to observe each other and give feedback. There was no structure to it. I watched a teacher who had come in temporarily because she was struggling so

I found feedback really difficult. I did not want to upset her or make her feel bad.

(TA1, 22.1.2016, Interview, L4 – 27)

These attempts to facilitate collaborative working were organized by senior leaders with good intentions. However, the problem was that there were no protocols agreed by all teachers and there was no structure for discussions and follow up. This is another example of the hierarchy using their top-down approach and power to influence what and how teachers learned. Teacher Rounds on the other hand allowed teachers to re-own the power and develop a bottom-up approach. They owned the process and they decided what they would do with the new learning.

Del Prete (2013) warns that when collaboration is subject to “top-down control, increased standardization of curriculum and teaching, and narrow accountability measures” (p.13) then teachers have more reason to resist than to participate. Furthermore, he argues that imposed collaboration can foster more “conservative individual” (p.13) behaviour and he says that students’ education can suffer as much as teacher professionalism under these circumstances. Whatever the intended impact or outcomes of the collaboration, if it is not decided or owned by the teachers themselves it is unlikely to be very effective.

There is a lot of talk about collaboration in schools and teachers participating in this study were encouraged to plan together and to develop shared resources within departments or phase groups they rarely had the opportunity to investigate areas or ideas that they considered would help them develop as teachers. The imposed collaboration was directed by the school priorities and thus by the senior leadership team. Whilst teachers were set ambitious targets and goals around pupil outputs that were high stakes in terms of their salary it is not surprising that opportunities for real collaboration were few and far between. Collaboration needs structure and protocols but most of all it can only happen when there is a supportive school climate where there is trust.

The data in the previous chapter shows that teachers in the sample did not feel trusted, were constantly being directed and monitored, giving them little or no space to reflect or to develop their own way of teaching. This led to a certain amount of resentment amongst participants. Enabling teachers to participate in learning communities (such as Teacher Rounds), is viewed by Louis (2007) as:

Attending to the hunger that most teachers feel for time to think about their work in concert with others whom they know and trust is a precondition for successful, resilient schools. (p.487)

This “hunger” was reflected in the numbers of teachers who volunteered to take part in the study, despite the requirement for them to give up much of their own time and for them to have their classes covered – something they did not do lightly.

Trust cannot be taken for granted but needs to be nurtured (Sutton and Shouse, 2016) but Talbert (2010) argues that mutual trust and accountability must grow in the context of rules, regulations and monitoring. The reality is that for teachers, constant surveillance (Foucault, 1977a) monitoring and standardization of the profession gets in the way of developing strong relationships and trust. This was certainly true of all those involved as participants in this study.

6.4.1 Creating the conditions for collaborative learning communities

The data provided in the previous chapter is supported by the literature review (Chapter 2, Section 2.7) and shows that trust is probably the most important element of collaborative working and setting up a professional learning community. A Teacher Round is a professional learning community which has one purpose, that is for teachers to learn from each other. However, in order to do this they need to develop the kinds of adult relationships that can support individual change in their own classrooms and across the whole school (Spillane and Louis, 2002; Toole and Louis, 2002). As mentioned before, the head or principal plays a key role in

developing a school culture that nurtures these relationships (Barth, 2006; Hord, 1997; Sparks, 2003). The three schools included in this study appeared to be ones where there were good relationships and trust amongst teachers and leadership. The fact that the principal/head teachers allowed and enabled the research to take place in their school indicated there was a healthy culture where relationships mattered. However, as we worked together it became clear that trust in the leadership team was superficial and was severely damaged by the accountability measures in place. It was the role that senior leaders held, and their responsibility for performance management, that got in the way rather than the actions of individuals. It is worth noting that sustainable change in schools will only happen when teachers are fully on board and understand and support what is being proposed. National (or indeed school) policy that is simply imposed will not be effective. This points to the need for a different style of leadership.

Trust is mentioned as a precondition for any learning community (Sutton and Shouse, 2016; Stoll et al. 2007) and the authors assert that collaboration amongst teachers facing similar problems in a school builds trust and expertise and enables schools to implement changes with greater ease. The implication is that even if trust does not exist when the learning community is formed, it will emerge as the group works together. This was my experience facilitating the three Round groups in the sample. As teachers became familiar with the process and with each other, they opened up more and discussions became richer. My attempt to set up a Rounds group in a fourth school (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.8) was fraught with difficulty, because of the lack of trust amongst teachers and the leadership team and so had to be abandoned. Fullan (1999) claims that in order to improve student outcomes school-wide, success will only be possible “if organizational members develop trust and show compassion for each other” (p.37). This is something that is backed up by the data in the previous chapter but it is easier said than done.

According to Hargreaves (2007)

strong and sustainable professional learning communities are characterized by strong cultures of trusted colleagues who value each other personally and professionally, who are committed to their students, who are willing to discuss and disagree about evidence and data that can inform them about how to improve their practices, and who are willing to challenge one another's practice in doing so" (p.118).

The problem is that many teachers have little or no opportunity for such open discussions. There is also a culture of fear in some schools where teachers are actively discouraged from voicing any criticism or dissent. In the schools where I carried out my research fear was not the issue. Instead, teachers pointed to the fact that senior or middle leaders are "so busy, I don't want to bother them" (TB2, Interview, 23.6.2016, L40) and so would not ask for help. The comment about not wanting to upset anybody was echoed by Ellie (School B) during her interview, when she was talking about not wanting to bother her head of department to ask for help or to ask for feedback.

In all three schools teachers were not really involved in decision making or deciding what the whole school priorities were. Although they were consulted they felt this consultation was superficial and so they did not take ownership of the decisions or priorities. In many cases they did not understand why decisions were made. Many felt they are not encouraged to ask questions or to attempt to understand why they are being asked to do things in a certain way. Foucault (1995) describing the panopticon talks about "a field of visibility" (p.202), where subjects are constantly under surveillance (or they believe they are) and subsequently behave as if they are being watched all the time and "becomes the principle of his own subjection" (1995, p.203). Foucault believes that power, makes individuals "provide a hold on their conduct" (Foucault, 1991, p.170). This describes the way many teachers behave and explains why there is a lack of teacher voice and agency and this is a real barrier to collaborative working.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) present three conceptions of trust,

specifically, organic, contractual, and relational trust (Chapter 2, Section 2.9). The notion of relational trust (ibid, 2002, p.22) is “anchored in the social exchanges attached to key role relationships” found in schools. Relational trust describes the “extent to which there is consonance with respect to each group’s understanding of its and the other group’s expectations and obligations”. The authors provide an example; when a principal holds views about her or his own responsibilities and the responsibilities of teachers that are consistent with those held by the teachers themselves, then there “is a match in assumed values”, which in turn begins to build a foundation for the growth of trust. It is these assumed values that stood out when I was working alongside teachers introducing and implementing Teacher Rounds. The data indicates that the participating teachers were entirely focused on the pupils in their care and they wanted the very best for them.

Collaboration does not just happen and the data gathered during interviews with Teacher Round participants indicate that attempts at collaboration such as coaching triads were ineffective because they were not structured enough, or were too structured by being organized and decided upon by senior leaders and because no consideration was given to the use of appropriate language to talk about teaching and learning. The protocols associated with Teacher Rounds helped to address these issues. Similarly, where leadership decided on the problem that the collaboration was supposed to find solutions to, teachers did not take the collaboration seriously.

6.11 Organizational commitment to teachers’ professional learning

Del Prete (2013) confirms the importance of prioritizing teachers’ learning in the same way as student learning is prioritized. Yet we know that everything that happens in a school is subject to measurement of how it impacts on students. This is for good reasons, but is not always possible or desirable. Improved pupil progress that is attributed to a particular

programme or initiative is not always trustworthy as there are so many other contributing factors at play, particularly the individuality of pupils and factors affecting their learning. Similarly, teacher training and development is beset with advice about how to evaluate teaching and to measure its effectiveness but to date there is no foolproof way of establishing if a particular days' training has made an impact on the performance of teachers or students.

Teacher Rounds were designed to be a way of enabling teachers to learn from each other and to help them improve the quality of their teaching. During the course of this research teachers were very clear that they were not learning or improving their practice from performance management observations and feedback or indeed from the continuing professional development on offer in their schools but they were learning from their participation in Teacher Rounds. This changes the structure and dynamic of teacher development. It stops being a top-down power-based model and becomes a flatter structure where participants are equals. The task now is to convince head teachers of the potential impact of such a professional learning model.

Teachers participating in Teacher Rounds volunteered to take part in the research project. They did this despite the fears many of them had about observation and about being exposed in front of their colleagues. They volunteered because they wanted to learn and they wanted to be better teachers. Sandra expressed her views on Teacher Rounds as professional learning during the final focus group meeting:

I felt it was training on the job with everyone's feedback and I said ok the wonderings were to help me improve and it was not nasty and it was not a criticizing wondering and it's all been really positive. So I think it's been constant training, as we have been going along watching other people in the classroom. It is like a training room, but a really good training room rather than a fall asleep, training room! And it gave more depth into where they (pupils) are coming from. (TA3, Focus Group Meeting, 23.6.2016, L149 -155)

There was a feeling that there was no right way to teach and that every teacher had to find their own path and working and collaborating together was one way for them to do this. Having a supportive school culture (Section 6.6) to promote collaboration was important as we have seen and it is very much concerned with developing strong relationships and trust amongst teachers and amongst teachers and leaders. During Teacher Rounds, it emerged that the trust amongst teachers and between teachers is easier to establish than trust between teachers and leaders.

Elmore (2004) writes about the importance of leaders in creating the right culture for collaboration. He says:

Leaders must create environments in which individuals expect to have their personal ideas and practices subjected to the scrutiny of their colleagues and in which groups expect to have their shared conceptions of practice subjected to the scrutiny of individuals. Privacy of practice produces isolation; isolation is the enemy of improvement. (2004, p.67)

Whilst Elmore's view of collaboration seems to be a rational one it does not mention trust and relationships and could come across as another reason to introduce more accountability measures. Elmore says privacy produces isolation and teachers need to be open to scrutiny. This is something that even teachers would agree with but it is the degree of accountability that is questioned. Teachers feel they have little or no autonomy and agency so it is interesting that Elmore (2004) argues against the notion of teacher autonomy. He states:

Internal accountability systems influence behavior because they reflect an *alignment* within the school of personal responsibility and collective expectations, regardless of the external policy. This alignment of expectations and responsibility is also accompanied by some sense that there will be *consequences* if expectations are not met (p.191).

This comment comes across as vaguely threatening and is unlikely to create a nurturing school culture. When Elmore talks about alignment it is important to note that teachers need to feel involved and consulted on

whole school policy before they can sign up to it. This is why the leader's role is so important in sharing their vision and really consulting staff when deciding on what the whole school priorities are. When Elmore talks of consequence if teachers don't match up to the collective expectations of the school he could be talking about the high stakes performance management procedures and high stake sanctions in terms of salary or being identified as a poorly performing teacher with all that this entails that are very evident in the teaching profession today. It is worth noting that this article was written more than ten years before Elmore's change of heart on doing things to scale and best practice was published (2016).

Louis (2007, p.478) argues that in order to shift a school toward organizational learning and professional community, it requires "rearranging existing resources and the imaginative use of talents and assumes that teacher development necessitates building on human capital that already exists". For instance how much time and resource do schools spend on accountability measures as compared to resources spent on professional learning opportunities? This is something I will discuss in the conclusion and recommendations.

Troen and Boles (2014) argue that it is not only teachers that need to be learners but head teachers also. They say:

Rounds ask teachers to be ongoing learners. In turn, the principal must be a learner and be seen as a learner. Rounds ask teachers to make themselves vulnerable for the sake of improvement. So the principal must be willing to hear feedback. Rounds ask teachers to commit to change their work practice. The principal must make similar commitments. (p.96)

The head teachers who allowed me to work with their teachers to develop Teacher Rounds took a risk. They allowed me to work very closely with their staff in their classrooms and beyond. They agreed to keep well away from the process and allow teachers the freedom to participate without any worry about information being fed back to them. They also took a risk in allowing time (although much of this was the teachers' own time after school) to talk about what they had seen during Rounds.

Allowing teachers the time and space and most importantly the structures to reflect and talk to each other was brave of them because as a result teachers started to question what they were being asked to do.

Heads trusted me as a facilitator and researcher to work with their teachers and they trusted the teachers to make the most of the opportunity. Most Heads did not know what they should be doing now they were not expected to grade lessons (although one of them still was) and all were worried that when Ofsted came in they would need figures at their fingertips about the numbers of good and outstanding (or otherwise) teachers. The threat of an Ofsted Inspection was and is a continuous pressure on schools and teachers forcing them in a particular direction. The power of Ofsted is due to the damaging consequences of a negative inspection. The Teacher Rounds research was one way to open up this discussion. Similarly the general dissatisfaction with CPD was an issue that heads were grappling with but they did not know what to put in its place. All three schools had tried a number of approaches to make professional learning a more worthwhile experience but teachers were still not happy with what was provided.

6.12 School Climate and culture creating the conditions for collaborative learning

School climate and culture had a major influence on relationships within the schools participating in this study. The head teacher or principal is the main player when it comes to creating a culture that supports collaborative working and collegiality (Barth, 2006; Hord, 1997; Sparks, 2003). Collaboration amongst teachers facing similar problems in a school builds trust and expertise and enables schools to implement changes with greater ease. Whilst teachers in all three participating schools were encouraged to collaborate and work with each other, the collaboration was in all cases organized and directed by senior staff. Thus, it was not very effective. For example the opportunity to go and visit another teacher's classroom (School A) was not supported by any

protocols of confidentiality and no time or guidance was given for teachers to discuss what they had seen and learned. Toni explained what went wrong with this initiative:

A year ago we picked names out of a hat and went to observe each other and give feedback. There was no structure to it. I watched a teacher who had come in temporarily because she was struggling so I found feedback really difficult. I did not want to upset her or make her feel bad. (TA1, Interview, L4 – 27)

Moolenaar et al. (2012) argue the major challenge to teacher collaboration is that it is seen as a form of school climate or culture encompassing “norms of collegiality, trust, and social support; a management instrument to enhance school effectiveness; and a characteristic of a professional learning community” (p.8). If collaboration is seen as a management instrument or tool it is doomed to failure. In such circumstance they will be suspicious and will not own the process.

The teachers participating in Teacher Rounds all belonged to a team of some sort. They were either part of a phase group in primary school or in a department or faculty team in secondary schools. In this way they were not isolated as such. They were led by a middle leader and had regular opportunities to meet and to share their practice. However, the reality was that these meetings were based around implementing school policy and teachers did not believe they had a say in what was discussed. Indeed, they felt that if they raised any controversial issues or were seen to be a dissenting voice, their careers would suffer. Subsequently, in many cases they stayed quiet and did not express their opinion. During post-Round discussions teachers were not under the same scrutiny or surveillance and they participated as equals therefore they felt confident in using their own voice and expressing their own opinions.

Shulman (2004) and Sutton and Shouse (2016) argue that teaching is a complex process and claim teachers and school leaders crave more meaningful collaborative experiences to help make sense of that complexity. They suggest that collaboration between lead practitioners

and teachers is a powerful professional development activity that can help teachers improve their subject knowledge, think about teaching strategies in different ways and learn new ideas to try in the classroom. However, this model depends on teachers learning from experts rather than from their peers rather than from each other. Many schools now have lead practitioners, and teachers who are struggling with one or two aspects of teaching are often advised to see them teach. However, teachers involved in this study said that they found this daunting. They did not feel that they could match up to that person because they were not like them. Teacher Rounds have no experts and no one teacher is valued more than the other. Equity was an important part of the protocols.

Research claims that teachers who work together have proved more likely to remain in the profession because they feel valued and supported in their work (Beane, 1998; Barth, 1999). This is an important consideration in view of the recruitment and retention crisis the UK is currently experiencing. Gore et al. (2016) in a huge randomized research project on the study of Quality Teacher Rounds in Australia found that the quality of teaching improved for those teachers who were involved in the research and, even more importantly, that teacher morale and their school culture had improved by participating in the project (ibid, p.16).

Louis (2012) points to the sense of urgency and pressure that exists in schools. She says the “tasks and challenges are increasing annually, as it is the sense that resources will never meet the needs” (p.484). Furthermore, the challenge to keep on raising standards despite the many barriers faced by so many pupils cannot be matched by the resources available to tackle these issues. In fact the resources are decreasing whilst the barriers are increasing. Louis (2012) argues that whilst this environment creates challenges, it increases the need for opportunities for teachers to engage in professional learning communities. The data in the previous chapter confirms that Teacher

Rounds groups become learning communities and help to change the culture in schools.

6.7 Teacher Rounds as cultivators of Teacher Agency and Professionalism

Biesta et al. (2015) defined teachers' agency as being about teachers' active contribution to shaping their work and its conditions. The authors suggest that some policy makers see teacher agency as a weakness and seek to replace it with evidence-based and data-driven approaches. The Teacher Rounds process opened up the issue of teachers and their agency in the schools they worked in. Although they did not use this word specifically, they made it clear that they felt they had little autonomy and/or voice. They wanted to be more in control of their work and rejected the notion of compliance and direction – even though this was a fact of life for them. The only teacher in the sample who was not particularly worried about having more control was David (School B) but that was probably because he was leaving the school and profession at the end of the academic year. In effect, the participants felt they were deliverers of education programmes, rather than professionals who were trusted to make decisions about curriculum, pedagogy or assessment. They were expected to do as they were told and they did this to the best of their ability.

As an explanation of this lack of agency Ellis (2011) illustrates what happened to English teachers during the introduction and implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. He refers to the “coercion” involved in the implementation of the strategy (p.28), and the restrictions on English teachers' individual autonomy, which he asserts led to the ‘de-professionalism’ of teachers. The central issue for him was the profound shift in responsibility for developing professional knowledge, away from English teachers to central government (ibid, p.29). Although the National Strategies are no longer in place, the legacy of their introduction and implementation is alive and well in many of our schools. The legacy

is one of control and compliance and is not about engaging teachers in discussions and understanding around curriculum and pedagogy. The data in Chapter 5 show that teachers rarely took risks in their own classrooms, especially when they were being formally observed. They were frightened to try something different in case it went wrong and they might be judged as a less than competent teacher. The data gleaned from interviews describes how teachers resent and were stressed by the constant checking, monitoring and judging processes in their schools. In contrast, Teacher Rounds helped teachers to reflect on and understand what was happening in their own classrooms and across the school and they started to ask questions and to use their voice.

Biesta et al. (2015) suggest that many of the discourses of modern schooling are characterized by an “absence of opportunities for systematic sense making in schools, and as such teachers are regularly left confused about their role” (p.636). The authors suggest much of the blame for this situation lies in “externally imposed systems” (p.636) which alter the dynamics of schooling, leading to incremental change without the development of a clear philosophy of education to underpin the changes, and a professional collegiality that enables its development.

Ellis (2011, p.42) describes teachers being reduced to becoming “deliverers”. He argues that the risk is that the profession now judges itself by the “efficiency of its delivery”, rather than by its contribution to the future of the knowledge-base and its responsiveness to changing and diverse populations of children. In other words, if teachers are mostly used to deliver agreed education programmes, they will not be able to respond to the diverse needs of their students. They will become deskilled as teachers. Several decades of government policies have worked to de-professionalize teachers by taking agency away from them and replacing it with prescriptive curricula and oppressive regimes of testing and inspection (Biesta, 2010). The danger is that teachers are not being encouraged to ask questions or to reflect about what they are teaching.

Teacher agency (Chapter 2, Section 2.10.2) has been eroded over the last twenty years and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993, p.220) argue for teachers adopting an inquiry stance as they suggest teacher research is a natural agent of change: “doing classroom research changes teachers and the teaching profession from the inside out, from the bottom up, through changes in teachers themselves”. The data included in the previous chapter clearly shows that teachers have had little opportunity to be included in decisions about curriculum or pedagogy other than workshops about particular schemes or programmes. Before Teacher Rounds they accepted this fact as normal even though they clearly didn't want to be told how to teach. The post-Round discussions showed that this led to a greater understanding of the teaching and learning process and gave them some agency in their own profession.

Participating in Teacher Rounds gave teachers an opportunity to reflect and to talk to each other in a safe and structured environment. The data shows that teachers were generally unhappy with the professional learning provided for them and they were resentful of the surveillance (Foucault 1977a) and performance culture that clouded their everyday experience. They were clear these processes did not help them to improve their practice (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1). Teachers did not understand why particular issues were whole school priorities and were not generally involved in major policy decisions. The desire for consistency across the school had led (as the data shows) to a compliance culture where teachers taught what they were told to teach in a way they were instructed to teach. They became risk averse and were reticent about questioning feedback and school policy. They did not believe they had any permission or agency to question the status quo and did not want to be seen as trouble-makers or to be defensive or resistant to change.

There has been very little research on the effectiveness of Teacher Rounds but those small-scale studies (Chapter 3) indicate that where they are introduced they are popular with teachers and are seen as

effective professional learning. Philpott and Oates (2016) writing about their study of Learning Rounds (based on the Instructional Rounds model) point to the lack of attention given to developing rich problems of practice. Other criticisms were around the lack of external input into the process Rounds process and the fact that teachers were unwilling to challenge each other during post-Round discussions (Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1).

Teachers exist within a system that is largely concentrated around performance cultures where teachers are expected to perform to a particular standard and are expected to reach pre-set targets. Sachs and Mockler (2012) argue that performance cultures can have several consequences for teacher professionalism and teacher professional identity. Some of these consequences are that they:

privilege the technical aspects of teaching to the neglect of the relational and teachers' ability to make professional judgments and they serve to subvert teacher autonomy to the extent that teacher become implementers of policy rather than arbiters of their own practice. (2012, p.33)

The authors claim that as a consequence trust is eroded as teachers increasingly operate in a climate of surveillance. The data show that the experience of being checked and monitored and scrutinized was a common experience of the teachers involved in this study.

Elliott (2001) suggests performance cultures within public service organizations imply a low level of trust in the professionalism of their employees:

the more persuasive the gaze of audit the less trust invested in the moral competence of its members to respond to the needs of the people they serve. (p.201)

The logic appears to be if you can demonstrate improvement through the use of objective metrics then trust in government can be reinstated because clearly improvement has been objectively demonstrated. However, times are changing and more is being written about performance management cultures and the culture of audit that is rife in

our schools. In a recent interview in Schools Week (30th November 2017), Kevan Collins, Education Endowment Foundation commented on the culture of audit:

– compliance is very deep in the system; moving from that to a professional trust culture and an institutional learning culture at a system level is the goal.

Yet this culture still prevails and we have not learned from the past. The data included in the previous chapter is testimony to the fact that teachers participating in Teacher Rounds were oppressed by the constant checking and monitoring systems. This led to anxiety and stress and an obsession with judgment and grades. Although, they could rationalize this and even though they did not always respect the judgment of leaders they still took to heart any negative comment or judgment on their lesson (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.5). It was clear that teachers participating in the study cared deeply about the way SLT managers viewed them. They wanted to be good teachers and wanted SLT to acknowledge what they were doing right rather than what they were not doing. Their confidence was lacking. However, during the course of Teacher Rounds individual confidence grew as participants were able to talk through what was happening in their classroom with their colleagues. Ellie (School B) was the only participant who continued to doubt herself as we neared the end of the process. The feedback she received from her colleagues did help combat some of her negative feelings about her own performance.

Gentle (2001) argues that at best, teacher professional standards (Teacher Standards) are about “reinstating trust in the profession in the community, so that there is clear evidence that students are learning and parents’ expectations are being met and quality is not diminished. However, the reality is that rather than ‘standards’, standardization becomes the effect of these processes of accountability and compliance. Much of teachers’ time is spent on being seen to perform as much as on actual performance” (p.35). The author claims, the quality that these standards set out to measure, become “illusionary” (ibid, 2001, p.36). The data suggests that teachers involved in this study were very much

aware of the performance and evaluation culture in their schools and they “played the game’ (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.5) by planning and teaching safe lessons when being observed as part of the performance management process. Without exception, the teachers who participated in Teacher Rounds did not mention or refer to Teacher Standards even though these were part of their performance management targets. They viewed them as being part of the performance culture that was used to criticize them.

The professionalism and de-professionalism of teachers is discussed in some detail in Chapter 2 (Section 2.10.1). However, Elmore’s (2003b) view of teachers as professionals was not very positive. He says:

We subscribe to a peculiar view of professionalism: that professionalism equals autonomy in practice. So when I come to your classroom and say, “Why are you teaching in this way?” it is viewed as a violation of your autonomy and professionalism. Consider what would happen if you were on an airplane and the pilot came on the intercom as you were starting your descent and said, “I’ve always wanted to try this without the flaps.” Or if your surgeon said to you in your pre-surgical conference, “You know, I’d really like to do this the way I originally learned how to do it in 1978.” Would you be a willing participant? (p.12)

Surprisingly, teacher autonomy is not something Elmore (2003b) wanted to encourage. He compares teaching to the role of a pilot or surgeon. While he makes a relevant point these roles are not very similar to those of teaching. They are largely technical and mechanical and have an agreed way of carrying out their role. Teaching on the other hand has no one-way of instructing pupils and there is no one definition of what good teaching looks like.

Throughout this study the issue of hierarchies and power relationships are raised as a barrier to teacher collaboration and are covered in some detail in Chapter 2 (Section 2.9).

6.8 Power Relationships

The trust between teachers and administrators is less trusting than

between teacher and teacher (Bryk and Schneider, 2002) and therefore teachers often look mistrustful at a leadership-initiated change. This point is made clear in the previous chapter where teachers talk about senior leaders judging their lessons. The distrust between teachers and the leadership team was stark and acted as a barrier to teachers accepting and owning feedback that came from this quarter. This is a very serious issue for schools. This distrust was not about the individual person but about the hierarchical structure of the school and the perceived power they hold. Danielson (2009) argues that conversations about practice constitute a critical vehicle for professional learning. However, she points out that professional conversations between teachers and administrators and amongst teaching colleagues occur within the context of the schools' organizational structure and power and hierarchical structure.

Del Prete (2013, p.13) says collaboration needs to be founded on "respect" for teachers as professionals and for the challenging work of teaching. His view is that collaboration will not be effective if that respect is not there. The findings suggest that the circle or continuum of trust increased as the group hosted and observed more Rounds.

When introducing Teacher Rounds into a school, the commitment of the principal or head teacher and senior leadership team was an essential aspect of successful implementation. Although they were not directly involved in Rounds, they allowed me as the researcher into the school to speak to teachers and to ask them to volunteer to participate. They also had to agree to arrange cover for teachers involved, which was a considerable undertaking. Furthermore, they agreed not to ask for direct feedback on what happened during Rounds and certainly not to ask about the performance of individual teachers. This was a risky move as it meant that they would have no control about what happened. However, the groups promised to produce a general report about what went well during the research project and what they had learned. This report would also contain recommendations that the head and senior team might consider implementing in their schools. Without the support of the head

teacher and senior team we could not have implemented Teacher Rounds. However, this support was from a distance and senior managers are not direct participants of Teacher Rounds. However, there was one exception in Boathouse School where the Assistant Head was part of the group. She was someone who was trusted by the teachers and was accepted as a fully-fledged member of the Rounds group. As with everything else in schools it seems that good relationships are key to change and development and indeed to trust. This arrangement worked very well in this school and could work in other schools participating in Teacher Rounds. However, the dynamics of the group can be difficult if the senior or middle leader included in the group is unable to leave their performance and auditing roles behind them and join the group as an equal. Establishing trust amongst the group in such cases might be problematic but this depends very much on the school culture and on the individuals concerned. In such instances where a senior or middle leader is part of the group the role of the facilitator becomes even more important in making sure no one person dominates discussions. Teachers involved with this research participated on an equal basis and this proved to be another important element in successful implementation.

Trust in the leadership in all three schools was superficial and appeared to be centered on the accountability and audit structures and cultures that are imposed by head teachers and senior leadership teams. Even though relationships between teachers and SLT in all three schools involved in the research was generally good (according to the teachers), when it came to the subject of accountability and performance management there was a lot of fear and anxiety expressed. Furthermore, there was a general lack of respect for the leadership teams' ability to advise them about improving their teaching and therefore they became "passive" (Danielson, 2009, p.4) when receiving feedback from observations and during professional learning activities. This meant that the time, energy and resources invested in the bulk of the audit and accountability processes were wasted and were not doing what the

leadership team had expected them to do, that is improve the quality of teaching (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1).

Teacher Rounds are a form of peer coaching because there are no experts and no hierarchical structures involved and they allow teachers to learn from each other as collegial peers. However, it is worth remembering that in reality, “teachers may remain conscious of whose opinions hold more weight, based on the position the sharer holds at school, and submit to those who are in authority” (Hofstede, 2001, p.98). In other words, if a member of the senior team is part of the discussion group, participants may try to modify their responses. Furthermore, Hofstede (2001) argues that the value-concept of power distance is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of a society expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (p.98). The issues for leadership to consider when implementing Teacher Rounds is something that will be discussed in more detail in the conclusion to this thesis.

Ning et al. (2012) suggested that team collegiality is a significant predictor of team collaboration and suggests a sustained effort should be made by school leaders to encourage positive interactions among teachers (Stockard and Lehman 2004). The claim is that provision of supportive conditions for teachers to allow them to interact with each other can facilitate the cultivation of a collegial atmosphere and thus encourage communication (Barth 1990; Heck and Marcoulides 1996; Hord 2004). In order to help reduce power differentials and bolster the development of authentic collegial relationships; “teachers should also be involved in school decision making and policy formulation and be given the freedom to function relatively unimpeded by superiors” (Pang, 2003, p.301) to allow for greater exercise of autonomy in professional judgment. This is sound advice but may be unrealistic in today’s climate. In order to avoid the feeling of being done to rather than being done with, teachers need to have a voice in their own professional learning and in how and what they teach. In order for this to happen, the leadership of the school may need

to re-evaluate the way teachers are directed and controlled in an effort to achieve consistency of practice.

The role of leadership in creating a positive school culture and climate for both pupils and teachers to learn and to create the right conditions for Teacher Rounds to be implemented is a crucial one and the results and outcomes of this research has a number of implications for them which will be considered in the conclusion.

6.9 Discussion of Findings in Relation to the Theoretical Framework

6.9.1 Surveillance, performativity, normalization and power

When carrying out interviews with Round participants it became very clear that the constant surveillance that Foucault (1977a) describes as a type of invisible discipline is alive and well in the three school in my sample. This invisible discipline results in teacher self-regulation because of the fear that someone is watching their every move. Foucault (1977a, p.184) writes: “Like surveillance, and with it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power”. Foucault identified certain knowledges and practices as central to the normalization of values and institutions of modern society. Ofsted has done the same for schools. By normalization Foucault (1977a) means the establishment of rules and judgments around the idea of a norm, so that rather than coercing subjects, forcing them to follow the rules, institutions are judged as successful in so far as they educate people to obey particular regimes. Perryman (2006) argues that for schools, this is linked to assessment, appraisal and evaluation, as teachers become agents and subjects of measurements. Reading Perryman’s paper was a revelation to me as it explained why schools have developed in the way they have. When a school is on the edge and has been placed (or is in danger of being placed) in special measures certain adjustments are made to ensure teachers are conforming to expectations. Perryman (2006) tracks the change in teachers’ accountability along with the rise in the audit culture in teaching, and the increase in the power of Ofsted.

6.9.2 *Performativity*

Perryman (2006) locates special measures regimes in the context of Lyotard's (1984) performativity, Foucault's normalization and the school effectiveness literature. Performativity is about performing the normal within a particular context. In the context of school inspection this means that lessons are taught in a particular way and school policies and documentation reflect the expected discourse. Performativity is a term first used by Lyotard (1984) when he suggested that postmodern society is obsessed with efficiency and effectiveness and that this efficiency is increasingly "measured according to an input/output ratio" (1984, p. 88). This has led to schools being judged in terms of outcome and performance. Thus league tables, SATs results and inspection reports are increasingly the measurements by which schools and teachers are judged. Performativity is linked with the increased accountability and surveillance under which teachers find themselves and their schools being judged in terms of outcome and performance. Jeffrey (2002, p.1) notes that "A performativity discourse currently pervades teachers' work. It is a discourse that relies on teachers and schools instituting self-disciplinary measures to satisfy newly transparent public accountability and it operates alongside a market discourse". The Ofsted criteria become the norm that schools and teachers strive to achieve and leads to the normalization of teaching expectations.

Perryman (2006) claims Ofsted, and particularly special measures, form an important part of the disciplinary regime in education and quotes (Lonsdale and Parsons, 1998, p.110) who claim "The exercise of school inspection [is] one of improvement through threat and fear, an intentionally disciplining role". Foucault (1977a, p.170) wrote that "the success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination". This quote accurately describes the previous experience of teachers

participating in Teacher Rounds. The fear and anxiety of formal lesson observations and work scrutiny in preparation for the next Ofsted inspection had left a lasting legacy in the minds of many of the teachers in the study and they spoke about this openly during their interviews and in the post-Round discussions. This is why Rounds are so important in providing a means by which these power systems can be challenged and teachers can take back some control.

Perryman (2006, p.148) argues that this “vigilant eye” is increasingly everywhere, through the increasing use of accountability in education, and no more so than within a special measures regime. She uses the idea of “panoptic performativity” (Foucault 1995) to explore the experience of undergoing inspection. Panoptic performativity describes a regime in which frequency of inspection and the sense of being perpetually under surveillance leads to teachers performing in ways dictated by the discourse of inspection in order to escape the regime. Perryman (2006) argues lessons are taught to a rigidly prescribed routine, school documentation and policies closely mirror the accepted discourses of school effectiveness and the whole school effort is directed away from education and towards passing inspection. Although Perryman’s study was about a school in special measures I would argue that the principles of vigilance and surveillance, accountability and performance cultures are now firmly part and parcel of almost every school in the UK. Even when schools are classed as ‘outstanding’ many (including one in my sample) still tend to operate a panoptic performativity agenda and this is evidenced from the data included in Chapter 5.

Perryman (2006) argues that in order for a school to be removed from special measures teachers must adhere strictly to a rigid and predetermined recipe for success. This recipe is based on school effectiveness theories, and uses performativity and normalization as its mechanisms. It is assumed that all schools can follow the same recipe for success, and any deviation from this norm can be an indicator that a school is failing. This ignores the individual socio-economic contexts in

which schools are located. Performativity becomes the mechanism in which schools demonstrate, through documentation and pedagogy that they have been normalized. I believe it is this normalization where teachers are encouraged to teach to a formula or a script has restricted the teacher professional learning. If teachers or schools don't adopt what is seen as normal ways of teaching they risk being classed as unsuccessful which is probably why school leaders are so grounded on following the path laid down by Ofsted and the School Effectiveness agenda. Teachers are the (often unhappy) recipients of these policies and practices. This is the context in which teachers work on a daily basis.

All of the participants in this study had been trained and worked within a system (to different degrees) where schools have adopted particular regimes and recipes based along Ofsted criteria (as described by Perryman 2006) for good and outstanding teaching. Furthermore, they operated within strict rules and regulations that decided what they taught, how they taught and managed behavior and assessment. This did not differ even in School B which was judged Outstanding that operated along the same lines. The participants had known nothing different and had little opportunity to reflect or think about the way things were or question if they could be different. However, participating in Teacher Rounds did open up opportunities for discussion and questions and provided a safe forum to express their dissatisfaction with the system.

6.10 What changed as a result of participating in Teacher Rounds?

I have explicitly outlined what happened when teachers participated in Teacher Rounds in the Chapter 5 and in the analysis provided above. In what follows I critically examine the unique space created by Teacher Rounds that enabled teachers to reflect on/ and change their practice.

6.10.1 Giving responsibility for professional learning back to teachers

The evidence from my findings suggested that amongst my sample Teacher Rounds addressed and halted the de-professionalization of teachers and enabled them to reflect and question what was happening in the classrooms they visited. They decided on their own problem of practice and what specifically they wanted feedback on. The protocols ensured teachers felt able to challenge themselves, each other and the performance and compliance culture in their schools. The confidentiality clause included in contracts allowed them to use their voice in their professional lives. They began to question the status quo and took more responsibility for their own development. They became braver in terms of taking risks in the classroom during Rounds and in the post-Round discussions. They also became braver in terms of opening up dialogue with senior leaders about their professional practice.

There was real trust amongst the three Round groups and this was a powerful vehicle for collaboration and collegiality. Without this trust, Rounds could not be successfully introduced or implemented as described in Chapter 4 Section 4.4.8 where the lack of trust meant I felt unable to work with the school as part of this research. The teachers in the three sample schools were self-reflective and were well motivated. They wanted to be better teachers. They were very self-aware and knew what their areas for development were. However, they were riddled with guilt and self-doubt which was incapacitating for some who thought they would never be good enough. They clearly wanted to be great teachers so that the pupils in their care achieved the very best they were capable of. Day (2009) argues that teaching involves a moral commitment to serve the interests and students and society and also involves ideals. Similarly, Hargreaves and Tucker (1991) writing about teacher guilt point to the commitment to care of pupils and the moral obligation of teachers (Chapter 2, Section 2.9.1). This commitment to their pupils was palpable amongst my participants and is evident from the data recorded in Chapter 5. There was only one teacher in School B (David) who did not suffer from the same angst as others and was more relaxed about what he was doing.

The Teacher Rounds process did not come with any sanctions or consequences. In other words if a lesson went wrong it would not be reported to senior management (unless there was a safeguarding issue) and it would not be recorded anywhere. The confidentiality contract was reassuring and helped to develop trust and encouraged teachers (given permission) to take risks in their classrooms. They were set no targets following Teacher Rounds, although they all voiced what they had learned and what they would do differently or as well as, during the post Round discussion. However, there was no pressure for them to demonstrate or evidence what they had learned. However, we did observe some of these changes/developments in the second cycle of Rounds (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.5) where teachers started to take risks in the classroom. Most importantly, the Rounds did not lead to a judgment, which was something all the Round teachers dreaded and feared.

Teachers participated in Teacher Rounds on an equal basis where there were no hierarchies or power structures. There was no evaluation or judgment and therefore the process was open and transparent. Teachers could speak out without fear of retribution and as the data shows they did. They were able to question the way things had been done and the way they were expected to plan and teach. This was probably the most powerful aspect of the process simply because it was so unusual. Teachers are rarely given the opportunity to learn together without the influence of managers and leaders. The negative effects of surveillance (Foucault 1977a) is mentioned at different points throughout this study. Some might say that that Teacher Rounds are also about surveillance as peers scrutinize each others teaching. The difference is that Teacher Rounds have a different purpose and are not used to evaluate or judge teachers. Instead they are a professional learning opportunity. This fact changes the whole premise.

6.10.2 Teacher Rounds is about the specific detail of local context, specific practices.

Children are individuals and teachers involved in the Teacher Rounds research were fully aware that a one-size fits all approach will not meet the needs of all the children in their classrooms. Therefore, they were keen to add to their teaching repertoire strategies and ideas for reaching individual children. Teacher Rounds allowed them to see colleagues in the same school but in different phases or curriculum areas teach and they were therefore able to learn from each other. Rounds are not based on best practice and teachers are not expected to copy what another teacher was doing. In fact they said that being sent to see a lead practitioner or an expert teacher was a daunting experience as they felt they could not perform in the same way. They were different people with different personalities and styles and could not mimic best practice. Elmore's comments about best practice (Elmore 2016) mentioned earlier in this chapter are timely as sharing best practice has been and still is promoted as the way to help teachers improve their practice.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) assert that: "no one can empower teachers to respond to cultural diversity or to the many other complex challenges that face today's teachers" (p.64). Instead, they argue that only teachers themselves can interrogate their assumptions and their interpretive frameworks and then decide on the actions that are appropriate for their local contexts. This is the basic presumption around Teacher Rounds. There is no prescription and no right way of thinking or teaching. Elmore's (2016) most recent views on best practice and doing things to scale outlined earlier in this chapter are clear about the problems of imposing prescriptive solutions on schools and teachers. Instead teachers need to find local solutions to the different barriers they and their students face in the classroom.

Sir Kevan Collins, chief executive of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) in a recent podcast (7.12.2017) says research should empower and not be another 'stick to beat teachers with'. He argues that the last thing he wants is for teachers to log on to the organization's EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit and read it like a prescription: "We are

absolutely not looking to nail what works – there are no absolutes in this”. The data shared in the previous chapter confirm that there are no absolutes. Teachers need to find what works for them and for the children in their classroom.

Del Prete’s (2013) Teacher Rounds and City et al.s (2009) Instructional Rounds model presents a dual focus on the need for a common language and on scaffolding and inquiry. Both models acknowledged the need to base inquiry on local evidence and diagnosis of local conditions by building a descriptive language that allowed participants to describe and analyze what they were observing.

6.10.3 *Teacher’s beliefs and values*

Despite the fact that the teachers participating in Teacher Rounds came from three different schools in different parts of London, and that one was a primary school, they expressed very similar views about their beliefs and their values as teachers. Teachers set out a range of issues related to pupils’ enjoyment of learning. They wanted their students to learn but they also wanted them to enjoy learning. They all felt they could make a difference to the lives of individuals. Furthermore, they wanted to be better teachers. Biesta et al. (2015, p.629) describe teacher beliefs as falling into three categories: “beliefs about children and young people, beliefs about teaching and beliefs about educational purpose”. However, they argue that these beliefs appeared to be “fairly restricted in scope, more geared to short-term goals, and predominantly articulated via the language of recent policy documentation” (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2). This is an important point and was a feature of the data collected during Teacher Rounds. Teachers had to work really hard to leave the language of recent policy documentation behind during interviews and discussions. This proved to be difficult as participants had to find new unfamiliar describing words when talking about what they had seen and heard in Rounds. In the early stages I had to correct them when they used Ofsted and Government policy jargon. (Chapter 2, Section 2.10.1).

The transcripts of interviews, post-Round discussions and focus group meetings in this study were similar to those in the Biesta et al. (2015) study, in that teachers “convey the strong sense of teachers’ professional responsibility towards their students” (p.629). Furthermore, that “All the teachers believed that the relationships they developed with their students were critical” (p.629). This was also the case in this study.

Biesta et al. (2015) suggest that these teachers seemed to lack a “systematic set of professional discourses” (p.635) over and above those provided by the language of policy and they suggest this potentially reduced their agency in developing the curriculum through limiting their potential to imagine different futures, and through denying them the language with which to engage critically with policy formation (ibid, p.636). This was certainly the case during this study where teachers often reverted to the language or jargon they had become accustomed to – the language of policy and accountability. They had to work really hard to describe rather than interpret what they had seen and heard in the classroom and to think carefully about the language they used when feeding back to each other.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993, p.93/94) say that teacher talk is essential for teacher research, particularly ways of describing, discussing and debating teaching. In this way she says teachers engage in joint construction of knowledge through conversations. In order to achieve this they often have to learn a whole new vocabulary to describe and debate what they saw, as they did during Teacher Rounds.

The schools I carried out my research in were not oppressive and I don’t believe that teachers were obviously coerced into delivering prescriptive programmes. However, there was an expectation that they would carry out their role in a prescribed way according to school policy. Therefore they had little autonomy in what and how they taught or assessed children and they had little opportunity to discuss or question or understand why they were doing things. An example of this was when a teacher in Boathouse School said that as a consequence of participating

in Rounds they now understood why certain issues had been designated as whole school priorities, which they never did before (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.6). As a result, they felt involved in looking for solutions and ways to overcome these particular barriers.

6.11 Summary

The Rounds groups were volunteers and came with a range of experiences and expertise. None of the individuals had any experience of Rounds and became quickly engaged and immersed in the process and protocols. The fact that there were no experts and there was no “right way” of teaching meant that participants felt they were valued equally and all had something to bring to the group. Traditional hierarchies and power structures existed in all the schools in the sample and dominated teachers working lives. Teacher Rounds were free from the influence of senior leaders and performance and accountability agendas and were largely owned by the participants. This was a very different type of professional learning from anything they had been used to. Teacher Rounds broke down teacher isolation and brought individuals with different knowledge, skills, and expertise together in a structured environment where professional conversations could take place.

Although many of the findings are around teachers making sense of Teacher Rounds the most relevant findings to emerge from this study could be described as emotional responses, in that participating teachers developed strong relationships, emotional bonds and learned to trust each other. The Rounds protocols helped turn snatched conversations amongst teachers into “a more formal learning process” and they “encouraged disciplined in-depth, productive collegial discussions and problem solving” (Del Prete, 2013, p.18).

The conversations and quotations included in the previous chapter are indicators of the trust that existed and developed over the period of the research. Teachers had previous experience of formal performance observations and feedback, which had in their opinion led to stress,

anxiety and fear and did not help them improve their practice. This “performance culture” (Sachs and Mockler, 2012, p.33) and Foucault’s (1977a) surveillance culture were constantly alluded to throughout the research and there was no doubt as to the damaging effect it had on individual teachers. Because of this, there was not a lot of trust in the system. Teachers described a “compliance” culture (Sachs 2005, p.581) they had been trained in and were still expected to follow. This compliance was based around the standards agenda and a set of expected outcomes that therefore ensured teachers were accountable and compliant and that they conformed to expectations.

During Teacher Rounds participants felt free to express their opinions, their areas for development (which they described as weaknesses) and their guilt during the post-Round discussions. The knowledge that they were not being judged or evaluated was powerful and promoted open discussion. They were able to have professional conversations (Danielson 2009, Timperley 2007) and were able to be critical of each other using the protocols of Rounds.

Teacher Rounds gave teachers the opportunity to collaborate and work together in a meaningful way. Although participating teachers had worked with phase partners and department teams developing schemes of work, marking policies and undertaking joint planning, they had not worked for any length of time with colleagues from different parts of the school. They had had little opportunity to see each other teach or even to visit each other’s classrooms. However, there was a willingness amongst participants to trust others in the Rounds group from the very start but there is no doubt that working closely together in a structured way cemented that trust and built stronger working relationships.

Teacher Rounds are a practical way of encouraging teachers to participate in open-ended inquiry in schools. This inquiry stance described in Chapter 2 by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) means learning is constantly evolving and is self-managing. At a recent seminar

hosted by CITED at Kings College University, London (14.2.2018) Cochran-Smith defined what she meant by “stance”. She said “The metaphor is intended to capture the ways we stand, the ways we see, and the lenses we see through as educators...” She continued, “Across the life span a research stance provides a kind of grounding – a place to put one’s feet – within the changing cultures of reform and competing political agendas” (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999, 2008). Learning is never done as teachers participating in Teacher Rounds kept discovering. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) argue: “When groups of teachers have the opportunity to work together as highly professionalized teacher researchers, they become increasingly articulate about issues of equity, hierarchy, and autonomy and increasingly critical of the *technocratic* model that dominates much of school practice” (p.21). This raises the subject of teachers as professionals (Biesta et al. 2015) and the concept of teachers as transformative intellectuals, who have the potential to change their own teaching practices. The data included in the results chapter shows that participating in Teacher Rounds provided the right conditions and the right culture for teachers to thrive. The protocols acknowledge that there are no experts and no hierarchies in the Rounds group. This is important, as it is very different from most teachers’ everyday experience. Teachers Rounds are about reflection and change but are mostly about individual teachers changing elements of their practice. They are not about system wide change and are not designed to find solutions that can be passed on as best practice.

Adopting an inquiry stance builds on the practitioners’ desire to bring about a change in their own practice. Teachers volunteering to participate in this study clearly wanted to improve their practice in the classroom. They wanted to get better but found that the mechanisms to help them become better teachers in their schools were not effective and they were looking for something new. Teacher research is the subject of much discussion and debate as the call for evidence-based teaching grows however, the notion of teachers as researchers usually involves deciding on a research question, data collection and analysis and writing up

findings. The problem is that teachers often don't know what questions to ask as they have limited experience. Taking an inquiry stance means the learning is more personal to the individual, the learning is ongoing and is never finished. The Teacher Round inquiry takes place in the context of the classroom and is therefore, very relevant to the participants involved. Sir Kevan Collins, Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) in a TES Podagogy (7.12.2017), asserts that research is only useful when it is viewed in the context of a teacher's own classroom. Furthermore, he argues that research-informed teaching is:

about being evidence-backed or evidence-informed. What I do not want it to be is another stick to beat teachers with, someone else telling them what to do. All we can ever do is tell them what worked, not what will work.

In Teacher Rounds there are no experts and nobody tells teachers what they should be doing. Instead there is full discussion on the evidence collected by the Rounds group where teachers reach their own conclusions and decide on their next steps.

6.12 Emerging questions

It was clear that teachers participating in Teacher Rounds learned to trust each other and subsequently learned from each other. They took charge of their own learning and they challenged themselves and the way things are done in schools. They started to use their voice and they shared very intimate details about their working lives. Sometimes it was difficult to hear. During the course of the research several questions emerged.

1. If the most powerful influence on teachers are other teachers (Little,1982) and (Lieberman,1990) why are we not giving them more opportunities to learn from each other? Although much thought has been given to professional learning programmes in schools it is clear that what is provided is directed by senior leaders according to whole school priorities not according to individual teacher needs and desires. Teachers say they don't improve their teaching by participating in these activities so the question is why are we doing them?

2. If we can we acknowledge that there is no one-way to teach and there are no 'absolutes' why are we obsessed with consistency of practice, best practice and expert teachers?
3. Why are we still using models of accountability and performance management based on old-fashioned outdated notions about how to get out of special measures (Perryman, 2006)?
4. Are we making best uses of the resources we have in schools? The resources used by SLT on constantly monitoring and checking teachers is huge but not many schools actually work out the costs in monetary terms. If they measured these costs in terms of outputs (does this monitoring and checking improve the quality of teaching?) would they still think this was the right approach to take?
5. Schools talk about collaboration and collegiality which means responsibility and authority are shared equally by colleagues rather than managers. However, this is rarely the case and collegiality is largely superficial as managers insist on managing the process. Similarly collaboration is often directed by senior leaders and so is not authentic. Why are we unwilling to allow and enable teachers to support each other in a meaningful way?
6. Is it time to move away from trying to find whole scale solutions to perceived problems that can be imposed across large groups of schools? Instead should we concentrate on individual teachers and schools and let teachers find their own solutions to their own issues?
7. How can we mitigate the toxic effect of hierarchies (Danielson, 2009) and power relationships in schools? Is it time to distribute leadership in a different way and treat teachers as professionals?
8. Equal opportunities and inclusion are words we use when talking about students. Is it time to look at equity in relation to teachers?

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of sixteen teachers in three London schools who volunteered to participate in Teacher Rounds as a Professional Learning Activity and as a Participatory Action Research (PAR) inquiry into their own practice. There was one main research question which simply asked: What happens when teachers participate in Teacher Rounds? It tracks participants' experience of the processes and protocols associated with Teacher Rounds and tries to understand what it was about Teacher Rounds that caused this to happen. Teacher Rounds are viewed as a structured, systematic approach to collaboration and as a professional learning activity and the focus of this research was the process, rather than the outcome in terms of improved classroom practice or improved student progress.

Roberts (2012, p.126) described the Instructional Rounds process as a "culturally disruptive" practice because it is so different from the usual methods of adult learning in schools. This proved to be the case as Teacher Rounds were very different from anything that participating teachers had previously experienced. They were "culturally disruptive" because they gave teachers time and space to use their voice and opportunity to talk about teaching and learning in a structured way. This was risky because it meant that teachers began to question the way they had been doing things for (in some cases) many years. They began to question the status quo. They began to use their voice to have professional conversations with each other (Chapter 5).

Teacher Rounds was a means of working with teachers from their perspective and with a developmental purpose, rather than seeking to deliver research findings to practitioners for them to implement. This was an important distinction and helped persuade schools and individual

teachers to volunteer to participate in the study. Teacher Rounds was viewed as a professional development project for the school and the participating teachers. The research question was therefore sufficiently open ended to allow me to gather evidence about what was happening to teachers as they participated in Teacher Rounds.

Teacher Rounds and Instructional Rounds literature (Del Prete, 2006; City, et al. 2009; Teitel, 2009; Virtue, 2006) is mostly about the process of implementation of the Round protocols. When I came to this study I had no previous, hands-on experience of Rounds but I knew there had been little research previously that looked at Teacher Rounds in quite the same way as my study. I had no idea what would happen when I introduced them in schools in London and therefore I kept my research question open-ended. The research focused on the experience of sixteen teachers in three schools participating in Teacher Rounds over two and three terms.

7.2 Key findings

The key findings from the study are reported in some detail in the Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. However, the key elements that stood out were the importance of trust and good relationships in schools undertaking collaborative activity. It was clear that teachers are constrained in their work and are expected to work within a very tight framework of accountability and performance. This inhibits their ability to take risks and to try alternative approaches to meeting student needs in the classroom. This was illustrated when one of the participants declared she had suddenly realized there is no one-way to teach, "... there is no one practice to teach in as it's very fluid". (TB3, Focus Group Meeting. 23.6.2016, L33). Seeing different practice across a range of subjects and age groups was a revelation, when teachers understood they could be themselves and not try to emulate and copy "good practice" as presented by senior leaders in their schools. During the study it became clear that teachers had a collectivized view of teaching and believed there must be one (normal) way of teaching. All participants in Teacher Rounds, no

matter what their length of service, had experienced directives and training about the school way of planning and teaching and although these directives changed over time according to the latest new ideas and strategies or Ofsted frameworks, it was clear from participants that they were expected to follow school policy and not to teach independently in the classroom. Normalization (Foucault 1977b) in terms of teaching has been accepted as the way forward. Similarly surveillance as described by Foucault (1977b) is used to check-up on whether teachers are doing as they are instructed to do. Teachers lived in fear of retribution if they were seen to be lacking or if they were doing things differently. The consequences of being judged as a struggling or resistant to change teacher were very real and were high stakes. The pressure on teachers was palpable and is evidenced by their conversations and from interviews reported in Chapter 5.

The participating teachers responded to the Teacher Rounds process in a professional manner but also in a very emotional and personal way. Daniels (2009, p.7) reminds us that teaching is “challenging and emotional work, and the more caring a teacher is the more demanding his or her work will be.” The teachers involved in this study (without exception) cared about their pupils and cared about each other. The fact that they volunteered to participate in Rounds meant they wanted to improve their practice. They wanted to do a good job and wanted to do their best for the children in their care. This was evident from their interviews, from the post-Round discussions and from the focus group meetings. The strong relationships and trust in each other as well as the complete absence of judgment resulted in participants having professional conversations and asking sometimes difficult, searching questions of each other. They listened carefully to feedback from their colleagues and were ready to try out new ideas in their own teaching. As a result of these discussions they were more willing to take risks in their classrooms. As part of the participants’ emotional response to the process, teachers opened up about their perceived weaknesses and self-doubts and were self-critical. They expressed guilt and a feeling that they

sometimes let students down. Some expressed a feeling that they would never be good enough. Personal humility and self-reflection were integral to many of the conversations.

Professional learning in the context of the classroom was a relatively new concept for participants and schools, yet this was a powerful learning experience. Because it was based in the classroom it was authentic and teachers were able to see each other teach 'warts and all'. There were no performances and no 'playing the game' when it came to participating in Teacher Rounds.

As I have explained previously I chose to focus mostly at the processes of Teacher Rounds rather than the practical and specific learning described in the transcripts it should be noted that there were many of these and the three groups decided to gather examples of what they had learned together and produce a report for their head teachers that could be shared with other teachers (Appendix 13). School A and School B made presentations about these learnings at staff meetings and they went on independently to set up Teacher Rounds as an ongoing process so that their colleagues could benefit from the same experience. Therefore, participating in Teacher Rounds had a profound effect on their classrooms. This was adult learning as outlined in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2.2.2).

The collegiality and trust amongst Round participants encouraged a supportive school climate and culture. This allowed participants to reflect individually and as a group and to focus on their teaching and student learning. They all agreed that they volunteered to participate in Teacher Rounds because they wanted to become better teachers and continue developing. Round protocols helped to create a structure for future collaboration in the three schools. Teachers understood how important these protocols were and how they could be applied to other collaborative activities. In particular, the protocols around confidentiality were key because teachers felt safe in the knowledge that what happened in the Round, stayed in the Round and would not be reported to SLT.

Teacher Rounds appealed to and cultivated teacher agency that built on teachers' innermost beliefs and values. The professionalism of teachers was a topic that is discussed throughout the study but particularly in Chapter 2, Section 2.10.1) and this was related to the fact that teachers do not feel trusted to do their jobs. Whilst agency and professionalism were not discussed in any great detail during the Teacher Rounds study the conversations and interviews illustrated that teachers generally felt they had little autonomy and no choice but to follow school policy even though they had not been involved in developing that policy.

7.3 The role of leadership

The issue of power relationships and the role of leadership in schools emerged as a huge barrier for collaborative working and collegiate relationships. Constant surveillance and evaluation of teachers in all three schools proved to be an irritant and showed teachers that they were not trusted to do their jobs. More importantly, this made little difference to performance in the classroom and led to distrust and resentment of senior leaders. Power and hierarchy was a limiting factor as teachers felt that they could not speak freely or have a dialogue about their lesson following performance management activities. Participants felt that having a senior leader as part of the Rounds group would limit the conversation and limit the trust. However, this was proved wrong in Boathouse School where a senior leader was part of the group. She was unique in that the group had complete trust in her as a teacher and as a leader.

The leadership of the school sets the school culture and creates (or can create) a safe and secure environment for teachers to grow and develop (Chapter 2, Section 2.9.1). Head teachers, like teachers need to take risks (Troen and Boles, 2014) and need to speak up and stand up for their teachers. They need to resist many of the dictates that come down from above, unless they are sure to benefit their pupils and their staff.

They need to understand that perpetuating punitive processes and policies as described by Perryman (2006) is not improving teaching and is damaging relationships with teachers.

The data reported in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 show that there is suspicion and distrust between senior leaders and teachers even when the school culture is not obviously oppressive. This is largely due to the performance culture that leadership take responsibility for. These act as a barrier to effective collaboration between the teachers and their leaders and managers. Teachers believe that they are constantly being judged and the high stakes associated with this judgment mean that this can affect their salary and their promotional prospects, but mainly it was around teachers wanting their leaders to think well of them and to view them as good teachers. Conversely, teachers were reticent to ask for help or support because they did not want to be seen as struggling but also because they felt their leaders were too busy to listen and they did not want to bother them or to upset them. Breaking down this suspicion and distrust and opening up honest dialogue with teachers is important particularly when it comes to retaining teachers in the profession. (TES,

Jack Worth, NFER School Workforce Lead –June 2018)

7.4 Professional Learning

The three schools participating in this study placed great importance on the professional learning of teachers. There were well-organized training sessions and all had a training plan of some sort. However, teachers involved in Rounds said that this was directed and planned by senior leaders and did not result in the desired learning. Teachers claimed they became passive during this training and regarded most of it as a waste of time and resources. When asked during their initial interviews what sort of CPD was most useful they all said watching other teachers teach and collaborating with each other.

Teacher Rounds focus on the specific detail of local context and specific practices – rather than system-based expectations and priorities. However, one of the questions posed was how the improvement of individual teacher performance contributed to the wider collective development of the practice of teaching across the school. Although Teacher Rounds was designed to develop individual teachers Del Prete (1997) recognized the potential for teachers across the school. The Teacher Round group in each school wanted other teachers in their school to have the same opportunity to learn from each other, and, following my exit two of the research schools set up their own Rounds groups facilitated by the original participants who trained volunteers around the protocols. They negotiated this with their head teachers and now Rounds are part of the Professional Learning programmes in their schools. The third school group had similar aspirations but these were derailed by other issues following a very difficult Ofsted inspection.

This study looks at a variety of different collaborative projects and groups and concludes that collaboration *per se* is not sufficient to improve practice. However, collaboration that is designed and owned by teachers (rather than managers and leaders) that takes teachers into classrooms is effective if it is well structured and operates within clear protocols. Teachers cannot be forced to collaborate but need to choose to collaborate and work together without the issue of power and hierarchy getting in the way. It became clear during the course of this study that collaboration without trust and strong relationships will not be effective. Professional learning that is grounded in classroom practice and authentic collaboration is more likely to be successful (Chapter 2, Sections 2.3 and 2.4).

7.5 Taking an inquiry stance

The inquiry stance allowed teachers to make a difference through allowing teachers to participate in a sustained, systematic, self-critical inquiry during every Round (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993). The inquiry

was based around problems that emerged from classroom practice identified by the teachers themselves. Teacher Rounds as a PAR allowed teachers to inquire into their own practice without having to go through some of the more time consuming aspects of traditional research methods. The outcome was that the inquiry process generated local knowledge that was transferred to all members of the Rounds group and beyond - reports about learning were shared with other teachers, and new Round groups set up.

7.6 Teacher Rounds as a medical model

Both Teacher and Instructional Rounds evolved from a medical model where doctors were trained around a hospital bed (Del Prete 2013, City et al. 2011). Whilst this may have been the case, medical Rounds are rarely used today. Greenhalgh (2018), writing from a medical perspective, suggests a problem with research evidence and the fact that implementing the outcomes of such research is fraught with difficulties. She says that research findings may point to best practice but notes this cannot always be replicated to local contexts. This was true in medical wards because every patient was different and is also true in schools where children, school culture and individual teachers were different. Teacher Rounds work on the premise that there are no experts and there is no one-way of doing things. Medical Ward Rounds on the other hand were based on a hierarchy of experts (the consultants) and the trainees who were expected to replicate what the consultant said and did. Greenhalgh (2018, p.15) argues that research usually addresses a problem that is “one step removed” from one that needs solving. This is often the case with teacher research that is handed down to teachers to implement without having the opportunity to understand or discuss what and why they were implementing it.

7.7 Delimitations and Limitations of this study

7.7.1 Delimitations

A delimitation of the study was the decision to include only one primary school and two secondary schools in the sample. I made this decision because I had limited experience in primary education as compared to secondary. However, in the event Teacher Rounds worked very well in a primary setting.

In addition, the study was delimited by the decision to select participants from the London region only. More diverse data could no doubt have been collected by including a larger number of schools and participants across a wider geographical area. However, my decision to focus this study on London-based schools was based around factors of time to work with schools that were further afield. The developmental aspect involved in this formative intervention required me to be in school (usually) one day a week. As I was collecting a large amount of data I was conscious of maintaining focus and a worry that I might suffer from information overload, which would not have been helpful for my study.

7.7.2 Limitations

A limitation to the study was the fact that I had no choice about who participated in the study. Teachers had to volunteer to take part and as a result we only had two men and no minority teachers in the sample involved in any of the three schools in the study. I had no opportunity to investigate why this was the case as it could have taken me down a different path from the original research topic.

The main limitation of the study was my position as a researcher, facilitator and participant which I have mentioned early on in this thesis (Chapter 4, Section 4.8.6). As such I became very close to all the groups and they were very open and honest with me. This could have led to teachers giving me answers they felt I wanted to hear. Perhaps they were more positive about Teacher Rounds because I had introduced them to the protocols and had worked closely with them over a number of months. They liked me and no doubt wanted to please me, but I have no evidence that this affected their views and opinions about their

experience. On the other hand the positive relationship between researcher and participants proved to be a benefit in that teachers trusted me and shared their thoughts and feelings freely with me.

The cost of providing cover for teachers to participate in Teacher Rounds was mentioned as an issue in all three schools. However, the primary school facilitated this by organizing Rounds during whole school assembly time and they used Teaching Assistants to cover for absent teachers at no extra cost. In the two secondary schools teacher colleagues and supply teachers provided cover, which cost the school additional funds. Sometimes teachers worried about leaving their classes in the hands of others, especially when the timing was near to public examinations. It was as if teachers felt their own learning and development was a low priority and they felt guilty for taking time out to participate in Teacher Rounds. The findings of this research show that Teacher Rounds can be introduced into schools without too much disruption or additional costs.

Power relationships were seen as a barrier to establishing the level of trust to enable Teacher Rounds to be implemented. However, this research points to the importance of confident leadership in allowing and enabling Teacher Rounds to be introduced and implemented. As a former head teacher I am aware of the implications of this study for school leaders. It is time to rethink the traditional leadership structures and hierarchies found in most schools. These models of leadership are not helping teachers to improve their practice. Leaders urgently need to reconsider the way the current punitive accountability procedures and review the way professional learning is delivered.

It is clear from this study that oppressive monitoring and checking has had a negative effect on the morale and self-confidence of teachers and have not resulted in improvement in the quality of teaching. Similarly leaders may need to revisit the way CPD and professional learning is organized and be honest about its impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, leaders need to revisit the drive for

consistency in the classroom and ask if this encourages teachers to be risk averse and stifles creativity. The need to trust teachers to do their job without trying to control their every move has never been so important. Furthermore, if we want to retain teachers we need to encourage and enable their agency and their professionalism. Teachers need to be more involved in decision-making processes and need to understand why particular decisions are made. If we want to get the best out of teachers they must be clear about the values, vision and mission of the organization so that they can contribute to making them a reality.

A concern of teachers participating in Teacher Rounds (School C) was that without external facilitation the process might become warped and changed or may not happen because schools always have other priorities! Also the fact that I was arriving for Rounds on a particular day (School B) made the teachers and school organized cover and get the day set up. Therefore, the role of an internal facilitator needs to be carefully considered and developed so that resources can be invested.

7.8 The impact of Teacher Rounds

This study is a qualitative research project that gathered evidence from detailed discussions between participants. It makes no attempt to measure, in quantitative terms, the impact of Teacher Rounds. Instead it includes many examples of what teachers were saying about their experiences. For those looking for a measurement of outcomes and impact of Rounds I point to the randomized study by Gore et al. (2016) on Quality Teacher Rounds (Chapter 3, Section 3.4.7), which provided evidence of the positive impact of Quality Teacher Rounds. The Quality Teaching Framework was used to evaluate the outcomes of implementing Rounds. My research on the other hand is firmly based on the Teacher Round model, which is a more intimate model of Rounds and is based in one school. This particular study is based on examining the process of Teacher Rounds and looks at what teachers do with it and what they gained from the experience. No research to date has

examined the transcripts of post-Round discussions in such detail or the same way. Therefore, this research is unique and makes a new contribution to knowledge.

The findings of the research are overwhelmingly positive in terms of teacher feedback on their experience of Teacher Rounds as a professional learning activity. It puts into focus the damaging effects of formal lesson observations and feedback and the fact that participating teachers learned little or nothing from these approaches. The findings of this research suggest that the participating teachers feel they learn best from each other and in the context of the classroom, and introducing Teacher Rounds facilitates this. The importance of trust and strong relationship amongst the group emerged as a key component of successful implementation. This is an issue that I would urge Head Teachers to consider when planning accountability measures and professional development activities. Paying attention to developing a supportive school culture emerges as an important issue to be considered for new teacher learning to take place.

7.9 Contribution to Knowledge and Significance of the Study

This study is significant in its ability to further our understanding of Teacher Rounds and their contribution to supporting teachers in improving the quality of their teaching and supporting their professional development. The subject is under-researched and the current literature tends to focus on 'how to' implement Teacher Rounds and feedback has been mostly anecdotal. This is the first study of its kind in the UK; it is counter-cultural teacher education practice; it demonstrates the importance of allowing teachers alternative spaces and methods for discussing and developing their practice. Furthermore, it highlights the damaging effects and barriers caused by coercive power and hierarchy on teacher's practice in the classroom.

7.10 A reflexive account of the nature of the research, and the problems encountered in developing the thesis.

Having spent seventeen years as the non-teaching head of a large secondary school I thought I knew a great deal about teachers and teaching. My relationship with the hundreds of teachers I employed over the years was, I thought, inclusive and supportive. However, I had no idea of the damaging effect my many high and regularly changing expectations, was having on them. This has been a life changing learning experience for me. I knew they were under stress and we did what we could to lessen their workload and to improve their wellbeing. However, myself and my SLT still heaped more initiatives and new ideas on them and we monitored constantly with the firm belief that by doing so we would improve the quality of teaching. Reading Perryman's (2006) paper on panoptic performativity and what happened in a school that was in special measures really struck a chord with me. When my own school was inspected and graded (unexpectedly) as a school that Required Improvement (which was a category at the time), I am sorry to say that I (and my SLT) acted in a similar way to Perryman's school. We introduced new lesson planning format and asked teachers to plan and teach in a particular way that we believed Ofsted would approve of. We introduced a host of new policies and procedures and we increased the amount of monitoring and checking that went on. This was difficult and exhausting for teachers but it worked in the short term. However, I am conscious that the same systems and processes and checking continued as the school returned to being judged as good. The feeling was that it worked so why would we not continue to do it? I see now that like lots of other heads that have seen something work we hang on to it even when the school is outstanding. It's hard to let go of that control. This explains why so many schools operate in this way and explains why teachers feel that they are not valued or trusted.

During this research I became very close to the teachers that I was working with. I not only facilitated these activities but I was also an active

participant in them. I was given the opportunity to be party to their in-depth discussions and their thoughts and feelings about their experience as teachers. As a researcher, there were no obvious issues of power. Teachers trusted me with their thoughts and feeling about their experience as teachers. This could be seen as a limitation in that my closeness to the groups in each school could have made me less objective. Teachers may have wanted to please me and perhaps they said what they thought I wanted to hear. However, I don't think this was the case. Instead I believe the strong relationships I forged with participants helped them to speak openly and honestly.

Working alongside teachers during the study was a privilege and it made me reflect on the pressure I had put on teachers that I had previously employed. I now know that these actions were not making much difference to the quality of teaching and learning. This made me wonder whether the drive that existed in my school for consistency and control was sustainable or even worthwhile. The findings of my research indicate that such actions were a waste of time and money. Having said that I know that teachers (particularly new teachers) need guidance and need to be supported by mentors and other teachers as they learn and develop. Similarly teachers who are struggling in the classroom need support and guidance but constant surveillance and monitoring is not helpful to their professional learning.

I am not suggesting that accountability and performance measures should be disbanded, and most teachers agree that they are necessary for accountability and performance management purposes. However, they should not in my view, dominate the prevailing school culture. Where they do exist, they need to be rooted in values of equity and fairness. They need to be humane and they need to be done with teachers not to them.

In a time where there are serious problems of teacher recruitment and retention and on the issue of teacher wellbeing, where resources are stretched, it is important to think differently about our treatment of

teachers. They need to be respected and supported and need a voice. They need to be encouraged to take risks and teach in the way that works best for them. It's time for head teachers to let go of control, to trust teachers and to distribute leadership in a different way that is not dependent on individuals place within (or not) in the hierarchy.

7.11 If I knew then what I know now....

Following my work as a researcher I reflected on what I would do differently now if I were to return to my role as head teacher. The truth is I would do things very differently now and my mission is to reach out to school leaders to tell them about my research and to tell them about the lessons I have learned during the course of this study.

My first action would be to discuss the emerging questions outlined in Chapter 6 (Section 6.9) with my Governors, my SLT and with my teachers and ask ourselves why we do things the way we do. I would then reflect on the school culture and the way teachers (and indeed all staff) were fully included and that they felt that their contributions were valued and acknowledged. I would revisit all the decision-making processes and find ways that teachers could contribute and be more involved. Furthermore, I would challenge the assumptions that senior leaders make about what teachers know and understand about the way the school works, and on how and why whole school priorities are set.

Secondly I would reduce the accountability and performance measures and invest greater trust in teachers to do their jobs. I would redirect the resources used for this purpose to enabling teachers to participate in Teacher Rounds during the working week. I want teachers to be able to learn from each other and not depend entirely on input from experts. Furthermore, I would want to discuss and consider the place of 'best practice' in improving the quality of teaching (or not). More importantly, I would ensure teachers decide on the sort of professional development they need and keep this constantly under review.

My next step would be to return to the Performance Management processes used in my school and work with teachers to find a better way of managing performance and developing individuals. Currently its an expensive time consuming process that makes little impact on the quality of teaching.

My own experience as a school leader mirrored to a certain extent what happened in the school described by Perrymann (2006) (Chapter 6, Section 6.9.1). I now understand that I perpetuated a punitive accountability system in order to get the school out of an Ofsted category. More than that, I continued to use the same processes and systems after the school recovered. This is what is happening in schools across the country and I would like to challenge this behaviour and find a different approach to improving teaching and learning. With this in mind I would want to review the drive for consistency and compliance across the school and move to a more equitable relationship with teachers.

Finally, I would want to re-examine the hierarchical structures in the school. Distributing leadership and creating flatter structures may be the only way to break down many of the barriers to collaboration. Moving to a system and creating a climate where power is shared more equitably particularly when it comes to the core purpose of the school (teaching and learning) is in my view the only way forward.

7.12 Recommendations

The recommendations I am making at this point are outlined above. The actions I would take if I now returned to headship are ones that I would want to share with others school leaders. However, these are further clarified here:

1. Schools should consider the use of resources in terms of time and money, they spend on audit-related activities. If they are not leading to improved practice in the classroom, what purpose do

they serve? One way of getting across this problem and a better use of resources would be by replacing some formal observations with Teacher Rounds, with senior staff covering the classes of participating teachers allowing them to take part.

2. Make Teacher Rounds part of the professional learning programmes.

3. Lack of trust in schools emerges as a major factor in the way teachers engage in their work. Head teachers need to create a school culture that develops openness and trust between teachers, and between teachers and the senior leadership team. Surveillance, constant monitoring and checking on teachers needs to be urgently addressed and accountability measures need to be rationalized and be more humane.

4. Head teachers and senior leaders should revisit the compliance culture that pervades schools and ask if these are improving the quality of teaching and learning.

5. Giving teachers a voice in what and how they teach and involving them in the decision making process in schools will encourage them to take ownership of the teaching and learning process and allow them to develop their own agency and professionalism.

7.13 Final Researcher Commentary

The outcomes of this study suggests areas of further research that could benefit the field of education, specifically in the area of regular ongoing professional development for our teachers.

Teacher Rounds was originally designed to be used as part of Initial Teacher Training programmes (Del Prete, 1997, 2010, 2013) and there are many examples of similar variations of Rounds that concentrate on pre-service teachers. This is something that needs to be explored and

researched further, particularly in the context of Initial Teacher Education in the UK.

The role of the facilitator in Teacher Rounds emerges as a crucial one and could be explored in more detail.

The attitude of teachers is changing where teachers are reclaiming their professionalism and their agency and are demanding to have more of a voice in their schools. In a time where the teacher shortages are staggering, leaders are starting to listen.

A final question:

Will teachers accept their role as increasingly directed professionals or should they become “agents of change” – in control of their professional destinies and influential in policies that shape their professional world?” Burstow and Maguire (2014, p.117)

7.14 The research has the potential to:

- Contribute to local, national and international debate about teacher professionalism, teacher agency and subsequently about recruitment and retention.
- Contribute to local, national and international debate about accountability process in schools.
- Contribute to local, national and international debate around Professional Learning and CPD, offer alternative options for teachers to learn from each other as part of a structured professional learning activity, making collaboration meaningful.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: University Ethics Committee Approval Letter



College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Brunel University London
Kingston Lane
Uxbridge
UB8 3PH
United Kingdom
www.brunel.ac.uk

1 December 2015

LETTER OF APPROVAL

Applicant: Mrs Canice Frederick
Project Title: Teacher Rounds
Reference: 1038-LR-Dec2015-838

Dear Mrs Canice Frederick

The Research Ethics Committee has considered the above application recently submitted by you.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. Approval is given on the understanding that the conditions of approval set out below are followed:

- The agreed protocol must be followed. Any changes to the protocol will require prior approval from the Committee.

Please note that:

- Research Participant Information Sheets and (where relevant) flyers, posters, and consent forms should include a clear statement that research ethics approval has been obtained from the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- The Research Participant Information Sheets should include a clear statement that queries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Supervisor (where relevant), or the researcher. Complaints, on the other hand, should be directed, in the first instance, to the Chair of the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- Approval to proceed with the study is granted subject to receipt by the Committee of satisfactory responses to any conditions that may appear above, in addition to any subsequent changes to the protocol.
- The Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to sample and review documentation, including raw data, relevant to the study.
- **[delete for staff applications]** You may not undertake any research activity if you are not a registered student of Brunel University or if you cease to become registered, including abeyance or temporary withdrawal. As a deregistered student you would not be insured to undertake research activity. Research activity includes the recruitment of participants, undertaking consent procedures and collection of data. Breach of this requirement constitutes research misconduct and is a disciplinary offence.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Knowles".

Professor James Knowles

Chair

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Brunel University London

Appendix 2: Information for participants

Teacher Rounds

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

As part of my doctoral studies at Brunel University, I conducted a research study to examine what happens when Teacher Rounds are introduced as part of a professional learning programme in three London schools – two secondary and one primary. I have now gathered the data for my research but will work with teachers at the Gateway Academy to help set up a self sustaining Teacher Rounds as part of their professional learning programme.

My area of study – Teacher Rounds, is about a collaborative form of peer observation and continuous professional development. Teacher Rounds is based on a medical ward rounds model that have been common practice in teaching hospitals for many years as a way of training doctors around a patient's bed. Rounds in education are designed to support collaborative teaching and learning practice in the classroom.

I have been to see Teacher Rounds in action in various schools in Worcester (near Boston, USA). Teacher Rounds and Instructional Rounds have been used widely in the USA & Australia and there has been a pilot project in Scotland. However, they have not yet been introduced into schools in England on any large scale.

Key Characteristics of a Teacher Round

- A Teacher Round occurs in a real everyday context, in the classroom.
- A Teacher Round is about learning in and from practice. It is not a process of evaluation. No judgments are made ever!
- A Teacher Round is always framed by the Round teacher through identifying a problem of practice. The Rounds Teacher is the teacher who prepares and hosts the Round in her or his classroom. Everybody in the group take a turn to be the host teacher.
- A Teacher Round is a collaborative process – a way to bring extra eyes and ears to the task of learning what students are thinking and doing and what is engaging them and to what end.

- A Teacher Round involves a minimum of three and up to seven teachers. Having between 3 to 7 participants ensures that a range of experiences and multiple perspectives are brought to the process.
- Before each Round there will be a short **pre-Round meeting** where the host teacher outlines the **Problem of Practice** and shares the **Rounds Sheet**. Following the observation there is a **post-Round meeting** to reflect on what happened during the lesson.
- A Teacher Round always entails intentional reflection, observation, inquiry and collaboration. Round participants are reflective partners.

Teachers who make up the Round Group will need to agree strict Protocols for working together and we will agree a basic contract for working together. The Teacher Round process require a level of trust that will grow as you work together. A certain level of anxiety is to be expected at the start of the process as teachers feel 'exposed' in front of their colleagues but this feeling will soon pass!

No evaluation or judgment is involved and nobody is the expert. There is no hidden agenda and the only aim is to allow us time for reflection and an opportunity for rich learning conversations and to learn from each other.

Some important points to consider:

- It is vitally important to make sure that the **Protocols** for Teacher Rounds are observed and no corners are cut.
- Teachers' involved as participants in Teacher Rounds need to forget Ofsted criteria and language and just describe what they see and hear when in the classroom observing colleagues and do not attempt to interpret it or make any evaluations (good or bad!).

- When they (teachers) feedback to the **host teacher** (at the post-Round meeting, they tell the teacher what they have seen or heard in the context of the problem of practice. They make no judgment or evaluation.
- The teachers end their feedback with a **wondering** (there may be more than one) about what might happen if they did this or that..... Whatever they might be wondering about!
- They also outline their **Learnings** and things they may do differently following the observation.
- In the final session teachers will be asked to make a commitment to making some changes to their practice after observing each other teach. These can be minor changes.

Please do contact me if you have any concerns or queries.

My email address is:

Yours sincerely,

Kenny Frederick

Appendix 3 Checklist for Round participants & Ethical Consent Form

Brunel University

Information sheet and checklist for research participants

Study title: Teacher Rounds - putting teachers at the center of their own professional learning.

Invitation to participate: You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the study? The study aims see what happens when Teacher Rounds are introduced and implemented in schools. Rounds are a collaborative form of observation and continuous professional learning. My aim is to study what is the significance for teachers who take part in this project. Will it make a difference to their classroom practice?

I expect to be conducting this research between February 2016 and July 2016.

Why have I been invited to participate? All teachers in your school have been invited to take part. The research takes place in the classroom.

Do I have to take part? No, participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any point.

What will happen to me if I take part? If you decide to take part you will be asked to participate in initial training and development on the Rounds process and will spend time agreeing protocols to be used. It will also involve mutual observations of and by colleagues in the Rounds group.

It will also involve a questionnaire and a one-to-one interview with me as the researcher. This interview will last about an hour and will be arranged at a mutual convenient time. The discussion will be guided by me as the researcher, to encourage you to address the questions underpinning the research study. This should last about one hour maximum and I will be asking for permission to record the discussion using a digital voice recorder. I will also be gathering data from pre and post Round discussions.

What do I have to do? You will be asked to participate in preparatory training on Teacher Rounds and subsequently a programme of Teacher Rounds in your school. This will involve you and a group of colleagues from your school.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part? The risks are minimal. No judgements will be made and information from observations will not be discussed or shared with others outside the Rounds group.

What if something goes wrong?

You can withdraw from the study at any point.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential? Yes. Great care will be taken to ensure that names of the schools and of participants are entirely confidential. All information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. Any information about which is used will have your name (and school) removed so that you cannot be identified.

What will happen to the results of the research study? The results from this study will be written up in my PhD thesis due for completion in December 2017. This will be written up in such a format that no one will be able to identify you. Raw data from observations and pre and post round meetings will be destroyed after the thesis has been marked. All participants will be offered a short summary of the key findings.

Who is organising and funding the research? Brunel University London.

What are the indemnity arrangements? I will be working in schools which all have Public Liability Insurance. I also hold personal Business Insurance which covers me for £1 million.

Who has reviewed the study? The project has been reviewed and approved by the Brunel Ethics Sub-Committee.

Contact for further information: Canice (Kenny) Frederick
[@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:canice@brunel.ac.uk) or you can contact me on my mobile:

Or you can contact my thesis supervisor, (name) (Head of the Department of Education) (email address) Brunel University, Kingston Lane, Uxbridge, Middlesex.UB8 3PH

Thank you for participating in this study.
Canice Frederick

Ethical Consent Form

Title of Study: Teacher Rounds - putting teachers at the centre of their own professional learning

Name of Researcher: Canice Frederick
Please initial box

1.	I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.	
3.	I agree that this form bears my name and signature may be seen by the designated auditor.	
4.	I agree that my non-personal research data may be used by others for future research. I am assured that the confidentiality of my data will be upheld through the removal of any identifiers.	
5.	Delete if not applicable I understand that my interviews and my comments during pre and post round meetings may be taped and subsequently transcribed.	
6.	I agree to take part in the above study	

Date:

Appendix 4 Introductory letter to Head Teachers

TEACHER ROUNDS – putting teachers in charge of their own professional development

A research proposal from Kenny Frederick

After many years in headship I am now doing my PhD at Brunel University and my area of study is around a collaborative form of peer observation and continuous professional development. Teacher Rounds is based on a medical ward rounds model that have been common practice in teaching hospitals for many years as a way of training doctors around a patient's bed. Rounds in education are designed to support collaborative teaching and learning practice in the classroom.

I have been to see Teacher Rounds in action in various schools in Worcester (near Boston, USA). Teacher Rounds and Instructional Rounds have been used widely in the USA & Australia and there has been a pilot project in Scotland. However, there is little research evidence about their effectiveness in helping to improve the quality of teaching.

I am aiming to set up Teacher Rounds in three (possibly four) schools in London. I would work very closely with the schools to fit the model around existing CPD opportunities. I will train teachers who volunteer to be involved along with a facilitator (probably the teacher with responsibility for CPD or a Lead Teacher) and will provide ongoing support with the project.

My main research question is to see what happens when teachers participate in Teacher Rounds.

If you are interested in taking part in this exciting and innovative practice I would be very happy to come and meet with to you to give you more details about Teacher Rounds and my research and what it would mean for your school. I promise you that a meeting with me would not put you under any obligation to take part. However, I really hope you might be keen a take part.

Please contact me to arrange a mutually convenient meeting time:

My email address is: @brunel.ac.uk and my mobile number is:

I would be very happy to hear from you.
Kenny Frederick

**Appendix 5: Agenda for Training Session with Round
participants**

**TEACHER ROUNDS TRAINING SESSION WITH THE ROUNDS
GROUP**

(Approx. 1 hour long)

1. Developing a Contract for working together
2. The Teacher Round Protocol – The Pre-Round Meeting
3. The role of the facilitator
4. Preparing the Rounds Sheet – go through the prompt sheets and
look at examples
5. Ground Rules for observing Rounds – difference between
describing and interpreting what we see.
6. The Post-Round Debriefing Protocol
7. Follow-up/Next Steps

Appendix 6: An example of a Round Sheet and Problem of practice

Name: Toni **Date & time of Round:** 15th April 9.10-10.10am

Room: Reception

Background/Context:

This year group are generally quite high ability. We have 16 children with older siblings in the school, 18 girls and 12 boys. There are 5 children who have EAL (L, N, Ch, Ig and Ja). The children generally get on very well and there are few behavioural problems in the class.

L- selective mute, she speaks at home and has spoken to mum in front of me, however there is something about nursery and school that makes her very anxious. She has a child psychologist who we are working with. She is very aware of her surrounding and will be very aware that you are all there. Be very discrete when observing Lu, she will know that you are watching her.

N- suspected global delay. He has delayed development in many areas. He is 6 years old this month and is still working at pre-school age expectations. He sees a speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist once a week. He also has a learning support plan. He has a strong imagination, has made some basic friendships however relies on adult support and attention. He is aware of new adults.

Oy- Hypermobile. He is a whirlwind, very enthusiastic and often falls or trips over. He can become very hyperactive. His behaviour was a problem when he first started, however, he has settled much more now.

Ig- has a lung defect, making her very susceptible to infection. She has low attendance, which hasn't affected her academically. However, she finds it very hard to make friendships with children and needs a lot of adult encouragement to play with other children.

Cl is working below her peers in numeracy and literacy by quite a lot. She is of similar ability to Nicolas, however hasn't got anything in place yet. She is very sociable and has a very kind nature.

Fi, Oy and Ew can become quite silly together, as can Oli B, Ch, Re and Cal. However, it's very low level disruption.

Our day starts with the register and changing the date, with a small discussion about the day and date. Mon-Thurs we have differentiated phonics groups, however on a Friday it is our whole class phonics session, this is to assess the learning throughout the week and allow the teacher to remain aware of the children's progress.

From 9.10-9.30 we will be doing phonics.

9.30-10.00- independent learning- I will be inside working with children planting beans (started a new 'growing' topic) and floating generally. Mrs H will be outside with whichever children decide to go outside.

Round Learning Focus: (The aim & objective or goal of the lesson)

- **Learning centered: 9.10-9.30-** Mrs H (NNEB) will work with N and C in a small group. They will recap their sounds, and play a matching game, where the children will match the picture to the word. The children will then do some letter formation using whiteboards and pens.
The rest of the class will be recapping their initial sounds and digraphs and trigraphs (sounds with two or three letters) and will practice some words/sentences using a variety of sounds.
- **Aim:** Children to be on task and engaged and for children to use knowledge of learned sounds to write words and sentences.

After the phonics session the children will learn independently. Myself and Mrs H will float in and out, assessing, observing, supporting and teaching with a variety of children.

- **Rounds inquiry/Problem of practice:**

There is such a huge range of ability and confidence in this class. We spend all day, everyday observing and assessing the children and recording their learning, however it will be very interesting to get an outside perspective on things that we may overlook.

Round Inquiry/Rounds questions: (What the Rounds teacher wants Rounds participants to take particular note of)

I would like you to observe how the children communicate and the relationships they have with each other generally. I'd like an adult to choose one of the identified children to observe how they access the resources, who they interact with, do they initiate play and challenges, do they seek adult support or attention?

To what extent should/would you like observers to interact with students?

For the first round, I would like the adults just to observe. Naturally as inquisitive 4/5 year olds, lots of them will engage with you and involve you in their play which is fine. When observing individuals, this is when I would like adults to take a step back and observe by far (particularly with L and N who will be aware of you).

Appendix 7: Interview questions

1. Gender:
2. Age
3. Ethnicity Female
4. How long have you been a teacher & how long have you been a teacher at this school?
5. What phase/year/Subject do you teach?
6. Where did you do your teachers training
7. How many times have you been observed teacher since September? How did these observations go? How do you feel about observation in general?
What was feedback like? Was it useful?
When will you be observed again? Are you given notice before the observation?
8. How many times have you observed colleagues teach? What did that feel like? How did the feedback go? What did you learn from these observations?
9. Why did you become a teacher?
10. Have you ever regretted this decision?
11. How happy are you working as a teacher
12. What is the best thing about your role as a teacher?
13. What is the worst thing about your role as a teacher?
Are you able to address that at all in the school?
14. What are your strengths as a teacher? How do you know?
15. What areas do you need to develop as a teacher? How do you know?
16. Describe what happens in this school to help teachers improve their teaching?
Would you have the confidence to address this in the school?
Do you think you have a voice in the school?
So you as a school are not good at asking the difficult questions?
17. What in your view is the best way for teachers to improve their practice?.
18. What was the best CPD you have ever had? Describe it? How did it change your practice?
Do you belong to any teacher *Network*?
19. Where do you see yourself in 5 years time? Do you think you will you still be teaching?

Appendix 8 Example of a Contact Sheets
Contact Summary Form – School B – Round 4

Type of contact **School/Venue for Meeting** **Date: 14th April 2016**
 Post-Round Meeting with Rounds group School B/Sixth Form Study Room
 (6 Round participants + facilitator)

PAGE	SALIENT POINTS
	THEMES/ASPECTS Host teacher
1	<p>it was okay. I mean when I feel other people in the class I don't ... I'm thinking 'Oh God what are they thinking?' I think that the girls gave some good answers, They felt relaxed, which is always a positive for me. Girls gave good answers & were relaxed</p> <p>I was following Na and Ha who are they're low achievers in practical, but they're good at like theory and things like that. So in the first activity you were getting them to do just kind of awkward running positions.</p> <p>She was looking around as well to see who was looking at her and the people beside her were looking at her.</p> <p>There was at least three times where XX gave good theory answers, so she was able to give a good answer about using balls, running technique.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Feelings of self-doubt</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Focus on pupils</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ability of pupils</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Description of activity</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Focus on pupil</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Questions/Answers</p>
2.	<p>I had B (named in Problem of Practice) who's very able but self destructive, so didn't seem to want to put her heart into it all. I'm just wondering why ... You did really good questioning throughout the lesson,you said to one girl and you asked her a question...you said 'Have a think, I'm going to come back to you' – which I thought was good because it's still not off the hook.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Description of pupil</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Wondering</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Questioning</p> <p style="text-align: right;">let her</p> <p style="text-align: right;">It was good</p>
3	<p>However ... um ... going back to Be, she did really well, which was good, so she was getting into it etc. But again, two hands in her pockets.</p> <p>Humour – brilliant, use of humour, "sweep the floor" ... you know whatever.</p> <p>The use of questioning was really good and it's the follow up question as well, it's really good. Oh ... I'm not allowed to say whether it's good or not ...</p> <p>You asked 'Why is it not close to 16 seconds?'</p> <p>'What do we know about Usain Bolt runs?' 'How would you describe their position?'</p> <p>And it was a case of the follow up questions for students you know 'Was it hunched over?'</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Good</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Brilliant</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Good questioning</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Acknowledgement of TR protocol rule breaking...</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Questions</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Follow-up questions</p>
4	<p>Then the other thing I started to try and do, and I felt was good but I couldn't be sure, was the idea of how many students actually spoke in the lesson. And how many pupils spoke in lessons from where I was trying to dot them, without knowing them, it appeared that a lot of the class spoke.</p> <p>I was focusing on L and U (named in problem of practice) and I think first of all I'd never seen a PE lesson before ever, so I was a bit like 'Wow'. I thought that there was a lot of trust</p> <p style="text-align: right;">No of pupils who spoke</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Never observed PE</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Wow</p>

in the class, there was a really good relationship between... Trust & relationships
the students and you together. They were happy to like Respect
run in a really silly way, and they obviously really respect you. Respect
you've got really good systems in place, they knew exactly Good systems
what they needed to do is that the right word? And she
mentioned you know 'Oh I learnt this from athletics'. And
she's on the ball ... at the beginning of the lesson when you Description of what
pupils

were waiting she was literally like leaning forward listening doing
to everything that you had to say really really intently focused.
And when she was doing the running as well like really
really wanting ... constantly wanting your attention, constantly
waving her hand up. And she definitely really enjoys the
subject and I think she's a very tricky student, cos you want A tricky student
to contain that and sustain that. So throughout the lesson
she was constantly having her hand up. And I could see you
were trying not to constantly ask her questions. Which is tried not to questioning her
really difficult when she was constantly putting her hand up. Putting her hand up
...what touched me more than anything about Ud is ... which
I thought it was lovely. I think she's there for an experience It was lovely
rather than anything else, the academic aspect is another
thing. And what touched me more than anything else was It touched me/Feeling
the way the other students were very accommodating of her
.. and Ud was literally playing with the dirt on the floor in the
lesson and Ka was like really quite 'Stop it, that's not
good, that's not nice'. It was tricky without TA Lack of a TA

I think everyone would have been quite supportive of Ud,
cos she's difficult one-on-one. Plus you were really excellent You were excellent
with her and you were constantly on the look-out for You were excellent with her
What I thought was really nice was that she was refusing Really nice
... she was getting stubborn wasn't she at the end, she's Description of pupil
attitude

tired, and her eyes were getting red. And you managed
to get her up and run – which I thought was very impressive Impressive
as well. I biased, because they're my class. ...great introduction Great
and lovely – the practical and the theory linking into the GCSE. Lovely
Great questioning, and you had great positive feedback Questioning (Great)
for everyone. ...and what I loved was that when you're like Feedback (lovely)
teaching PE you didn't tell them what to do, they kind of did Loved
it, and then you kind of corrected it and they discovered how Learned to do it
themselves

to do it themselves.... That was really really good, cos I was Really good
looking at R, and then the overall class. R is very talented,
she knew everything that was going on. Sometimes I felt that Feelings
when you were like ... you had them lined up and when they
were getting questioned... but the girls up here were kind Questions
of in a group and they kind of were a little bit zoned out..
I was looking at L (Named in PoP). I teach L and she like Description of what pupil
... the academic side like, she's just so withdrawn, doesn't was doing
like school, she'll tell you straight out that she hates school
...and she was so into it (the lesson) I've never seen her so Evaluation of what
pupil was doing
positive, she really really loved it like.

I thought the instructions were really clear throughout, **Evaluative comment**
there was no ambiguity the way that you spoke to them.
The tasks ... it was challenging I think the things that you were **Description of pupils**
asking them to do, not so much in the running but you know ...
there was lots of maths in there... All that maths which they **Description**
took on board, so great cross-curricular sort of stuff. The girls
all seemed to be listening and involved and lots of .. I didn't
notice any sort of looking apathetic or not involved.
Lots of talking, the talk partners ... and they did do the talking, **Lots of talk**
they got into that one. And the way that you set the targets
and so on. The use of humour.... So they were able to laugh **Description of pupils**
at themselves..

Wonderings - I was thinking of Lo and I was thinking she's
really like precocious and she really wants to improve. **Description & evaluation**
And I can imagine you know she might get a bit
frustrated if she's wondering but wrapped not constantly
pandered to. I don't mean to be mean. So I was thinking **I don't mean to be mean**
... maybe think about leadership roles in the group or **(Apologizing first)**
maybe think about how you could embrace certain students **Suggestions (Not part**
of the protocols)

who maybe get them to kind of take particular roles..... you
could have like prompts or key words to target particular
terminology that they can maybe have around the gym or
something just to get them focused on ... particularly
scaffolding their work or talk for learning.

Learnings - I have learnt a new respect for PE teachers ...I **Respect for PE**
teachers
think I need to think about questioning and how I ... cos **Reflection on own**
practice
on questioning

some students always have their hand up, I need to make
in questioning sure that I enhance that and I use that in a way
that makes them feel like they're valued feel valued but don't **Make them feel valued**
take over the lesson. My **wondering** was about ... I don't want
to really use the word progress but I was thinking how do we **Progress**
know that any of them ran any faster at the end. If you could
almost start with the if they ran for 20 metres at the **Suggestion**
beginning and did that and then said for more able pupils
right okay there they are. And then you go through all the
theory, then they're actually seeing the impact of their **Seeing the impact of theory**
theory themselves so that was one. And my other wondering
was for those who could run fast already ... and that might be
instinctive, so it's not necessarily that they knew the theory ...
but kind of where was the challenge for them there. ... **Criticism (veiled)?**

Learnings. a lot of what you teach them they already know. **Reflective comment**
So it's almost for them to realize that themselves. Cos you're
seeing them engaged, you're seeing them do it, and it's this
idea of them being aware of the impact of that. The trust **Trust in teacher**
and the way they did trust and work as a class. So I do think **Trust in each other**
actually what I need to do in my classroom developing that **Reflecting on own**
practice

atmosphere within the classroom is vital as well. And seeing
it in classroom action is a really important learning for me. **Seeing it in the**
classroom

... you did praise ... I was wondering if for Be because she's
so disengaged and couldn't care, that if you had a reward **Suggestion**

system for her would she actually like ... would she actually contribute more in class etc. Like maybe if you say if you can beat this, give her like goals....also I was wondering if you could ask her more questions.

Suggestion

And then my **learnings** is ... I have a newfound respect for PE

Respect for PE teachers

New learnings

teachers, I did not know that you incorporate science, maths and yeah health into it, like maths - air resistance could be ... even the way they have their hands etc, so

Wonderings. I was trying to think of ... wondering ways to get them more involved, but I think anything I was coming up with was going to backfire. Like I was thinking but outlining pit-falls if you could have some sort of races. But then if you did have a race it could get them more unmotivated because if they're not good at sprinting it's going to backfire on you. ... But I couldn't really find **any** other fault, so the first sprinting lesson I thought was excellent.

Suggestions

Can't find fault
Was excellent

Learnings, I learnt ... it was a really good start, good use of questioning as well, so giving hints and ... probably should have said it earlier, but another learning was that one student ... you were giving hints that you were trying to get a certain answer, so I kind of knew the and I was kind of ... but she gave a slightly different answer, and it wasn't questioning techniques exactly what you were expecting. But instead of just saying oh we're looking for something else you said 'That's a great answer – why is that a good answer?'and then you just ask another question to get what you were looking for.. not kind of shutting

Hints to help find
find an answer
Questioning

Use of praise
More probing
Not shutting
down pupil

down a student,

Wonderings are ... I know it's time consuming and it probably wouldn't work but if you had them gathered in for the questioning and positive comments first then they'd be more engaged maybe. And they'd listen ... cos like it was very hard to hear from the guys at the very end of the hall because they talk so quietly. So if you brought them in ... and that's just time consuming as well, so I don't know would it work.

Suggestion

Talking so quietly

The other learning I had was with Ud because I sometimes like ignore Ud because I don't know how to deal with her, cos it is really hard, she ignores me, I don't know how to cope with her, I don't know what to give her ... while you're just brilliant with her, Its helpful to me to see how like you just ... you're with her every step of the way. it's just ... it's really helpful to see how you manage her so well.

Confession

Honest reflection
and confession

My learning

Wonderings - I'm just thinking I wouldn't be worried about that she's not fully included. I mean I think the social aspect is huge learning, you know and for all of that class of practice set by host of having her in there. So I wouldn't be worrying about that. She was getting exercise teacher you know and then having fun. And for me the **learning**

Reflection

Everyone can be
included
In PE.

was that everybody can be included in PE.

Appendix 9 List of themes and sub-themes identified from three Focus Groups

Contract/Rules

Importance of rules and protocols of Teacher Rounds

Confidentiality

Volunteered

No judgment

Formal observations

Negative experiences

Formal observations do not help teachers improve their practice

Performance is reported (To SLT and or Governors)

Observer sets the agenda & focus of the observation.

Tick-box and check lists

Usually 20 minute observations

One persons opinion

Feeling terrible and that I can't do teaching then (following negative feedback)

Choosing my best class for the observation

Playing the game

The observers ideology

I've found them arbitrary, I've found them a power thing

Filling forms when observing gives little time to reflect on what you see.

Don't see the point of learning walks

Teacher Round observations

Learning to describe rather than interpret

Number of people

Learning together

More relaxed

A different vibe

Teacher Rounds allow teachers to talk about Teaching and Learning

Seeing other teacher teach challenges you to reflect on your own practice

A nurturing experience

It's a commitment you make to be involved

Being a fly on the wall

Teachers are able to show their vulnerability in the classroom

Trust in each other

Respect for colleagues opinion.

The problem of practice to focus the observers eyes and ears in the classroom

Feedback from Formal observations

Not what you have done but about what you have not done

Positive experience of Teacher Rounds

Feedback – its one persons opinion

Avoiding Ofsted jargon (TR)

Feedback is the most important bit as its about interpreting what to do next

The way feedback is given is not helpful (FO)

Working on the feedback I gained from Teacher Round wonderings and feedback

Being open to feedback (TR)

Not criticism just support (TR)

We are non-the-wiser following formal observations

Critical friend feedback

360 degree feedback

Timing of feedback

Owning the feedback and taking it on board

You don't get any knowledge back from Formal Observations

Feedback from colleagues is far more powerful and you are more likely to take it on board

How can I believe what you say when I have not seen you teach?

Need constructive feedback

No feedback from last observation – told it was excellent!

Teacher Rounds a completely different way of getting feedback

Everybody in the group fed back positively so wonderings were always seen as positive

Focusing on the positive rather than the negation helped improve my practice

Need to respect the person who observes you

Targets set following a formal observation

The targets are usually whole school priorities

Targets are not personal and are dictated from above

You can't answer back and have no voice

Targets set before SLT enter the room.

Pressure to meet targets set

No ownership of targets set in FOs

Emotions/Feelings

Emotions – anxiety, stress, scared, fear, joy, excitement , courage

Facing your fears

Confidence and self-esteem

Being brave

Self-doubt

Less fearful of being observed (TR)

Nervous

Guilt

Feelings of failure

Fear of being exposed in front of your colleagues (TR)

Building trust (TR)

Panic

Resentful
Powerless
Feeling positive (TR)
Self-critical
Burn out

Leadership and power issues

Lack of trust and respect in leadership
The observer (In formal observations) decides the focus of lesson
Resistance to change after feedback from senior leadership team
Power distance issues
Unable to disagree in case regarded as resistant.
Remain passive & say nothing.

Make up of the Teacher Round group

NQTs as part of the group.
Assistant Head in group
It's the status of the group participants – equal status
Dynamics of the group is important
Getting the balance of experience right.
Variety of Subject & Curriculum & Phase specialists.

Learnings/wonderings

I am going to try that. If it does not work I will do something else
Interacting with children
Seeing each other teach was a 'real eye-opener'
Wonderings helped me improve
You have scope to learn, its real learning (TR)
Amazing to see what is going on in other departments
So much can be transferred from one department/subject the other
Depends on your openness to change

Risk taking

Not taking risks when being observed
Taking risks (TR)
Playing the game
Worried about judgments
Sticking to safe lessons so can get tick on tick lists

Judgments

We are all in this together – no judgments (TR)
People are on your side and not judging you (TR)
Accountability & performance management processes cause anxiety
Depends on who is doing the observation (Effects how I feel about it!)
No matter how many positives you get you hang on to the negatives
Judgment of each other is ineffective

Time for Reflection

Time for reflection

reflection of people not just the observer giving their opinions but both the observer and observed reflecting on their own practice.

Seeing other teacher teach challenges you to reflect on your own practice

Problem of practice

Able to focus on a small group of children

We are told what the focus of the formal observation is. In Teacher Rounds we decide on problem of practice

I learned lots of little things

Changes to my practice were instantaneous

Relationships

Strengthening relationships between us

A united group

A different vibe

Working relationships between teachers in different parts of the school

Relationships between teachers and students

Circle of trust built up in TR group

Talking about teaching and learning

Able to talk about teaching and learning in a safe environment

Teacher Rounds mean people go into the process more relaxed and open to change

Teacher Rounds allow people to speak freely

Developing a language to talk about teaching and learning

There is no one practice in teaching

Difficult to let go of the Ofsted language

Not using a set of STANDARDS to talk about teaching and learning

Talking about the evidence of what we have seen and heard

We have a language we are using it does not seem as regimented as doing observations in a different context.

Learning not to use evaluative language

Improving your practice

I want to know how to improve my practice but formal observations don't help

The wonderings helped me reflect on how I could improve my practice

Little time to change

Planning

Teacher Rounds mean people go into the process more relaxed and open to change

Teacher Rounds allow people to speak freely

Listening

Have other people listening to you and making you think/reflect

Listening to each other

Training and CPS in the classroom

Teacher Rounds was training on the job

Like a really good training room – not a falling asleep training room

Irrelevant staff meetings, not useful

Someone in front talking to us

CPD is around a particular skill or knowledge

Trying out a training session in the classroom

We talk about the way kids learn but forget this when it comes to our own CPD

Opportunity to observe a colleague but no structure and no follow up

You don't have to tick all the boxes to be a good teacher

Its impossible to run a training session on what you observe in a classroom

Support and training for 'good' teachers is non existent

Expectations of teachers

Different expectations across the school

Seeing different strategies in different phases

Enabling teachers in different phases to understand and see what is happening across the school

Fear of upsetting anybody

Not upsetting anybody

Everybody is so nice

I don't want to bother them

The culture of the schools is not supportive to teachers who are struggling

They know what your targets are before the enter the room

Appendix 10 Example of a piece of coded data

School C: An extract from Final Focus Group meeting

Transcripts extract in paragraphs	Prompts/Context for discussion	Theme/Sub-theme	Code
<p>Sonia - I found the process, I found the people very positive in the process, which is I think makes the process of being observed less pressurised. And also being observed by people you have seen teach so you then have respect for their teaching and sharing that practice and learning from others not in just what they feedback to you but in terms of what you have observed in their teaching. So seeing people in different departments teach – I so rarely get a chance to so that has been really useful. Having observed people in the past its also I think you look for ways to improve people rather than through the negative (in past observations) rather than looking for ways to improve through the positive (as we do in Teacher Rounds). After being observed (by TR colleagues) I felt positive about my teaching and have taken the positives to further improve and trying to change what I am doing in my teaching and building on the positives. I found it really helpful in just gathering ideas and just</p>	<p>Teachers feeding back on their experience of Teacher Rounds</p>	<p>Positive Pressure</p> <p>Respect</p> <p>Learning from others</p> <p>Seeing people in different departments teach</p> <p>Seeking ways to improve through positive feedback</p> <p>Feeling positive about my teaching</p> <p>Trying to change what I am doing</p> <p>Gathering ideas</p>	<p>POSITIVE</p> <p>RESPECT</p> <p>RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>LEARNING</p> <p>FEEDBACK</p> <p>SELF CONFIDENCE</p> <p>REFLECTION</p> <p>LEARNING</p>

<p>a less pressurised way of being observed.</p>			
<p>Sonia -I think everybody in the group fed back in a positive way and yeah I think we all developed well as a group and we all have something to contribute to the group. Its been very open and everybody has a different way of doing things. Its been nice to work with people from different departments. You don't get those opportunities very often.</p>	<p><i>How did you develop as a group?</i></p>	<p>Everybody feedback positively</p> <p>We developed as a group Everybody had something to contribute Very open process Everybody has a different way of doing things</p>	<p>FEEDBACK</p> <p>RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>EQUITY</p> <p>LEARNING</p>
<p>Sonia - I always want to improve and I always want to respond to that wondering and think about how I need to adapt. I felt I did not want to have too many wonderings for different people. I wanted it to be a really positive experience for them. But I think it's a really beneficial way of observing because if you have had too many wonderings (not that I did but someone who is new to teaching may have) but if you are focusing on too many things to address - its not going to help you. So its been very beneficial to you because having a couple of wonderings you can focus more on them without being overloaded.</p>	<p><i>When there was a wondering, which could be seen as critical how did wonderings make you feel?</i></p>	<p>I wanted to improve so always wanted to respond to the wonderings Did not want to have to many wonderings (Risk of offending?)</p> <p>Not going to help if there are to many to address – its not going to help you.</p> <p>Beneficial – you can focus more on them without being overloaded</p>	<p>LEARNING</p> <p>WONDERINGS</p> <p>REFLECTION</p> <p>POSITIVE</p>
<p>Sonia- yes because of my last school it was quite difficult but it was good to be in a position to 'not see teaching as a tick list' because you don't have to tick all of those boxes to be a good teacher. You can</p>	<p><i>Did you find it hard to get away from the Ofsted check list? You have all been quite good at not using the Ofsted language – was that difficult?</i></p>	<p>Not seeing teaching as a tick-list or checklist</p> <p>You don't have to tick all those boxes to be a good teacher.</p>	<p>CHECK-LISTS</p> <p>LEARNING</p> <p>NO ONE WAY</p>

<p>look at teaching in a different way and people using different styles and get different results even when not hitting that check-list and not doing some of the things you are supposed to do as a good teacher.</p>		<p>Different styles & different results</p>	
<p>Sonia - when I set them off into groups I give them a little more focus, to give them more independence in getting them to feed back to each other, building on the knowledge they share and building on what they already know. Sharing knowledge (not just the knowledge directed by me.... And to allow them to evaluate each others performance or each others work a little bit more when they are not so physically active. I have always used whiteboards but I will probably use them more just to get them to note things down and assess each others performance. Just so they are not wasting time while someone is performing – what can others be doing? Although I have always been aware that they should be doing something – sometimes you forget that that is the case!</p>	<p><i>Give us some of your learnings and things you are going to change as a result of participating in Teacher Rounds so far.</i></p>	<p>Different way of organizing groups to promote independence.</p> <p>Getting them to feedback to each other. Sharing what the know.. How they can evaluate each others performance.</p> <p>Will use whiteboards more</p>	<p>REFLECTION LEARNING</p>
<p>Cassie - I think its been fantastic and I have learned so much. I think part of the reason it has worked so well for me, although we have a</p>	<p><i>Tell is about your experience with Teacher Rounds</i></p>	<p>Fantastic</p> <p>We have a language we use that is not regimented</p>	<p>POSITIVE PROTOCOLS</p>

<p>language we are using it does not seem as regimented as doing observations in a different context. You know comparing what you see in front of you to a set of standards. There is not a particular format that we are note taking and we are just looking at what we see. We are looking at the evidence and analysing it at the time. I think that has encouraged me to be more actually looking at the evidence, taking it on board and think about it actually because we have had little time in between the observing the lesson and the feedback. Rather than when I have observed lessons in a different context I have to fill in a form and in some way or other you are supposed to be note-taking and sometimes that does not give you the space to reflect on it and concentrate on what you are seeing as you go along and I think for a different reason the best things I see are not things I can articulate to do with the atmosphere in the room, the teacher not using particular strategies but through their persona is creating that atmosphere. That's sometimes hard to put into words. It would be very hard to run a training session on – its almost impossible to do that but when you are</p>		<p>No comparison to what you see in front of you to a set of standards.</p> <p>No particular format for taking notes.</p> <p>We are looking at the evidence and analysing it.</p> <p>Reflecting on the evidence</p> <p>Feedback on same day as Round.</p> <p>No forms to fill out</p> <p>Time to reflect</p> <p>I can't articulate some of the best things I have seen – such as the atmosphere.</p> <p>Would be hard to put a training course on how to create an atmosphere..</p>	<p>NO STANDARDS</p> <p>FEEDBACK</p> <p>EVIDENCE</p> <p>REFLECTION</p> <p>FEEDBACK</p> <p>REFLECTION</p> <p>LANGUAGE</p> <p>ATMOSPHERE</p> <p>ATMOSPHERE</p>
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<p>watching other people do it you can start to emulate them.</p>			
<p>Cassie - Very tangible things – coaching can be different from peer assessment. That's been really helpful. But I guess what I am saying is the wider learning, the deeper learning is things like different ways of talking to students. Different tones of voice .. then there was... I can't exactly put my finger on it but whatever it was Adam was doing in his lesson (<i>took his shoes off I think!</i>) but whatever it was it worked because of the atmosphere that was established and I hope I am copying that without necessarily being able to say how. If that makes sense?</p>	<p><i>What have you learned along the way?</i></p>	<p>Very tangible things; coaching can be very different from peer assessment.</p> <p>The wider and deeper learning – different tones of voice.</p> <p>Atmosphere</p>	<p>LEARNING</p> <p>LEARNING</p> <p>ATMOSPHERE</p>

was playing with something was trying to play it with xxxxxx) and I thought you handled her really well. At one point your patience snapped and I know what that is like as I teach her too and I know what she is like and she does that a lot. You didn't let her off, you made her contribute but structuring and scaffolding questions so she did not get away with not answering. Which I think was positive and then when she genuinely had given up you sanctioned her for being lazy and I thought in my head, is she being lazy or but you did not go through that route. You kept the environment positive then you said that's all right we will pass it on. And then at this stage I noticed your questioning was just like fire, it was so rapid you were calling names like no one had a chance to avoid, you were literally like you, you you... em and it meant everybody had to be on their toes. And then you said, I really liked this right lets skip the names of the organs you literally were like you, you, you and everybody had to be listening at that point. And someone said and an answer and I liked it when you said "say that again with more confidence". Because they were right and you reinforced that. Then when we went onto the categorising task of systems I again sat with XXX and XXX and they were really debating it out. Their conversation was completely driven and quite intellectual and they were questioning each other on that. Then one group had won and I think you told them to correct something – you were buzzing around checking people again and they sat there saying we are the winners... and they were really into it and so were XXXX and XXXX and XXX they were really keen to finish it correctly but I noticed that winning group were sat with their hands up waiting and really intently wanting you to say they were your winners. And then you came and checked XXXX and XXXXX and they were sort of waiting for the next thing to happen and the others... I noticed you had so many resources for prepared for them they pretty much had everything. I did then wonder about something else which I will come to in the wonderings... so then they were going on to something else and you had given your instructions and then you were giving further instructions about an extension if they had finished. It was excellent to have that challenge there and then you were talking about writing in pencil and you said you

can write in pencil if you want to and then I think you noticed that a lot of people were making a few errors and then went back and said now write in pencil. I can see some obvious mistakes (she laughs and says it in an Irish accent and everybody laughs) but I just wondered with the instruction thing again, because you had done the task and they had started they were not listening to all the other instructions. So I think that was why the pencil thing happened. I was looking at xxxxx and xxxxx and they got down to the last two – the rectum and anus – excuse my language and they were not sure and I said are you writing it in your pencil then? But they said we have already started it in pen – you know what girls are like – very pedantic with it! Then they had finished, they whipped through that and were having a conversation about it and were working out what the last two were – they thought it was bladder and something else...and xxxx was thinking urether because she wanted to say this new word em then you came over and found it for them and then xxxx came over and again went off on the thinking then but I think she thought, she wasn't think about that being the back – she was thinking it was front only. He thinking was a bit confused there... and then you went on to questioning people and your facial expressions crack me up. I do wonder what they think? You were questioning someone and they just, I think it was someone stubborn but I can't remember who but you were questioning someone (*Eilie says a name*) and I think from teaching her she is a bit stubborn but I did wonder why is she like that? What is going on in her head? I was trying to watch the interaction in her head and you were like 'come on..' and your face was just pure disgust with her. But then afterwards she then eventually put in a bit of effort and you went 'thank you!' and the frustration was there and I did wonder does she get that a lot elsewhere and she just shuts down – I don't know because that's what I am thinking with xxxx she is like that with me as well. Then we went on to the food bit – at this point I stopped writing notes because I was in absolute awe of what was going on! And I thought they were all stood there watching it and I thought that was such an innovative way to show that So now I will go onto my wonderings. With that I did wonder what would happen next. The sort of outcome of

that activity was what do they take away from it? And how do they use it? What's going on there! So I will go back to the top with my

wonderings:

The resources ones first – as I said they had mountains and mountains of resources I know you sit and make them and I did wonder is there a way that the lesson can work without you having to spend all that time making the resources? Something like you know they were categorising the systems could it maybe on a slide that was typed so you would only have to do it once to cut everything out. I think about you with time – you spend a lot of time and a lot of your energy and I wondered if there are shortcuts to help you save some of that energy and time. Yes that was my wonderings. My other ones were – I wondered are they listening to every instruction? Because they get a lot and you use a lot of energy repeating instructions and then when I have been in that situation I get frustrated and think why haven't you listened but I think with them, just from observing them they listened to your first instruction then they wanted to start straight away. Is there some way and I am not sure how they can break down the instructions? So maybe they have a little tick list on the board so once they finish they go back to check for the next thing they have to do maybe. So there is not that excuse to say ' I was working, I didn't hear you sort of thing. And then also to save you that energy. And that frustration in saying you did not hear me and I have already said it sort of thing!

My Learnings are – I learned all the different parts of the digestive system. Also that you can mash up food and gross children out and they absolutely love it! They all learned from it! But also my learning again is to reflect and re-evaluate my own teaching and think where are they in terms of saving the teachers time and energy? The pressure is added repeatedly. They want us to nurse them, police them and whatever and I think the only way we can survive and save time I have learned to try and do that and utilise it so that's my learning!

Facilitator Aoife over to you!

Aoife – I was observing xxxxxx at the very start when you got them in the group there was not much talking about the work at all and xxxxx did

not contribute to the group she was just sitting there like this! Pure laziness! But then when they got it down and you came round one of them was put in here because there was no talking when placing it but then when you came around and said correct to xxxxx and I teach xxxxx so I know hat she is like. The group were just waiting – there was an awful lot of pressure on you because you were just rushing around. You were checking all the tables and there was one table to the left of me and they obviously were the weak table and they were still talking while the rest of them were waiting for the next thing to do! When you moved on from that you asked them questions and they were so different from Year 7 who always have their hand up and are so enthusiastic, this lot are just too cool for school sort of thing! But you kept going with it you didn't let them fly – you kept going! That girls who was going 'I don't know, I don't know... you kept at her and she probably does know and its just to show off.. then we went on to them putting the organs into the correct order and I don't know what the girls next to her was called but they worked really well together and the got it done! They got in a bit of an argument about the pituitary gland which I always thought was in the brain... and was sensory and they said no Miss its not in the brain, its not sensory system – they were actually debating which was great. They obviously did not need me and they doubted me as well so that was fine! When they had that done they thought they had done enough and it was like 'so how is your life then' sort of thing? There was no work done for about 3 minutes – there was just chit-chat! They were asking me what I teach.. (*laughs!*). They had nothing to do there so were filling in time. I notice when you give them out a sheet they stick it in immediately – it's a problem in maths at the moment because they are losing sheets and books are a mess! They know when they get a sheet it needs to be stuck in even if it takes two minutes! You don't want them losing the sheets and it looks lovely in the books. It's a hard class to gauge work for because it's a set 2 with lots of different abilities. I was going to say about what Clair said about resources – how did you cut them all up and printed out in colour and all that but is it realistic to keep it up over a long period of time? I will go on to my wonderings to ask that... and then on

to the whole food thing I thought it was amazing! I wish I had learned to digestive system in school like that – It was amazing to see. I just learned it off a book! And it was really good the way you did it – a really innovative way to do it! What was it next...

My wonderings are: I know in maths we try to be resource (inaudible) as possible but sometime using jig saws and matching things is either you cutting them out or they cutting them out for you which uses class time. Maybe using colour coding or something might help. Just printing out a piece of paper and getting them to colour code it means there is no cutting out or sticking involved! I use that sometimes which avoid wasting time cutting things up! Then I wondered, I teach two classes of year 10s and they are hard to motivate but you are so enthusiastic with them they really like you. They find you funny and I wonder if I was like that would it help them to learn and appreciate learning more? It can be like 'I am too cool for school' and I might encourage them to drop that whole attitude if I was more enthusiastic with them!

My learning is – that innovative ways of doing like what you do with the food really worked. They obviously enjoyed it and obviously learned from it. They will remember that in years to come. Maybe we should always try to fit innovative ways to bring learning to life?

Facilitator – over to you David now its your turn –

David - I was looking at xxxxx and xxxxxx who is lazy and does not do much work em right so... at the start the like girls (colleagues?) were saying I don't know where you get your energy from – all that running round checking to see if they were right... so first I was going to say you could have just put the right answer on the board.. so looking at xxxxx you asked her a question and she knew the answer so she is obviously able to answer them but it took you prodding her to get the answer out of her. She wasn't going to put her hand up without you prodding! Then she moved to a new table and she sat down and was chatting for a while then you came over to her and give more kind of hints and prodding and 'common lets get going with this..'. then you walked away and they actually started working away and discussing it. And the exact same thing happened with the second sheet you gave them and they were

labeling so it gave them, they weren't bothering but then you came over and said girls you haven't done anything yet! You need to get answering! You helped them with the first one but by the second one they were (stuck?) again! Its hard because you are not going to be able to come over to them every time they stall... and give them a poke like! Its hard to think how you might do this. Their behaviour was not bad like, they weren't distracting and were on task for most of it. Again there was another activity that had you running around the place keeping everyone on their toes! It was good but I would be worn out from it! Em you handed out the sheets to everyone so I was thinking if you got someone else to hand them out for you it might save you some time sort of thing. That's all I had written on xxxxx so, she wasn't back at one point she was properly discussing things in her group - 'oh no I think that one is a bone. If it's a bone what bone is it?' They were really actually thinking about it! Rather than just write on anything! For that activity they were actually engaged! Another thing when they were doing the main activity and you asked a question and asked them to say it out loud and proud – you said to another one it was excellent! So you are really trying to get them going which is good! Because they don't like answering so you were giving them confidence and encouraging them when they do get it right! Then I stopped writing as well for the main activity, which I thought was unreal and so hilarious – I was trying not to laugh! It was so funny but they were learning it! So I thought it was excellent and really innovative. As you were going through you were constantly asking questions, they were watching you and so many people got asked some question so there was learning going on as well. They were not just watching you which was good.

Wonderings – that last activity I thought it was so good you could have spent most of the lesson on that so I was thinking maybe the two starters if you just did one of them and went on to the main activity and if you had the equipment ready and the food ready – it was a really good activity and you could have spent longer on it! But you did fit in a lot so it was good. And **Learnings** – I suppose it was similar to what Aoife was saying – you can always learn something – ok here's a list of 20 maths

questions go answer them but if you get them actively doing something and get them back to the maths and what they learned there is a good way of introducing things! So I thought it was really good!

Facilitator – now its your turn Carol..

Carol – I was looking at xxxxxx but had to find her first! It took me a bit of time to realise she was not in (*Someone else chips in to say they were also looking for her!*). It was fine... anyway once I had worked that out I just picked someone to go with – I went with a group who were all working and I asked them to explain what they were doing and they did so brilliantly! I could not make sense of it at all from the diagram but they were labeling it carefully – they told me you need to show the muscle tissue – so they were teaching me and it was a change of the teacher student relationship! It all seemed to be going very fast but not just in you – I wanted to slow you down a bit as you were going 100 miles an hour and I was trying to keep up with it! But then you did do a good follow up question here – you said what causes the stomach fibers to attract – and xxxxx responded, I couldn't really hear it but I think you were happy with the answer she gave but I know later on you did say "say it louder and prouder" but there are times when I think we get into – we hear the answer and we are fine with that but we don't always think who else is hearing that answer. So that was kind of that! Define an organ was the next task but I was thinking do they know the definition of an organ? They weren't very good at that were they (*Laughs!*). so that was quite interesting. I think here you looked like you were really enjoying yourself because that really comes across. And you know you want to be in that class where the teacher is really enjoying herself! Then they started the next task with the words and put them on and it was really interesting when xxxxx took it and she does all the work! Xxxxxx took the pen and the paper and it was brilliant because I said (inaudible) and then XXXX takes over – its those exchanges that we don't hear! There were a number of the systems they were really unclear about so they did not know what the respiratory was, they didn't know what the excretory was or whatever it was called and there was another one they didn't know. I was thinking oh that's where those tasks ... I think as a teacher we don't

see it and I know that's really not easy to hand down and suddenly when they are not kind of getting it, how we do that! And that was the bit where you were certainly going around working really hard and this is what I have written – xxxxxxx and xxxxx are sitting having finished, and you say from across the room has anyone finished and they don't hold their hand up! So they are sitting there having finished and there's you saying have you finished and they quite happily... I mean I tried to engage them in and Gill engaged with them but she might say a bit more about that! And then later on you asked again! Because more put their hand up they put their hand up so it's that bit of how we judge that sort of thing. I have said labeling the digestive system xxxxxxx and xxxxx worked really well together. Their class teacher was working very very hard! And then I thought the answers were put up very quickly... and I know I didn't get a chance to think about them. But now you were going to do that experiment so you probably did think oh my goodness look at the time I need to move on (*Ellie butts in and says what that was all about!*). I am not really looking for any answers to that bit but gosh you were working hard! But I have to say the experiment was fantastic! And I suppose that leads then to And I would love to see what they have remembered from that. So I guess my **wonderings are:**

Do you ever stand at the back and just observe? And take a minute out? I worked with a consultant bloke who came in – Roy Blachford I think his name is and he called it a chez lounge moment when we should all have these moments to stop and take stock of what is going on across the whole classroom because we can get so bogged down in the detail. And the other thing, which I think David has alluded to was almost getting them to do the experiment and getting them to label the diagram afterwards because they would have seen that happening and would be better able to label it afterwards. **My learnings were:** it is important to enjoy yourself and your relationship with the kids is fantastic and seeing you enjoying yourself will make the girls enjoy their subject. So that's something. How often do I smile? And the experiment was brilliant. Thank you.

Facilitator - Right Gill – it's your turn now!

I must apologize because I came in late. And I was supposed to be observing xxxxxx but I kind of just skirted around lots of students and when I came in they were doing a sorting activity and I started just wondering around and I think was it xxxxxxxx? I went and spoke to xxx who I teach for English – she looked really happy!. She doesn't look very happy in my lesson. She was really enjoying herself. She was working with xxxxxx and they were working really well and they were kind of having a really good discussion and focused on the work and they were not quite sure what this was called, the trachea, and it was really nice to sit and hear them have a conversation about it and they were uming and ahing about it and xxx actually said it's the trachea which was really nice! I then moved on to look at xxxxx who is an able student. It was really interesting. She was mumbling a bit at the end of the activity because I was sitting next to her and she was mumbling and following on what you were saying. She was really on task which was really cool and then I moved around and looked at the two girls at the front – was it xxxxx and xxxxxx? They were working really well together as groups and all the pairings I went around to speak to they were discussing and were working really well. It is really interesting because in some pairings and some groups there has not been that and they have been holding back a bit. They are obviously really comfortable with each other and xxxxx and xxxxx they were on task and engaged and they were really focused and they were working really well together. There was a point where they had their hands up and asked for help a bit and the issue was some were sat waiting for a while for the next activity. But when asked and prompted they could talk through and discuss and they understood it really well. I thought your questioning was really really good and I am looking at your questioning because you were asking them if they agreed with this and that.... As you went around the classroom. You mentioned prior learning and things they had covered in previous lessons. You were not letting them away with anything – you said we did this, you know this...and the activity – I stopped writing notes as well, because I was transfixed. I really liked the practical and Christine said something to me last year and she probably does not remember this, when people are in your

classroom you get quite stressed.. but the kids were really engaged and active and one of the students pretended to be sick in the corner but she was really engaged on it – yeah that’s kind of my **learnings** I think. Its that they were having a really good time and they were enjoying it. Shall I do my learnings now? **My Learnings**;- some were sat waiting so thinking about what they are doing and how we can think about how to extend their learning. I think a big thing is you need to be a lazy teacher a little bit. I think literally take a step back and you are going to burn out so maybe think about how you get them to self assess and take a back step and the idea of having something on the board so they can be getting on with it. Rather than you running around the kids you know we are precious and we need to look after ourselves. But you were really engaged and the pupils were so happy to be in the lesson – it was really great. My **Learning** are your questioning – I am going to use your questioning- it was really really good the way you questioned them. It also made me realize, I wrote it down – humerous fibula – is that a word? I can’t remember but I thought of it in Christines’s lesson today a new word and it made me realize how like, this is me with my English hat on now, how vocabulary is so important to really understand words and spell words those sort of things irrespective of where you are so its made me think of how getting students learning how to do that. Thank you it was great.

Facilitator as observer - I had problems trying to find the student I was supposed to be watching. So I was just chatting to different groups. The first group I went to were doing the first activity and they were working – well there were four of them and whether it was because I was standing over them – but they were very quiet and did not want to get involved but they warmed up a bit. There knowledge of key words wasn’t good and I asked them if they had learned this before... oh yeah back in year 7 or 8 they said. So they could not quite remember it. Once they had warmed up and were working on the activity, you came over to them, you could see they were struggling. You had set the diagram as homework and it was on Show Me Your Homework. Some of them already had it done in their books – is that the same one? (*Ellie explains what the task was –*

they were all supposed to be researching something different so when they worked in a group they could share the knowledge). The question was fast and furious and we heard the voices the girls have – but I couldn't hear them very well so I don't think others could not hear either. – we know this is a school issue. Its how we get them to speak out. You tell tem to be loud and proud which is more difficult when they get older and are trying to be cool. Is so important because a lot of the learning is lost that way. I got more involved with xxxxxx and xxx and they were working quite well together and were contributing. Some of the students were finished the task and were waiting so there was a bit of dead time. What might they have been doing to challenge them the physical demonstration was great and really did help explain it – I have never seen it done like that and I thought it was really good. So my

Wonderings – as David said could the whole lesson have been around this experiment? And was would it have been possible to let them do it (the experiment themselves? If actually doing some of that squeezing it through or whatever would have added to the learning/ I don't know.. em and so some of them had secure knowledge about the different systems but some did not. How did you know who was who? I was trying to figure out who had the secure knowledge and who did not... and again you worked so hard if you did not have the same energy and enthusiasm that you had – your energy is catching. I was not sure because you said at the beginning – they were SET 2 but were mixed ability so I was not really sure where they were at in terms of ability. Is it a broad band?

Ellie responds – there are about 7 of them that are very weak and literally less able.. that shows up on their data but some does not. Some are just lazy.

Facilitator– the demonstration was really good and a very real experience and I learned lots of new words so thank you.

DM650033 – Facilitator – to Ellie (Host Teacher) I forgot to ask you for your reflection on the lesson – apologies! How was the feedback you have been given? Was it useful?

Yes I really do take the feedback on board because after you all had left and I was reflecting I did realize that I cocked up a bit by rushing with

them. That wasn't the intention. The intention was like 10 minutes on each of the activities, do the digestive system experiment and I do take what you said on board because after I do it which is probably not a really good idea – and I rush it and there is an activity afterwards where they had to see what they could write and remember and then see what knowledge they actually picked up – it came to me when I was saying it.... I felt that the thing was way too fast. The demonstration I didn't go through as much detail as what I wanted to do. I think I wasted too much time at the beginnings of the lesson, I did waste too much time – its one thing I am finding with them. I always feel like I want to give the time to the slow girls but then what do you do with the others? I am trying to get that balance right – making sure the stuff for the quicker ones are the ones to do so I notice there are gaps. I need to work on that a bit more, because ye all picked up on it and there were times when one or two groups said it to me I should have gone.. I had an inkling that the third group in the corner – I just wanted them to get it. I should have just left them but then that's 5 kids that don't know it and yeah again they should have some sort of extension work. That's my own fault. I loved all your feedback – with my instructions I felt my instruction were clear with the task at the beginning. I think I just had too much in the lesson – I put that down to planning. But like were they too fast for clarity or were they just too many? Should I just give them like what....?

Carol – I think you put yourself down so much... even now listening to your reflection you are focusing on the negatives..

Ellie responds – but they did though and ye all said it...

Carol – Yes but this is a different way of observing and its to reflect on what works and then to find things that work – not to list everything that was wrong. And even though you are dwelling on the instructions thing and I think the instructions thing happened because of that mentality when you introduced the class to us I could tell – oh God its not her favourite class to teach! And I know that feeling because the girls who walked in I would have felt exactly the same but actually the feedback you have had here today, the reflections showed they were hanging on your every word they loved the banter and were laughing along with you,

just relaxing and enjoying the lesson rather than worrying about our expectations and trying to pre-guess, like that is what it was. They came in, they lined up, you asked them to get into groups and they did it, it was just about... my personal reflection is you need to believe in yourself and not beat yourself up.

Ellie responds – no I'm not there was lots, like I should have stepped back after the experiment like 'what did you learn? That was the whole point. I just put too much in... I am just asking what you would have done...

Gill – in the practical I think the students will remember that. They won't forget it! That is something.... They were transfixed on that... we were transfixed on it and you explained it really well.

Christine - and you asked great questions!

Gill – oh my gosh you certainly did! And the students were really engaged and they won't forget it. I won't forget it... I will eat my dinner differently now! But that is something they needed to know and they certainly know how digestion works now

Carol – You know how you said what would you have done I think I would try to do in that situation was actually this! Let them come in and say line up and sit and wait a minute and just relax because I think its that thing I know I have felt in the past when people were watching me and thinking 'the pace isn't quick enough... and its because we watch lessons we know what the buzz words are and actually they don't work. Sometimes you have to allow yourself to be human – and think its freaking hot! Its going to be a bit slower today and think ok lets slow it down a bit! You know what I mean and its not That would not have made us think its too slow..

Gill– Christine formally observed me today and she said something to me last year which was just enjoy it! Relax and ... and that was in my head today and its really important! You were having a banter with them but they were still learning!

Ellie responds – what would ye have done with the kids who were not getting it? Would you have had a worksheet or what?

Carol – just by calling out to them and noticing them and geeing them up.... Or you could have had them writing sentences or something like getting them to describe what happens to the food... its always worth having something like that up your sleeve.

Facilitator – I am going to call it quits now because you are not in confession and need to stop saying sorry!

Appendix 12: A transcript of a Focus Group Discussion

FINAL FOCUS GROUP MEETING 23RD June 2016 (Mary was out on a school trip)

Facilitator We are in School A for our final focus group discussion. We have finished altogether 10 Rounds and everybody in the group has gone through two cycles of Rounds. We are missing Mary today because she is out of school today on a trip but she has sent me some feedback so what I want to ask you today, and we will take it in turn to say something then we can have a general discussion. How long have we got? (*someone says we are covered until lunch*). So first of all I want to ask when I interviewed all of you, it really came out quite strongly that the anxiety you all felt when having a formal observation and the way you got feedback to and everything – I want you to tell me first of all is how have Teacher Rounds been different to formal observations? Are they better or worse? I want you to tell me what **you have learned from the process of being involved of Teacher Rounds and also what you have learned by being in each others classrooms and what you have done or might do as a result?** Don't worry about not remembering everything I have them recorded from our post-Round meetings. I have all my notes and I will put it together and I am going to put a report together that we can use... Theresa shall I start with you?

Thersa - no!

Facilitator – OK Shall I start with you then Toni? So I will remind you of the questions again. Teacher Rounds as opposed to Formal Observations & feedback what did you learn from the process, working with your colleagues and what did you learn about your own teaching?

Toni – I think in terms of Teacher Rounds as opposed to Formal observations its where we have made a very good relationship between us makes it a very different vibe as it were em and I think we know because we have an agreed understanding between ourselves that we are not there to judge or to form an opinion on us as teachers its more to support each other in identifying areas we might think we need support in and offering as professional advice for each other em and you don't get

that vibe from formal observations. I guess it depends on who it is who does the observation – I know I have had formal observations that have been really supportive and I found quite useful. But often I feel I, you know I have been disheartened by observations – its often things that come up which are said but you don't understand what I am trying to get across as a teacher. And then its like a cycle, that you feel down, you feel like the people aren't understanding and you feel like where do I go from here? Often feel none the wiser so to me it's often quite a pointless exercise. But I feel that this (*Teacher Rounds*) has been the complete opposite. Its trained me into thinking of and thinking about my own practice where we have to find our problem of practice for the teacher rounds it makes you be reflective of your own teaching so you think "what do I really want to focus on in this lesson?" and being in Reception as well it is a, I found it a hard thing, there are so many things that I am always looking at it was hard to narrow down to 'what do I really want the observers to focus on?" so that was a big learning point for me. Really trying to narrow in on one particular thing I really want to look at. And I just love the way now I am walking into my classroom and I am like Hi! Its almost taken away that scary thing of observations where immediately as you walked in your stomach churned and you were almost phew I could really do without that whereas now its really sort of, its really changed my opinion on being observed. But something that I like is I feel that it has strengthened relationships throughout the school, between different year groups and em that's something that before you were very much in your year group ad you don't really come across each other – if you do in the staff room its "hi – all right?" but then I feel we have got to know each other as a range of teachers, with different responsibilities and different year groups and I think that has been a really good thing. Its been a really helpful for me. Something I have found really really helpful for me has been looking to see the expectations of other year groups in terms of my own practice. It gets me thinking "oh I could drop that in now and just not teach the whole unit on you know exclamation sentences... but you know at least now I can, I have that knowledge of what is expected later on. Watching a lesson thinking "yeah I can start thinking about that and

introducing it now..” just so that they are open to the vocabulary to being used further up in the school. em Yes!

Facilitator – I think there are some really good points there perhaps we include some of them in our TeachMeet presentation next week? Shall I go to Zoe now?

Zoe – mine is... basically you have said everything I wanted to say only you said it better! I completely agree. I think the biggest thing for me with (formal) observations is that fear of them coming in I kind of, its very much them telling you what they thought and not much you explaining how you thought it went or not even much of you.. its them “I want to look at this or that but here we get to say what we want you all to look at and then you can help us develop that as well if we need to. So its very much the was Teacher Rounds has strengthened relationships. I have had a formal observation since and I usually can’t sleep for three weeks before it happens but I was like “OK lets do it tomorrow”! I just went with it! And it was OK so it has definitely what you were saying about people coming in em I have just really enjoyed seeing different teaching strategies and things that I might be able to do. Things that might not work in my year group but maybe if ever I move I could try them and like you said as well definitely to see where they have come from because when you come to Year 2 I just expect them to be able to write.. you actually teach them that (to Toni) all that stuff you do in Reception and in Year 1 its interesting to see that some of the higher ability were similar to mine, the weaker ones em it was really good to see what goes on across the school because you don’t really – we are down here and ten we are sectioned off. And when its lunch and all the juniors are up here .. em its just about being more open to feedback as well. Because no one is actually criticizing you they are just trying to support you and help you and that really comes across. And any of the **wonderings** are just wonderings they are not you know, criticizing you as a person and I think it really is more about the practice and your problem area that you have identified. So it is everything you have said really I don’t know how much more I can contribute.

Facilitator – Do you feel more confident as a teacher do you think?

Zoe – I think I definitely feel more confident em I definitely feel more confident with people watching and yeah as a teacher I suppose because the feedback I have been given I have really tried to work on that so for instance when in the talk partners when Am wasn't listening or wasn't taking part and I have really tried to understand why isn't she? And I watch her now – she is a very shy person and you try to encourage her... yeah I think I am probably a bit more confident (laughs!).

Facilitator - you got a lot of affirmation about your teaching – you have all had. Does that help with your confidence do you think? Because you are your own worst enemies and beat yourselves up all the time! But to hear from your colleagues “that was really good” it's a bit like “Hey, she's good”! does that help?

Zoe – It does help! but then you kind of think ... no, yeah it does help (laughs!). no its really good and just to know over time we are all in the same boat. We are trying our hardest, we are just trying to do what we know how can we do it? And watching other people for example Theresa's Science lesson I really loved all of the practical pre-testing and just watching someone do it is actually makes you realize you can make it happen and you can do it as well! Trying different things. Being brave like Mary.

Sandra – I think when you have a formal observation its very much one persons opinion and as was said its their focus, not yours. Actually this is my class who I have been with and know really well now and Its also someone, and I know this sounds bad, but is someone is not in the classroom all the time the way we are. So actually there is a difference I think and often no matter how many positives they tell you its that negative one that you hang on to and you feel terrible afterwards for doing one thing wrong. And you just think “oh I missed one child answering three questions rather than just one! You just feel like ahh what do you hang onto then? That's what you remember until the next formal observation. And that's a horrible feeling. We all do it and I know its something we shouldn't do and should focus on the positive but we are all human and we are going to look at negatives! Whereas these (Teacher Rounds) have been so much more positive and you feel like

everyone is coming in to support you they are not coming in to watch and criticize or go back to anyone else and say anything. It was really good and I have gone and I know we don't talk about it but I have gone to others and said "I have seen really good practice today" and I feel we could implement that. And that's been really good. Because its that sharing of information between other people and going up to senior management and saying this has happened today that maybe we could all be doing. And they go ok.. I think that has come across positively about us that it sounds really positive in the staffroom when we all go in and we say on a Friday " its been really nice today" and other people go "oh it went well then?" and you are like 'yeah – we are not coming out going "we have just been observed and that bubble sort of thing! So for me its been a really good experience and it felt a bit more positive and I felt a bit more alive on a Friday and happy. Em yeah I think it would have been better had it not been so close to the SATS. I think if I had had it when there was a period of real teaching I think I would have got a lot more out of my teaching and I would have been able to implement it straight away. Everything I have been seeing and I was going 'oh I am going to put that in, if it doesn't work I will try something else. Because there are loads of things in the lower part of the school that could be used and be tweaked for the older ones like "hey that's good!". Especially with some of my boys in my class and have been really positive all year, the DoJo points – things like that every morning doing the shapes as you do the date. I think if I had done that from the beginning of the year then that would have been so natural for them and they really need to remember their shapes and lots of other things. And so instead of me suddenly putting it in now when they might be thinking what is she doing... it would have been more natural but I will introduce them at the start of next year with my new class. So I am trying to take notes during the teacher rounds. It would have been useful to have people coming in when I was doing that real hard teaching (rather than SATs prep) and then I think I would have had more problems of practice for you to really help out with! Also looking at other year groups has made me not so scared I think as I was really scared of Reception even though I have a child of that age I

am frightened of it! And going in and seeing how comfortable you are with them I see its not so bad! (laughs) which is so silly because we are all teachers and should be able to teach all of it! You just have that fear in someway you just have a fear of smaller ones but its really silly to be like that! I felt it was training on the job with everyone's feedback and I said ok the wonderings were to help me improve and it was not nasty and it was not a criticizing wondering and its all been really positive. So I think its been constant training as we have been going along watching other people in the classroom it is like a training room but a really good training room rather than a fall asleep training room! And it gave more depth into where they (pupils) are coming from. We got greater insight into all of that... it's a shame we couldn't go into a Year 7 class to see what happens next!

Facilitator– when we are at XXXX for the TeachMeet perhaps we could ask if this was a possibility for the future? I wish some of them would really benefit from coming here because I have learned so much as a secondary school teacher. Right Theresa are you ready?

Theresa – kind of... em before we started this process I have a huge baggage that I have tried to hide I am horrifically fearful of people coming into my classroom watching me because of previous experiences I just can't shake. And as much as this has been great and it has lifted my confidence it has made me appear more and a bit more relaxed when I am being observed. I think the real ...destructive damage I will never get over *(voice cracking.. and others join in with words of encouragement.. inaudible)* because when we have been in, but that's what I am saying, there is nothing I can do and when I volunteered for this I knew it was going to be hard em so it was nice to have the time to reflect and realize that there is an awful lot of good stuff in what everybody else does. And its good to share it. And the risk of being judged made it tolerable. I think if and that's why when we talked about the rules at the beginning about not talking about it outside I really needed those because that was where things had gone awry in times gone by and again when you have the formal observations in school, you don't have, you have that kind of "well if you don't meet these targets or

you have not met this one then your performance is being measured and you are being reported to and the governors are being reported to and and, and.... When you have such a negative start to my teaching career that actually at the end of the second year I did not know if I was ever going to teach a class again. That's where I was coming from with all observations and it was all performance you have not done this you haven't done that and its constant, constant, constant! Here it is generally more supportive but there is as you say its their job to improve the school, to prove that we all are doing outstanding teaching so you come in with your agenda as a school we have got this amount to prove this many teachers have to be doing this, and this many have to be doing that and it is right – this is your number! This is how much you have got to do. This is where you are at the moment, this is what you have got to do or to achieve before the next one. And although as a school we don't over formally observe in some ways that's a negative because if we had a few more and people got used to it like with the Teacher Rounds .. I don't mind people coming in and watching. I don't have a problem per say it's the judgment and the way feedback is given back and the way in which we have worked with the wonderings has been really nice because there have been times when you have sat there and you have wondered this that and the other and you are sat there thinking that was wrong, this was wrong and that wasn't good enough or this wasn't good enough because that is where I am programmed in. and I have also been on the other side of that where I have had to go and do the formal observations and I can see where the management scale is looking at you saying you have got to have and your targets are, you have got to prove 90% of the teachers in this school are good or better because you are not improving the standards in teaching so you get that kind of sense being thrown at you. And I have not, I have really tried hard to leave all that at the door and just kind of tried to enjoy what we have done. So yeah I am really a bit of a basket case on this one ...(others interrupt and say you are just emotional, nothing wrong with being emotional...) In terms of **LEARNINGS** I have managed to overcome the nervousness em the relationships we have built made us a really strong group in the school.

Some of the others on the outside look in thinking they weren't friends before – its not that we are friends its just that we have worked in a different way and yes it would be lovely if everybody worked in a similar way all the time. You could theoretically have three groups of people set up in a school of our size and then the following year you swap just like when we had the middle management thing, we had the three teams and staff meetings where Katie was doing and I was doing one .. so there are still opportunities to work collaboratively but I think moving forward I am worried about budget pressures and how we will be able to continue this because I know there is a positive impact to be had to benefit all of the teachers – it would be huge. But it is now how can we get, I sometimes feel.... I don't really want to say... you are recording this anyway (*others encourage her..*) I sometimes feel that when we need that pat on the back from our leaders and that little bit more self assurance – we don't get it (*others agree and Toni says.. its often when you need it the most I find personally when you need that boost the most you get knocked down*). We know there is an awful lot going on , new curriculum changes and other bits and pieces makes it really hard and with the greatest respect to the people in charge they need to come in and they need to see it and they need to come and actually give it a go – our two phase leaders teach, I know our deputy runs booster groups but our head doesn't step into our classes unless she has a clipboard in her hand. And I know that she needs to have that air of what have you but with all the changes it would be a nice feeling if she felt was in it with us. Just kind of 'how is it going? Do you know about this or do you know about that topic or even coming in and flicking through the books while we are still teaching not because she is checking but because she is interested and is having a look. (*Theresa breaks down in tears at this point and others try to comfort her*). Sorry....

Facilitator – don't be sorry. We need to think how we can get this message across to the head. I know she really wants to keep this (TR) going. I really think you would be the people and I will help you and work with you to set it up because then you can have influence on other colleagues and it will build that collaborative feeling because you have

seen what there is to be gained from it. Let me ask you another question, because we said about the wonderings one of the criticisms in the literature and you have said it yourselves you have had the opportunity to do coaching and go see someone else there was no structure there, there was no way of feeding back and teachers are so polite to each other its hard to know what to say about the lesson and one of you said when there was a temporary teacher and the teaching wasn't good they felt they could not say anything. So they just said that was fine.. so to me its about the protocols and somebody said to me yesterday when I was in another school is the fact that the feedback (with TR) is on the same day is really important because sometimes when you have an observation people are often too busy to come back and give feedback ...but lets come back to the wonderings as part of the protocol did that ever feel like wonderings were just another way of criticizing you?

Sandra – No I did not feel that. it was a way for someone to say to me or someone else or if I was in your class at that time made me think about things maybe some of the things I might have thought this, peoples different thinking and also at the end of a lesson you are so busy, either marking it or moving on to the next thing you have no time to reflect but if you did have this time you would have the same wonderings. So its quite nice to have everyone together and what I thought as well because I thought in mine each person had just a small group of children to focus on what someone said to me last time about Robyn one of the girls, was very chatty. I always knew that she does not produce enough work but I have actual evidence now and that is the reason some of the wonderings you can't wonder because you wasn't there (in that group of children).

Zoe - i saw this as quite random it is a bit relevant. A computing course with cameras all in the room so after the lesson the teacher can go back and move the camera to see who you wanted to look at and it's a bit and you are kind of doing that so he could see every second of that lesson and what everybody was doing. This (TR) has done that and all of the things you might have found out things so it did not feel like... in your head the wondering is a type of feedback you that that is what it is.. but it

is not done in that sort of way. You just feel people are on your side and is your peers and is not judging you... its different.

Facilitator - Comments on the IRIS camerasand that you can look but you can't hear the conversation. I noticed with you all is that you were all willing to take risks, trying to do things differently and I think that is fantastic because you are there with your colleagues and are going to try something different rather than stick to the same old, whereas if you are being formally observed and are being judged on it you are more likely to stick to the same thing..

Zoe – You want to do your best whereas you are kind of not as worried about doing your best just doing what you might normally do and get actual genuine feedback that is not in a nasty way. Its helpful.

Toni – I think its a lot to do with the trust and relationships we have built up because if we decided say for example, personally I think when someone is giving me feedback and I don't have respect for them not as a teacher but just as a leader or anything. I find it really hard to take that feedback on board because I think where is this coming from? Is it because, is it coming from you know from the heart is it coming from just because I have to tick a box to - giving you feedback. I sometimes feel it is about ticking that box to say I must give feedback so that's it done! Not actually thinking right – I think the observation is just the groundwork really it's the feedback that is the most important bit of the observation because that is how you are interpreting what do I do next and X.Y and Z whereas with us I think where we have built that trust between us and the respect for each other when we are giving those wonderings we know its coming from a good place and we know its coming from someone who is in the same position, you know we are all in this together. We volunteered our time to do this – its not just a tick box to say I have done a wondering – sometimes we have said I have really found it hard to come up with a wondering and instead of I was going to pick anything just to tick the box (others agree, mutterings).

Theresa – the problem with formal observations is before they even walk through your door they already know what the target is going to be because that's a whole school target that has been dictated from above

anyway. So you know and when you did get feedback you did not always feel that you can improve on what we thought was right what we thought was wrong you know we have been able to do that whereas when you have those formal observations you can't always feel you can say this is this and this is that and I have learned through the many Ofsted's I have been through now that when it comes down to it you have got to turn around and say no this is right and this is what you need to know and you have got to be that not pushy but assertive and you have got to feel confident enough to do that.

Zoe – I think what helps as well is a bit like you both were saying with there is a minimum of three official observations a year so you have to so they are coming in it might be a whole school target ..

Facilitator – its not the law..

Zoe – I thought it was...

Facilitator - *Performance management can be done anyway you like to be done .. discussion.. it's a school policy*

Zoe – whereas we volunteered for this its kind of like you are taking ownership, you want to improve rather than someone telling you, you have to, to this and that.. it kind of gives you a different perspective and you are getting the feedback you asked for this as opposed to I have just had another one tell me what you have to say.

Facilitator – It really changes the dynamics if you had say a phase leader or the deputy as part of this group it might not work in the same way or would it?

Toni – I think it would maybe they don't teach in classes so it would be very difficult to do it in terms of watching them

Facilitator – but in terms of the trust because that's what I am feeling?

Sandra – I think it probably does

Toni – I don't think I would want any of them in.. and that sounds really horrible but I would not trust them to not go back and discuss it as a team.

Sandra - I don't think that would happen I think naturally they are in that position to talk about it...

Facilitator – But they have gone from this (TR) because they have heard your feedback and you are all so polite. I know you lot have said to me you don't want to upset people or whatever they must recognise something is wrong to allow me in. I know I am persuasive but to allow me in in the first place to have free rein with you all without asking any questions other than how is it going or whatever.. nobody has tried to find out what is going on. And the same has happened in the other schools I am working with so there is something to build on.

Zoe – I think its really hard because until you do it you don't know so if we were put in and maybe and if one of us was not here and it was another teacher you just don't know how those relationships would develop, its just worked really well with us. I think if we were to continue it next year I don't know if it rather than be told you are with these people and you are with others I don't know if it needs to be random. You know what I mean so because sometimes people strategically put people together..

Facilitator – it has to be volunteers ... lets talk about how we move forward in a minute how that might work because I think it would be great, and great for developing your own leadership to lead on Teacher Rounds with your colleagues and that is what I will be recommending. That you do that and you will have to decide. People will have to volunteer you can't then ... but we can talk about that afterwards. Anything else before we talk about our TeachMeet next week? Any messages you want to get across?

Theresa – can you go back through those 3 questions to see if I have forgotten to say anything?

Facilitator – there was the difference between the formal observations and Teacher Rounds, what have you learned about the process, trust and collaboration. I mean I think this has been a very collaborative process.... Because I did ask you if you ever had the time to collaborate before but you have really collaborated fantastically during the TR process. So what have you learned from the process of doing the Rounds and then what have you learned from, you know each other in terms of your learnings? For instance some of the pre-testing stuff was very powerful people were thinking gosh how powerful that was and was something they had not

thought of. But there were lots of things that came up from all of you. Just about the teaching specifically and what you might take back and what you might change as a result?

Theresa – the only thing that kind of went through my head about the process is that when we first did our first round of observations they were very different from our second go, I think that is worth recognising in our practice is the first time we did it we were very tentative about what we showed to each other about ourselves

Zoe –I don't know if I was for my first one I did numeracy, which is my worst subject I would say. I was worried about that. I did not want to do that but I was the last one in the group to be observed so that might have made a difference.

General discussion –

Theresa - Sandra was first and I was second and I know that in my mind having seen yours as a you know, in my management hat on you know walk in and tick, tick my checklist this this... this and then looking at the second Round in terms of the process how we could if we are given the opportunity to do a third Round even more is something to recognise. If we then do this with another group of people they are going to have that kind of experience you can't just do one you have to do 2 or more for them to then relax into it and I think that's something worth noting.

Facilitator – you are right. The idea of Teacher Rounds is to come away as a school thinking that there are lots of different ways of working but I take your point doing a third Round would be a good idea and perhaps we can do it. I don't necessarily have to write it up but it could be good. I am really interested to see you all with your new classes. For you to go forward to lead your colleagues you need to be quite secure in that ..

Anything else?

Theresa – Another thing when I did the lesson on doing the pre-testing, I used it as an opportunity to do CPD because I kind of got my head around I have an opportunity here to get four people to try a different way of approaching it so I kind of flipped the thinking.. its about trying things out and thinking differently because we don't have time to do these

things. It did help my confidence though.. it became a training exercise as opposed to the usual CPD ..

Facilitator – shall I stop the recorder now but first let me say you have been fantastic to work with – I really enjoyed my Friday mornings coming here. You are all fantastic teachers and you have got to stop beating yourself up.

Appendix 13: Example of a Feedback Report to Head and SLT

School C

Feedback re Teacher Rounds

Researcher: Kenny Frederick (Brunel University)

My sincere thanks to the headteacher and leadership team for enabling teachers to participate in the Teacher Rounds research and for providing lesson cover as required. As a researcher, I really appreciate the fact that I was allowed to work with this group of enthusiastic and committed teachers over an extended period of time. Additional gratitude must go to XXXXXXXXXXXX, Deputy Head who introduced me to the school and paved the way for me to carry out my research. In addition, it was he who made sure lessons were covered when teachers were involved in Rounds.

The Rounds research

Five teachers from across the school took part in this project. They were all volunteers and although they all knew each other, they had not worked together in a structured collaborative way for any length of time. Although, they did not really know much about Teacher Rounds when we started they were eager enough to want to learn from the experience and to put their anxieties and nerves (and there were many!) and get involved.

I completed a training session with the group, which lasted for about an hour and a half and during this sessions we agreed a contract for working together. This contract was very important in helping the group to gel and to trust each other. The school made sure that teachers were released during Rounds days when we observed one lessons. The pre-Round discussions took place before school (at 8.15 am) to go through the Round Sheet produced by the host teacher. Post-Round discussions took place at the end of the school day and we were usually in school until 4.45 pm talking about teaching and learning. The fact that the teachers gave up so much of their time is an indication to their commitment to improve their practice.

It so happened that all the teachers in the Round group were experienced teachers and are certainly good teachers (to say the least!). Research tells us that teachers reach their peak in terms of their classroom performance after about seven years of teaching and it is important that we invest in this group of teachers and give them the opportunity to further develop their skills and to learn from each other. This group of teachers are often used to support PGCE students and NQTs but the assumption in many schools is that the only development they might need is leadership training. Teacher Rounds proved to be a very good vehicle for allowing them to grow and develop as teachers first and foremost and to allow them to become reenergized and motivated in their roles as teachers.

The Teacher Rounds protocols

- The Host Teacher produces a Round Sheet, which identifies the “problem of practice” and guides the Round observers during the lesson.
- A pre-Round meeting is held before school to go through the Round Sheet with the Host Teacher who tells us what to look for and which students they want us to concentrate on.
- The Round observation involving the whole Rounds group then takes place. The observers record what they see and hear and do not try to interpret it. They make no evaluation or judgment. They do not use Ofsted criteria or jargon. They don’t tell the teacher how to teach and they don’t offer solutions.
- A post-Round discussion after the lesson to feedback to the Host Teacher and to identify their **wonderings** and their **learnings**.

The teachers met together and with the Researcher before school on Round days to go through the Round Sheets, prepared by the Host Teachers that day. Producing the Round Sheet took a lot of time and reflection, as this is what guided the rest of the Round observers and set the problem of practice and outlined which students she/he wanted us to pay careful attention to or specific areas that the teacher wanted

feedback about. The quality of these Round Sheets was consistently high and really helped the process run smoothly.

The Rounds Group worked really well together and were very good at listening to and supporting each other. The discussions following Teacher Round observations quickly became informative professional conversations where they could talk about teaching and learning in a safe environment where they were not going to be judged or evaluated. They were very open and honest when giving feedback and were obviously very keen to help each other become even better teachers. They have now developed a safe and appropriate language for talking about teaching and learning.

The group found that the lessons learned (often quite small things) participating in Teacher Round observations were things they were able to act on and try it out in their own classrooms. It was practical training in the context of their classrooms.

When we came to the second cycle of Teacher Rounds we found that the teachers were far more inclined to take risks and to try something different which they would not have done if it was a formal observation. Having five teachers and the Researcher in the classroom meant we could closely observe and listen to small numbers of students, which really helped the host teacher understand more about the barriers to their learning.

Feedback was seen as an important aspect of the Teacher Round process. Teachers felt that in formal observations teachers receive feedback that is mostly about what they are **not** doing rather than what they are doing. The perception was that observers were often people whom they had not seen teach and who (mostly) taught for only a small number of lessons every week and often did not understand the issues that were dealing with on a daily basis. Teachers felt that many of the targets set after each observation are whole school targets and were not individual to them and they often felt that these were arbitrary and

depended on who was observing. During the Teacher Rounds process however, feedback from peers was better received and taken very seriously. They were not told what they were not doing but rather what they were doing and this was based on evidence of what they had seen and heard in the classroom. The fact that no evaluations were being made meant that they could talk freely amongst themselves and ponder on problems or barriers they were experiencing.

During the post-Round discussions, teachers fed back on what they had seen and heard and concentrated mostly on the problem of practice identified by the Host Teacher. They made no attempt to interpret what they had seen and they avoided all sorts of Ofsted-speak and jargon. At the end of this feedback teachers were asked to say what they had learned and if they had any **wonderings**. The wonderings are ways that teachers can ponder on what might have happened if a teacher did this or that. They are not a criticism but are designed to ensure reflection. The participating teachers felt that these were very useful in helping them to move their practice forward.

The following points were raised during interviews with participants and during post-Round meetings and through the interim and final focus group meetings. Therefore, the comments were made at different times during the process.

Some of the feedback from Teacher Round participants

- Teacher Rounds was very positive experience
- Being observed by people you have seen teach and respect as teachers means you listen to and appreciate the feedback more than in formal observation where you are often told what you are not doing.
- Feedback has been really useful and we have acted on it – almost immediately (“it’s been instantaneous”).
- Learning from and with your colleagues is a very powerful experience

- Seeing teachers in different departments is “an eye opener and we have lots to learn from them”.
- It’s surprising how much you can transfer from one subject to another
- We all have something to contribute
- The process is very open and transparent – there is no hidden agenda
- Everybody has a different way of doing things
- The language used in Teacher Rounds is positive and jargon free
- Looking at the evidence rather than at a set of Teacher Standards is more meaningful.
- There are things you can’t articulate – like the atmosphere in the classroom – on a tick sheet that you can see and discuss in post-Round discussions.
- Seeing the different ways teachers have of talking to students – the tone of voice, the body language and the obvious respect shown to students was an important part of my learning.
- Watching others using visual cues, using certain types of language when having debates was very powerful learning for me.
- Teacher Rounds have made me really reflect on my own teaching.
- A circle of trust has built up within the group
- It’s not about Performance Management. It is about gathering tips and strategies to improve your own teaching
- Feedback has been really useful but actually watching others teach has been the most positive in helping me improve my teaching
- Seeing the high expectations and standard of work in different classes – seeing what students are capable has made me think
- Seeing individual students and/or classes behaving and learning differently in different subjects is great learning.
- We talk a lot about how kids learn by doing and seeing but when it comes to our own CPD we are often told what we should be doing.

- We have made a commitment of time to sit down and talk about teaching and learning and we have developed the trust to do so
- Teacher Rounds made me raise my expectations of individual students
- We have all been very open and honest with each other
- We have taken risks during Teacher Round observations which we would not do in a formal observation
- Now I really understand the importance of developing good relationships with students
- I have learned I need to give students more of a voice in the classroom
- I have learned to use more praise – its important to acknowledge the students efforts
- I have learned how to make best use of space

Furthermore

- In every formal observation or learning walk I have tried to cover up my weaknesses, but not in Teacher Rounds
- I have not tried to hide my problem students or tried to skirt over them or hoped they would not be in! Instead I have asked the group to focus on them and give me feedback
- It's refreshing to be honest about not knowing all the kids names
- It's made me reflect more on my teaching and stopped me getting stale.
- You have to be yourself in the classroom – you can watch others but must not try to be them or do exactly as they have done. It won't work.

Some other issues that arose through interviews or post-Round discussions

- Experienced (good) teachers we are often used to support PGCE students/NQTs etc but it is rare for their learning needs in terms of their teaching, to be considered. This needs to be addressed.

- Feedback from formal observations is often very limited (due to time pressure) and the assumption is that they (experienced good teachers) don't need feedback – but they do! It's important!
- Most Professional Learning opportunities for this group of teachers is about leadership and there is very little is about improving teaching and learning, yet this is the core of their work.
- All of the Rounds participants had had negative feedback at some point in their careers and found it devastating especially when it came from someone they have not seen teach. It's hard to take this feedback seriously and does little to move them forward as teachers.
- However, constructive criticism is well received when it comes from someone they have respect for as a teacher.
- Rounds participants were very good at identifying their own areas for development, which they had identified from their own reflections rather than formal feedback from others.
- Different Departments vary in how they enable teachers to collaborate and share good practice – some don't do this at all. It very much depends on the Head of Department.
- Formal observations feel very false as they are always observed by the Head of Department who usually leaves after 20 minutes.
- Formal observations have often been messed around with – cancelled at last minute.
- Targets set after a formal observation, are not very useful and often they are not relevant. Teachers want more feedback and discussion about the observation so they can set their own targets and get better.
- Learning Walks are used for monitoring purposes rather than for professional learning and sharing good practice.
- Following formal observations or Learning Walks in our department, nothing happens as a result “we don't share good practice in our department”.
- We don't spot people doing things well.

- Having no staffroom to speak of means we don't get to know people in other subject areas. Opportunities to collaborate are minimum or are forced (or arranged) so have little impact.
- Seeing others teach is the best way to improve and talking to teachers in other departments and working on joint developments would be great.
- In terms of Teacher Voice we usually have to go through our department, which can be a problem if communication is not good.
- SLT will listen but often do not act on what we say – it's frustrating!
- It's not part of the culture of the department to observe each other
- Teacher voice – not sure if everybody is heard.
- SLT need to listen and act on what teachers are saying and teachers need to a forum to talk about Teaching and Learning.
- The CPD is now targeted and there is a choice of Professional Learning activities. However, it is not differentiated to meet all our needs. CPD still feels like a chore rather than something to look forward to.
- The school has invested heavily in a coaching programme but the group were unclear about the way this was working or who was involved or indeed whether it involved coaching or mentoring.
- We need (all teachers) to have the opportunity to debate and decide what good teaching means in this school – an ongoing discussion, not a checklist.
- We need to decide what professional learning we need – it can't really be whole school except on issues like safeguarding and health and safety.

Recommendations for the school

1. Teacher Rounds to become a sustainable part of the schools Continual Professional Learning programme and occur regularly throughout the school year.
2. The remaining original Rounds Group to be responsible for facilitating and training the groups. The Researcher is happy to support the facilitators and deliver training to the new volunteers (if

required) before they embark on a cycle of Rounds with new group.

3. The school may wish to review the way formal observations and learning walks are used and feedback given, and most importantly involve teaching staff in this discussion. They need to be specific on how these help (or don't help) teachers to improve their practice
5. The school may want to review the way teacher voice is heard and used to improve the experience of both teachers and students.
6. Move away from fixed time slots for CPD and whole school training and development. Instead use the model used for coaching and Teacher Rounds to allow professional learning to take place in the context of the classroom.

Some concerns expressed

- A worry that without external facilitation the process might become warped and changed or may not happen (because we always have other priorities!)
- A need to stick to the protocols for Teacher Rounds to have the desired impact.
- Teacher Rounds must not be used as a strategy to support weaker teachers or be used for accountability purposes.
- Once established – the school might consider and explore other ways that Teacher Rounds might be used in the school – eg with PGCE students, with NQTs, or within Departments or across year groups.

The make up of the Rounds Group

- We are all experienced teachers
- We all learned to trust each other
- It might be difficult if NQTs are involved alongside experienced teachers
- It's important to note we are all vulnerable at some point in our career – we have all had the class from hell that we dread – but we

don't normally voice this.... But we need to acknowledge this and know its OK to feel like that.

The Teacher Rounds group have agreed this report and would welcome the opportunity to discuss its contents with the Head Teacher and Senior Management Team.

Kenny Frederick

Researcher

November 2016