The path from instruction to inquiry: A narrative inquiry examining early childhood educators' stories of change

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Abstract

This dissertation is an interpretive research study that examines the change experiences of four early childhood educators in Ontario, Canada during the implementation of the mandated pedagogical framework How Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a). Since the beginning of the new millennium, Ontario has introduced a number of significant policy initiatives that increasingly recognises the value of the early learning for young children for success in school and later in life. This study is rooted in my belief that the experience of early childhood educators during the implementation of these initiatives hold lessons that may be useful for future policy initiatives. The theoretical underpinning of this study is based on the ancient Greek works of Heraclitus (Haxton, 2003) and Parmenides (Král, 2011) which I used as explanatory lens to consider key aspects of change. The theoretical basis was further augmented by modifying the Ölander & Thøgersen (1995) theory of behaviour change to present a model to illustrate how change concurrently happens at the individual, organisation, and systems levels.

Using the narrative inquiry model developed by Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000) as a methodological approach, I collected the experiences of these early childhood educators through a series of walking interviews and re-storied them into what Michael Agar (1990) refers to as 'creative non-fiction' format (p75). The stories were then analysed in three phases. First, the personal, professional and societal significance of the stories were considered collectively through a temporal lens. Following this, the change processes of the participants as revealed through the stories were compared and contrasted using Kurt Lewin's (1947) change model. Finally, a thematic analysis was conducted. These multiple forms of analysis revealed that professional identity, access to mentoring support, and reflective practices were important considerations for the participants. These findings led me to conclude that early childhood educators could benefit from a workforce support strategy that would accompany future policy initiatives. I conclude that future research is required to fully develop the strategy.

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Acknowledgements

Five years ago I started an unintended journey of personal and professional discovery when I quit a job that I loved but was making me sick. I decided to pursue doctoral studies at the University of Glasgow in honour of my mother who was born in Scotland yet lived her entire life in Canada. To my surprise what I discovered was so much more than family heritage. I found a community of eager and encouraging learners in my Ed.D cohort. I also found supportive faculty who challenged and celebrated our steps towards becoming independent scholars. Specifically, I am thankful for Dr. Mary Wingrave for her guidance, support, and supervision throughout the dissertation process. By generously sharing her expertise in the early years sector she became a key knowledge translator as I navigated between Scottish and North American literature and professional practice. I am also thankful for Dr. Fiona Patrick for her wit, wisdom and perspectives on the research design. She instilled the confidence I needed to step out on a limb with narrative inquiry and walking interviews.

Beyond the walls of the University I found international colleagues and kindred spirits who influenced the development of this study. Anne Fowlie, Jean Carwood-Edwards, and Kathryn Chisholm amongst others at the Scottish Social Services Council, Early Years Scotland, and the Scottish government never hesitated to open their doors to me, to collaborate and to share their local sector knowledge.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the early childhood educators who gave their time and allowed me to walk along side of them in order to learn their stories. Claire, Rosie, Olivia and Beatrice: thank you for letting me tell your stories. We will be forever connected through our shared laughter and tears.

I am also grateful for the flexibility and patience of my work family as they endured my mercurial schedule and emotions as I travelled physically, mentally, and virtually back and forth across the Atlantic. Your continued interest in my adventures, whether feigned or genuine, means the world to me.

Finally, the experience of learning about the place of my mother's birth led me to learn about myself in unexpected ways. I can say confidently that I have always been Canadian, but understand now that I am also Scottish. My Scottishness extends beyond the fact that I enjoy porridge for breakfast, serve shortbread at Christmas, and have a complicated relationship with vegetables. My Scottishness has unconsciously shaped my outlooks and beliefs and through multiple trips across the ocean I have come to love the craggy terrain of the Highlands, the glittering and mysterious lochs, and dreichy weather.

I also now understand that I am a settler who, through no fault of my own, was educated with only one worldview. Through the development of this study I have started to widen my view and gain a greater appreciation for 'new' ways of knowing. Going forward I am committed to learning and unlearning on a journey towards reconciliation.

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, who have always encouraged me to dream big, take risks, and live fully. All of the personal and professional successes that I have enjoyed in life can be credited to them.

Author’s Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Cynthia Abel

Definitions and Abbreviations Used

Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO)

Early childhood educator (ECE)

Early Development Instrument (EDI)

Early Learning For Every Child Today (ELECT)

How Does Learning Happen? (HDLH)

New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP)

Transtheoretical Model (TTM)

Prologue

Journal entry: November 16, 2018

I pull the drapes open in my hotel room and look out across the parking lot at the remnants from last night's snow storm. The grey slush and thick fog is so typical at this time of year. I can almost feel it reaching through the window to envelope me. I shiver in anticipation of the damp chill that I know I will face soon as I step outside. The weather is the perfect embodiment of how I have been feeling lately.

The lingering effects from last night's celebration honouring excellence in early childhood education have already worn off. A dull heavy feeling, the kind that drags you down, envelopes me. Usually this would be the type of day that fills me with excitement: visiting early years programmes and observing the learning environments; talking with early childhood educators (ECEs) and hearing about their experiences, triumphs, and challenges. It's my favourite part of my job.

But not today.

Today, I am worried that they are going to expect me to provide them with some words of wisdom, some encouragement, or some optimism. Typically I would oblige. In fact I usually enjoy obliging; but today I don't have any of those kinds of words. I don't know what the future will bring and I can't bring myself to lie to them and say that I do. There have been too many changes in the education and broader public sector lately and they have happened so fast that it's mind-numbing. Just like the ECEs I am about to visit I am feeling uncertain and scared. I don't know what will happen with the class sizes and ratios. I don't know what will happen with educator teams and qualifications. I don't know what will happen with wage enhancement grants. After all my years working in government I usually have some insight into the drivers behind government decisions but this current government has surprised me at every turn. As I finish the last of my watery hotel coffee I decide to set those feelings of uncertainty aside and try to make the most of the day.

I meet my colleagues in the lobby and we head out to visit the programme. The centre has just undergone six months of renovations to naturalise and enhance the outdoor learning environment and I'm looking forward to seeing it. As I pull into the small parking lot, I notice that it's an older building with architectural styles that are reminiscent of the 1970's. It reminds me of the first centre that I worked at after graduation.

That feeling of uncertainty and dread creeps up again and I push it back down. I put on my very best fascade and head inside to meet the programme supervisor. She's a young woman in her mid-twenties with a friendly face and an abundance of youthful energy. She introduces us to Beatrice, the lead ECE who will be showing us around the centre. From a cursory glance I deduce that Beatrice is a few years older than me. She has kind, wise blue eyes that crinkle when she smiles. I get the feeling that she has seen a lot of change over the course of her career. I immediately like her.

Beatrice leads us from room to room. She's a natural quick-talker and I find myself having to listen intently to follow along with her narration. I notice there is an absence of plastic commercial toys, but despite this the rooms have a warm, cozy and playful feel. There is an abundance of loose parts and natural materials such as rocks and stones. The walls are adorned with photos and documentation that tell the stories of children's learning. There is no doubt that this is a happy learning space for children.

Before taking us outside to the playground Beatrice pauses and tells us 'Now this. This is my baby'. She pushes open the double glass doors dramatically and motions for us to step outside. I take a quick intake of breath, partly because of the stark contrast of the cold air, and partly because the space is literally breath-taking. While most of the playgrounds that I am familiar with are cluttered with climbing apparatus and swings, this one is spacious, green, and calming. It looks like a cross between a park and a forest. Last night's snow has almost completely melted so I can see that there is an abundance of green shrubs and grass. There is a large hill

with trails for bikes and wagons and natural climbing rope that the children can pull themselves up with, or use to repel down the hill. It reminds me of the park I used to play in when I was a child.

Beatrice talks excitedly about the natural materials that she was able to secure from the consultant who was leading a workshop here the other night, and her plans to bring her husband in on the weekend to finish chopping some wood for the construction zone. She is talking even faster now than before and her entire presence appears to transform from her excitement and passion. Her face seems to glow and her blue eyes twinkle as she talks about 'her playground'.

Listening to her is so refreshing. It's so honest; so unencumbered by the uncertainties that have been weighing me down. Something stirs inside me like a flicker from an ember. It's been a while since I've felt this way. Could my professional fire be re-igniting? The thought fills me with such excitement that I am overwhelmed by emotion. I am enjoying being lost in my own thoughts but then she says, 'You know it wasn't always this way. I was the biggest resister.' I snap out of my self-absorbed daze.

'I'm sorry?' I ask confused by her comment.

'How Does Learning Happen?' she says. 'I was really resistant when it first came out. But now look at me. I'm its biggest champion! Children are capable and competent and all that'. She smiles as she quotes a key line from the document.

At the end of the tour we say our goodbyes and get ready to leave. She throws her arms open and envelopes me in a big hug. I'm startled by this random display of affection but instinctively hug her back. I feel an unexplained connection with this woman. 'You need to tell your story,' I tell her as we embrace. I'm not sure where that thought has come from but as soon as I say it I'm sure that it's the right thing to do.

She pulls away quickly, her eyes wide with surprise. I nod and tell her again ‘There are people who need to hear your story’.

‘Do you think so?’ she asks. Her voice is barely a whisper. I nod again and she hugs me tightly again. This time when we pull apart there are tears in her eyes. ‘Thank you’ she mouths. There are tears in my eyes too and I can’t explain why. I promise to keep in touch, as I wave goodbye and head outside to my car.

Turning onto the highway to head home I remember Beatrice’s bubbly chatter and I smile involuntarily. I easily merge into traffic. ‘Beatrice’s story’ I say to myself. There’s a nice ring to that. The highway is clear. The fog has lifted. There’s lightness now, both in the air and in my soul. The sun has come out once again.

Chapter 1: The Constant in Perpetual Change

1.1: A sector built on change

This study examines the experience of change of four early childhood educators (ECEs) in Ontario, Canada. As a former public servant responsible for the development and implementation of policy initiatives to support the healthy development of young children, I have a keen interest in how the broader children's system continues to evolve. In my current role with the regulator of ECEs in Ontario, I have observed how the workforce responded to the introduction of government initiatives. I believe that insights from these experiences can help to inform the implementation of future initiatives in the early years sector.

Gillian Rodd (2015) argues that 'change and the necessity to adapt have been prominent hallmarks of early years provision since its inception' (p1). Recent policy development initiatives in the early years sector in Ontario, Canada would appear to support this claim. Early years programmes in Canada were initially viewed by government as a social service for working mothers so that they 'could focus their full attention on their work, knowing their children were safe and happy' (Prochner, 2000, p54). This view of the early years has changed considerably over the years, most notably during the first 14 years of the new millennium during which time Ontario, like many other jurisdictions around the globe, implemented several significant changes to government policy to address the changing social and economic landscape in the province.

One notable change was the introduction of Ontario's first pedagogy for the early years: How Does Learning Happen? (HDLH) (Ontario Ministry of Education (Ontario), 2014a), which was the first document to be mandated for use in all early years programmes in the province to support the development of programming and curriculum for young children. The timeline graphic below illustrates what I believe to be the most significant policy initiatives that have shaped the early years sector up to, and including, the introduction of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a):

2013	How Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a)
	Think Feel Act (Ontario, 2013b)
2010	Launched Full-day Kindergarten
2009	Announced Full-day Kindergarten (Ontario, 2009)
2007	Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007
2004	Best Start Plan (Ontario, 2004)
1999	Early Years Study (McCain & Mustard, 1999)

Figure 1: Timeline of significant policy initiatives

The timeline has been presented in a vertical format to symbolically represent how these initiatives built upon each other in attempts to drive system change.

In the midst of these initiatives are ECEs like Beatrice from the Prologue, who continued to support children and their families through her practice as her professional context evolved with the introduction of successive new policies. This dissertation is about Beatrice's story of change and the stories of three other ECEs: Claire, Rosie and Olivia who also evolved their practice in response to the implementation of these new policies. Their stories of change document their personal and professional journeys from relying on traditional instructional methods to embracing inquiry as a way of practice with young children that aligns with the new mandated pedagogical direction. Examining their stories not only provides insight into how some ECEs experience change but it also provides some lessons that can be applied to future policy change initiatives that may support successful implementation.

The discussion that follows in this chapter will illustrate how each change initiative built on the previous initiative to shift the system away from early years programmes primarily being viewed as merely 'safe and happy' places (Prochner, 2000, p54) to focus more on pre-academic skill development and education, and eventually towards what may be viewed as a new era of early years programmes with HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). This chapter will also discuss how, in the midst of these myriad of changes, ECEs have continued to be a constant and enduring presence, despite how the ECE role has changed and evolved in response to these policy changes. The last section of this chapter looks ahead to potential future change and provides the rationale and parameters for this study.

1.2: Advancing an understanding of neuroscience

One of the first significant initiatives in Ontario in recent times was the release of the Early Years Study (McCain & Mustard, 1999). This report, authored by physician and research Dr. Fraser Mustard and the former Lieutenant-Governor of the Canadian province of New Brunswick and philanthropist, the Honourable Margaret McCain, focuses on the science of early brain development and illustrates how children's experiences in their first six years influence their development and set a trajectory for the rest of their life (p5). The report also raises concerns, suggesting that Ontario's children are doing as well developmentally as they could be doing (p10) and it urges the provincial government to invest in programmes that support the early years so that 'all our future citizens are able to develop their full potential' (p61). In response to the report, the provincial government launched the Early Development Instrument (EDI) (Early Years Study 1, 1999, n.d.). This suggests that the government's policy position related to the early years began to shift as early years programmes began to focus on measuring for readiness to learn and school achievement.

The roll out of the EDI was a key part of the province's Early Years Plan and was accompanied by significant new investment of $114 million (City of Toronto, 2001, p 1). The plan also included the creation of universally accessible Ontario Early Years Centres (now called EarlyON centres) across the province so that all families

would have access to a range of early years programmes and referral services including early literacy initiatives delivered by specially trained early years professionals (p3). These centres broadened training and employment opportunities for ECEs. At the same time the mandate of these centres focused the work of ECEs to be more about engaging with families, conducting developmental screening and referrals, as well as providing pre-academic literacy activities for young children (McLennan & Howitt, 2018).

1.3: Ensuring the best start

The change in provincial government in 2003 resulted in a major refocusing of early years policy priorities to leverage new funding from the federal government through Ontario's Best Start Plan (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2004). The plan articulates two overarching goals:

- Children in Ontario will be ready and eager to achieve success in school by the time they start Grade; and
- To make Ontario an international leader in achieving the social, intellectual, economic, physical and emotional potential of all its children (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2005, p9)

The plan included a rapid expansion of licensed child care programmes and availability of fee subsidies to offset the costs of these programmes for parents. It also established three expert panels to provide advice to government on how to implement key aspects of the plan: an 18 month well baby visit by physicians; a universal early learning programme; and a recruitment and retention strategy for professionals working in the early years (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2004). In 2007 the government released an early learning framework that was developed by the Best Start Panel on Early Learning (Ontario, 2014b). The framework, entitled Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) (Ontario, 2014b) is widely recognised as 'a foundational document in the early years sector' (Ontario, 2014a, p9). It establishes a shared language across disciplines to guide practice for all practitioners working with young children through the Statement of Principles (Ontario, 2014b, pp1-14). The document also presents a continuum of

development to understand how children develop from birth to age eight (pp18-62).

To date the provincial government has not mandated the use of ELECT (Ontario, 2014b) for use by early years programmes, rather it remained publicly accessible on the government website as a report to government that was adopted and organically spread by some organizations in the early years sector. Nevertheless, in 2014 the government acknowledged that:

> Many child care operators, child and family programs, municipalities, postsecondary institutions, and other organizations have integrated elements of ELECT into their programs, training, and quality improvement strategies. (Ontario, 2014a, p9)

For some ECEs the government's silence on the use of ELECT meant that there was virtually no change to their day to day professional practice. However for other educators who were employed in programmes that embraced ELECT may have experienced more change as programmes aligned to the framework. In particular, integrating the use of the developmental continuum into early years programmes may have required that some ECEs revisit the way they observe and document children's development.

1.4: Professionalising the workforce

Another component of the government's Best Start Plan (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2004) was the recognition of a distinct profession for the early years through the creation of the College of Early Childhood Educators (the College) in 2007 to regulate the profession. Prior to this introduction, many ECEs had been advocating for professional recognition through self-regulation (Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, n.d.). Jayne Osgood (2006) notes that some early years advocates argue that professional status 'could lead to a strengthened position and increased respect for those who work in [early childhood learning and care]' (p5). However Osgood (2006) notes that concerns also abound that professionalisation is simply a means for government to exert control and dominance over a predominately female workforce (p5). Furthermore, she argues that the introduction of standards associated with professionalisation

serves to undermine the growth and development of professional identity as 'practitioners are left too busy and preoccupied with meeting standards' (Osgood, 2006, p6). This line of argument suggests that the creation of a collective identity through standards of practice limits the agency of the educator to individually determine how they will commit to being and behaving as a professional. Notwithstanding which side of the professionalisation debate that individual ECEs in Ontario supported, the introduction of the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, meant that they were required to become a member of the College if they were to continue practicing the profession in Ontario beyond February 2009 (College of Early Childhood Educators, n.d.).

In fulfilling its legislative mandate, the College established a consistent standard for education for those seeking to enter the profession (College of Early Childhood Educators, n.d.). By establishing entry to practice requirements that included mandatory post-secondary education studies in early childhood education, the College dismisses the position that the early years is 'work that "anyone" can do' (Mooney & McCafferty, 2005, p226). It also reinforces the position argued by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (2001) that provision of quality programming 'depends on strong staff qualifications' (p126). However to date, the education requirement has remained unchanged, despite the additional policy changes and expectations of educators that are discussed in subsequent sections.

At the same time, the creation of the College began to standardise the professional practice of ECEs. Section 2 of the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007* defines the practice of early childhood education as

> the planning and delivery of inclusive play-based learning and care programs for children in order to promote the well-being and holistic development of children (*Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, Ontario, s.2*)

The inclusion of the term 'play-based learning' is notable for two reasons. First, it formally establishes early years programmes as contributing to the educational development of young children, rather than viewing programmes as 'safe places' (Prochner, 2000, p54) to house children while their mothers returned to the

workforce. Second, it creates an expectation that ECEs use play as a pedagogical vehicle. Yet at the time this was introduced there was no complementary legislative or policy provision to guide the operations of programmes. The *Day Nurseries Act*, which was the legislation governing the licensing of early years programmes at the time, does not include the word 'learning'; and the term 'play' only appears in reference to furnishings or materials. As a result there was a misalignment between expectations placed on the individual practitioners and the environments in which they practice that would not be resolved until six years later with the introduction of the Early Years Policy Framework (Ontario, 2013a).

1.5: A full day of learning

Arguably one of the most significant shifts in the provincial government's early years agenda came in 2009 with announcement of a publicly funded full-day Kindergarten programme for all four and five year olds (Ontario, 2009). The programme was based on the advice of the Premier's Early Learning Advisor, Dr. Charles Pascal (2009) who extensively referenced the research from the Early Years Study (McCain & Mustard, 1999) and ELECT (Ontario, 2014b) throughout the document.

The programme built on the existing structure to extend the half-day Junior and Senior Kindergarten delivered by local publicly funded school boards to a full-day of learning (Ontario, 2009). School boards were required to offer an optional fee-based before and after school care at schools to reduce the number of transitions for young children (Ontario, 2009). The programme's staffing model was also touted as innovative and unique with one certified teacher and one registered ECE in each classroom (Ontario, 2009). The creation of 'educator teams' was intended to leverage the complementary strengths and skill sets that are characterised by each of professional group (Pascal, 2009, p34). Registered ECEs would liaison with community support services; certified teacher would support student assessment and transition to Grade One; and together they would plan and implement the early learning programme curriculum (Pascal, 2009, p34). The whole vision was to

create a ‘seamless and integrated system of supports’ (Pascal, 2009, p1) for young children.

To further facilitate integration the government transferred responsibility for all community-based early years programs from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education arguing that

> eliminating the artificial divide…will facilitate improved policy and program development in supporting the needs of Ontario’s young children and their families (Ontario, 2010)

The Starting Strong II report from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2006) argues that governance structures impact both the quality and coverage of early years programmes (p58). Consolidating governance under one responsibile government ministry establishes a common mandate, reduces overlapping responsibilities, and ensures a coordinated policy approach across programme areas (p58). The structural integration of governance functions for early years in Ontario follows examples from other leading jurisdictions including Sweden, Denmark, and Finland (p60).

The full-day Kindergarten programme was implemented across the province using a phased approach over a four year period (Ontario, 2009). A government sponsored evaluation by a group of academic researchers at the mid-point of the programme’s implementation revealed the extent of disruption that the programme was causing for ECEs in both schools and community programmes (Vanderlee et. al, 2012). First, the researchers noted collaboration challenges between teachers and ECEs working in full-day Kindergarten programmes (p122). To address this challenge they recommend that the ministry should ‘clearly define the roles and responsibilities’ for the educator teams (p122). They also place additional responsibility on individual school administrators to ensure that professional collaboration is happening in the classroom. Specifically they recommend that administrators

> should model how to treat early childhood educators as valuable staff members by respecting them and enabling them to have input in the school community; early childhood educators need to feel like they have a voice (p122)

The report also notes an emerging early years workforce crisis in the community-based sector as a result of a number of issues associated with the implementation of full-day Kindergarten including:

- Early childhood educators being drawn to more secure, high paying positions with school boards (p121); and
- Job loss as a result of community-based programme closures (p175) resulting from the loss of the fees associated with four and five year olds (p54).

To help stabilise the community-based early years sector, the report (Vanderlee et. al, 2012) further recommends that the Ministry of Education should enhance the salaries of ECEs working in the community-based sector to be more competitive with the salaries offered by local school boards (p122).

The uptake of full-day Kindergarten was very successful with the government reporting in September 2014 that 265,000 four- and five-year olds were participating in the program and more than 10,000 ECEs had been hired to be part of the educator teams (Ontario, 2014c). However, little has been done to address the wages disparity between ECEs in the two employment settings. The Ontario Secondary School Federation which provides labour representation for ECEs working in the Ottawa-Carleton school board of Ontario indicates that under the current collective agreement the salary range for ECEs in 2019 was between $21/hour (Canadian dollars) and $27/hour (Canadian dollars) (Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, 2017). By comparison, a report on the Ministry of Education's key data and measures for community-based early years programmes reports that only 43% of ECEs earned the similar salary during the same time period (Ontario, 2020a).

Challenges with collaboration within the educator teams continue to exist. A recent study by Rachel Langford and her colleagues (2018) found similar challenges within educator teams leading them to conclude that an inequity of contributions exists between the two professional groups (p16). Specifically they found that the ECEs were assigned responsibility for 'care work which is accorded less value and status than the work of educating children' (p2). Furthermore they found that

teachers tended to perceive ECEs as 'assistants who support teachers' (p13), a view that had been reinforced through the implementation of the programme. ECEs who chose a career path in the school system in a full-day Kindergarten programme would have had to manage through these challenges of implementation, role differentiation, and developing productive relationships with another professional who may have viewed them in a subservient role. Conversely, ECEs who remained in community-based programmes would have had to deal with the uncertainty and instability of programme viability, as well as the historical pay inequity compared with their school counter-parts. Additionally, ECEs in community-based programmes were about to face a series of government policy initiatives that were waiting for them right around the corner.

1.6: A policy framework for the early years

The year following the release of the evaluation on the implementation of full-day Kindergarten, the Ministry of Education released Ontario's Early Years Policy Framework (Ontario, 2013a). The framework (Ontario, 2013a) committed government to the overarching goal of transforming programmes and services so that children could achieve better outcomes and families could have a more seamless service experience (p2). It (Ontario, 2013a) also committed government to a number of specific short- and long-term activities including continued investment to stabilise the community-based early years system as a result of the implementation of full-day Kindergarten; and the creation of a 'comprehensive framework to guide programming' that would align with and build upon the work of ELECT (p19). Yet the aspirational promise of early years service transformation is conspicuously silent on matters of the workforce, save for one non-specific commitment to continue strengthening the 'capacity and leadership' in the sector (p19). There is no specificity in the commitment about examining or supporting the qualifications of educators to ensure that they have the knowledge, skills and judgement to deliver on the expectations required in a newly transformed integrated programme.

While the policy framework (Ontario, 2013a) did not necessarily have an immediate and direct impact on the professional practice of ECEs, it is an important foundational document that establishes the policy principles that would influence future activities in the early years sector. Whereas earlier documents such as The Early Years Study (1999), ELECT (2007), and With Our Best Future in Mind (2009) all acknowledge and popularised the belief of the innate ability of young children to learn, Ontario's Early Years Policy Framework (Ontario, 2013a) is the first government policy document to enshrine philosophical beliefs about learning in the early years into government policy beyond expectations placed on practitioners. The framework (Ontario, 2013a) appears to foreshadow the introduction of provincial pedagogy based on play and the alignment between the expectations of programmes and ECE practice. This is accomplished in the document through two related concepts. First, the document (Ontario, 2013a) acknowledges that children are 'competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential' (p7). Second, it reaffirms the position of the (Canadian) Council of Ministers of Education that establishes play as the means by which young children develop and learn (p14). The inclusion of these core concepts in policy is significant because these beliefs serve as a foundational guide to direct future funding and policy activities such as the development of the aforementioned programme guidance document.

1.7: Promoting critical reflection on research

In 2013 the Ministry of Education also released a collection of six research briefs entitled Think, Feel, Act (Ontario, 2013b). One view of the document (Ontario, 2013b) was that it formed part of the implementation of the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework (Ontario 2013a). Leveraging the work of renowned academic researchers and clinicians, the research briefs included in Think Feel Act (Ontario, 2013b) present cutting-edge research on topics that align to one of the themes in the title. I have presented one example of how the research briefs could be aligned to the themes of 'think', 'feel', and 'act' in the table below. However, it should be noted that the complex and connective nature of the information

included in the research briefs do not necessarily lend themselves to falling exclusively into one theme:

Research Brief Topics	
Think	• Developing pedagogical leadership practices to guide the study of the teaching and learning process (p16) • Using pedagogical documentation to make learning visible (p27)
Feel	• Sustaining genuine connections with young children to support their social-emotional growth (p5) • Supporting young children in practicing self-regulation (p22)
Act	• Designing safe and stimulating learning environment (p12) • Creating programmes that welcome and include children and families from diverse backgrounds and abilities (p31)

Table 1: Alignment of research brief topics to Think, Feel, Act (Ontario, 2013b)

Furthermore, each of the research briefs reinforces the view that young children are 'competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential' (Ontario, 2013b, p2), which draws a direct connection to the theoretical underpinning articulated in the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework (Ontario, 2013a).

However, another view of Think, Feel, Act's (Ontario, 2013b) purpose is also possible. The introductory section of the document (Ontario 2013b) suggests that the research briefs are 'intended to challenge the status quo and encourage critical reflection' (p2) for those working in the early years sector. This two-fold statement subtly signals a potential change to come, and suggests that the document is part of the preparatory groundwork for a successful implementation of that change through a call to action. The name of the document would appear to support this assumption as the seminal work of Dr. Aaron Beck (1964) presents a cognitive model which theorises that there is a connection between an individual's

thoughts, emotions and behaviours (p567). According to Beck (1964) individual actions emerge as a result of the way that individuals think and feel; therefore actions can be changed by addressing the way individuals think and feel about a subject (p567). Whether or not the document was intended to link to Beck's (1964) model, the title suggests that government's intention was to change practices in the early years system by first changing the way that those working in the system think about the early years, and then supporting them to act on those thoughts and beliefs. To encourage and support practitioners to act, each research brief includes a series of reflective questions and prompts designed to 'stimulate personal reflection and team discussions' (Ontario, 2013b, p2). Using the document's (Ontario, 2013b) title as a framework for change suggests that these questions could then be used to help the practitioner *think* critically about the information presented in the research briefs, and evaluate how they *feel* about the information. Finally the practitioner can *act* on the new information to incorporate it into their practice.

Think, Feel, Act (Ontario, 2013b) provided a new, more directive and supportive way for government to engage with the early years workforce on current research and practice. It was the first publicly available early years research document produced by the ministry since the transfer of responsibility of early years policy. It was released using an approach commonly employed by the ministry to support elementary and secondary school teachers that included an interactive webpage with videos in which the research brief authors expanded on each of the topics. This allows practitioners across the province to experience conference quality presentations by renowned researchers such as Dr. Jean Clinton and Dr. Stuart Shanker that may have otherwise been inaccessible due to cost, travel or time restraints. One of the stated goals of Think, Feel, Act (Ontario, 2013b) was to 'pique [the] interest' of the early years workforce. In piquing interest about new evidence and practice, the government set the stage for the introduction of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) in the following year.

1.8: A pedagogy for the early years

HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) was introduced in the spring of 2014. It was introduced as a pedagogy for the early years that was intended to build on the developmental perspectives of young children presented in the ELECT (Ontario, 2014b) and the research from *Think, Feel, Act* (Ontario, 2013b) by adding 'new perspectives on the approaches that best support children's learning, development, health, and well-being' (p8).

At the onset, HDLH (Ontario 2014a) sets out 'a shared understanding' of children, families and educators which may be used as a starting point to develop programmes and practices to support learning (p6). Specifically, it states that:

- Children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential (p6).
- Families are composed of individuals who are competent and capable, curious, and rich in experience (p7).
- Educators are competent and capable, curious, and rich in experience (p7).

A common theme in the document is the underlying belief that children, families and educators are both 'capable' and 'competent'. This wording positions each group as an equal partner that contributes to the learning process, aiming to eliminate the hierarchical structure that can exist (with the professional-educator-expert in an elevated position of power and authority, and the child positioned at the bottom). At the same time, this wording is significant because it is the first instance in a government policy document that not only acknowledges educators in the early years, but positions them as 'capable and competent' partners in learning (p8). The important role of educators is further reinforced and illustrated throughout the document (Ontario, 2014a) through examples of how their practice supports young children as they develop and learn. By clearly stating expectations for programmes, HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) provides further pedagogical guidance to educators in developing programming; supports educators in becoming co-learners with children, families and colleagues; and provides a focus that can assist educators in building and maintaining critical relationships and connections (p13).

Guidance provided to educators and programmes in HDLH (Ontario 2014a) is built upon four foundations: belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression (p7). On the surface, the foundations appear to be simple, universally agreed concepts. However the document (Ontario, 2014a) digs deep beneath the surface to challenge educators to think about whether their practices are truly aligned with achieving the goals associated with each foundation. The examples that follow illustrate the full extent of the intent of the foundations.

Belonging' refers to 'a sense of connectedness to others' (p7). Through belonging, children feel valued, form authentic relationships with others and make contributions (p7). This foundation emphasises the important role of families and encourages their inclusion in the programme (p26). At the same time, to foster authentic relationships and build a sense of belonging, the foundation encourages educators to focus more time and effort on one on one interactions with children rather than large group activities such as 'circle time' that have traditionally been associated with early years programmes (p26).

'Well-being' refers to the child's 'physical and mental health and wellness' (p7). Digging deeper into this foundation, HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) promotes the full development of the child within a naturalised environment. Furthermore it encourages programmes to consider removing large outdoor play structures such as climbers and swings in favour of natural materials such as boulders, tree stumps, and mature trees which children can climb on and engage in more risky types of play (p32).

'Engagement' refers to a 'state of being involved and focused' (p7). When fully engaged, children explore their world with 'natural curiosity and exuberance' (p7). As is the case with 'well-being' HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) promotes the use of natural materials. In this case it encourages educators to replace commercially produced toys in the classroom with open ended natural materials and loose parts (p37).

'Expression' refers to the many different ways that children may communicate (p7). As children experiment with different ways to communicate, they 'develop

their capacity for increasingly complex communication' (p8). Recognising the myriad ways that children can communicate can express themselves in an authentic manner opens up opportunities to formally promote and preserve the use of the child's first or home language within the early year programme (p43). This concept is particularly relevant for a Canadian context given the consultative work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) that was occurring during the same time period as the release of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). In their final report to the government of Canada, TRC calls for action to preserve and promote Indigenous languages by including them in education programmes and curricula (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p2).

The underlying concepts of the foundation appear to be strongly influenced by the Reggio Emilia[1] approach as evidenced by the references throughout the document to the work of Loris Malaguzzi (1993) and Carlina Rinaldi (2004), both of whom are considered global experts on the Reggio approach. The Reggio influence was further amplified by the Ontario Reggio Association who had been active in the province hosting events and developing resources since 2009 (Ontario Reggio Association, n.d.). Given the size of the workforce it is reasonable to assume that some ECEs had been exposed to the Reggio Emilia approach in some fashion and so the introduction of the foundations of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) aligned with their current practices. However for others, like Beatrice, the educator who was introduced in the Prologue, these foundations may have been a disruptive force that challenged the status quo of their practice. Adding to the potential disruption was the specific direction to educators about the required practices to support learning and development that should form part of their professional practice when using the pedagogy. The inclusion of critical reflection and pedagogical documentation within the document (Ontario, 2014a, pp20-21) holds particular significance.

[1]The Reggio Emilia approach refers to a philosophy of education that is centred around on the multiple capabilities of young children. The approach was developed and first used following World War II in the municipal schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. More information about the approach can be found on the Reggio Children website: https://www.reggiochildren.it/en/reggio-emilia-approach/

Reflection is not a new concept to the early childhood education profession. For example, the College of ECEs has based the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for the profession (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2017a) on the practice of reflection and more recently has developed a resource dedicated to using reflection as a part of professional learning (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2017b). HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) takes this concept further to empower and encourage educators to 'test long-standing views and taken-for-granted practices and consider new approaches and ways of thinking about their work' (Ontario, 2014a, p20). Further, the document encourages educators to use critical reflection to involve and engage with others in 'collaborative inquiry' (Ontario, 2014a, p20). Taken together, the practices of critical reflection and collaborative inquiry shifts the position of the educator from complete compliance to imposed expectations to an active and responsible participant in collaboratively establishing norms of quality programmes.

Like critical reflection, documentation is also not a new concept for the profession. For example, the ELECT document (Ontario, 2014b) promotes the use of observation and documentation to help educators understand children's emerging skills and development within the context of the continuum of development (p16). However HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) moves the practice of documentation beyond observing children's behaviour to a pedagogical practice which aims to 'find meaning in what children do and what they experience' (p21). This practice requires the educator to use more complex interpretive skills beyond what they would have used as a part of standard observation.

HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) is arguably one of the most comprehensive documents that the Ontario government has ever released. It provides direction for a range of different aspects of early years professional practice and programmes. This complexity warranted using a more comprehensive approach to implementation (Ontario, 2014b), than simply posting it on the government website as they did with other earlier policy documents and reports.

1.8.1: Approach to implementation

Although it could be argued that the implementation of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) started with the release of Think, Feel, Act (Ontario, 2013b) in 2013, the document was officially launched by the Ministry of Education in the spring of 2014 along with introductory guides for educators (Ontario, 2014d), pedagogical leaders (Ontario, 2014e) and home child care providers (Ontario, 2014f). The guides are identical in structure, however the language used in each section is adjusted for the intended audience. The content of each guide includes a brief overview of the contents of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) (pp2-8), provides examples of how it can be used in programmes (p9) and directions on how to start using the document (p10). A list of additional resources is also included to further extend the learning (p11).

Following the release of the document and guides, a number of ministry-led in-person and online events were held to introduce the document to a range of provincial early years leaders (Early Childhood Community Development Centre, 2014). At the individual community level, professional resource centres such as Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (n.d.) and Early Childhood Community Development Centre (2017) began to offer a variety of non-credited training opportunities to support the use of the document in early years programmes. Sessions were offered to both ECEs who work directly with children, as well as those in management or administrative roles. Specific sessions were also designed for members of the boards of directors for early years programmes so that they could understand the document within the context of their fiduciary responsibility (Early Childhood Community Development Centre, 2016, p24). In some regional areas coaching and consultation services were also offered to early years programmes so through ongoing practice feedback full adoption of the pedagogy could happen over time (Affiliated Services for Children and Youth, n.d.).

In 2018, four years after the introduction of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a), the Ontario Ministry of Education established three Centres of Excellence to:

- support alignment with How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years and promote cohesion in pedagogical approaches and practices across early years programs;

- build the pedagogical leadership capacity of program staff in the early years sector; and
- create linkages to and/or develop professional learning resources (Ontario, 2019, p35).

While funding for this project expired on March 31, 2020 the ministry committed to continue

> investing in professional learning opportunities for Francophone and Indigenous professionals that will better meet their needs through more targeted, differentiated cultural and regional approaches, given that the needs are greatest in the Francophone and Indigenous sectors (Ontario, 2020a)

An evaluation of the impact of the Centres of Excellence initiative was not conducted however given the size of the complexity of the early years system in Ontario and the magnitude of establishing a new provincial organisation it is unlikely that in the two years of their existence significant change at the individual practitioner level was possible. While work continues to develop supports for the Francophone and Indigenous educators, plans for delivering supports to the broader early year workforce have not been released.

The multi-pronged approach to implementation was further advanced with the proclamation of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, later that year. This new, modernised piece of legislation replaced the *Day Nurseries Act* which had governed the early years system for past seventy years. Section 46 of O.Reg 137/2015 (General) under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* requires every early years programme to have a programme statement that is consistent with the HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). This provision permanently enshrines the document as the guiding pedagogy for all programmes in Ontario. To support the development of programme statement the Ministry of Educator developed an e-module that provided programmes with more detailed information about the

> connections between How Does Learning Happen? and the new program related requirements under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (Ontario, 2014g)

While the use of How of Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a) as pedagogy became a legal requirement for programmes in 2014, to date there is still no corresponding programme licensing requirements beyond the existence of a programme statement. In theory, programme statements are designed to guide every aspect of a programme's operations. However, without licensing requirements the ministry remains unable to take action against programmes that do not adhere to their espoused programme statement. The ministry is therefore reliant on the integrity of programmes to self-monitor their own compliance and implement change.

Early years programmes that rose to the challenge of implementing their programme statements with fidelity had the opportunity to adapt, change, and experiment with new ways of delivering programmes for young children. Likewise, ECEs employed in these programmes had similar opportunities to engage in the change process. It is important to recognise that this opportunity for change was the most recent, and perhaps culminating, link in a chain of change events that had been facing the workforce since as the provincial government began to shift its perspective and expectations of the early years workforce.

1.9: Changing perspectives of the workforce

As the previous sections have illustrated, over the course of the first 14 years of the new millennium the provincial government's policy position on the early years experienced a significant shift away from the view that programmes were merely 'safe and happy' places to warehouse children while their parents worked (Prochner, 2000, p54). Under the previous safe care-based view of early years programmes the early years workforce was primarily positioned as what Peter Moss (2006) would call a 'substitute mother' (p34). This highly gendered perspective of early year practitioners primarily emphasises the development of consistent and secure attachment between child and caregiver over the other more educationally focused aspects of the professional training that ECEs receive through their post-secondary education programmes.

Policy initiatives such as the introduction of the Ontario Early Years Centres, the Best Start Plan, and full-day Kindergarten suggest that the purpose of these programs shifted to be more educational and academically focused so that children could be ready to learn and reach their 'potential'. In doing so, the view of the workforce also shifted to become more professionalised as evidenced by the creation of a regulatory body to oversee and govern the profession. According to Moss (2006) under this model the workforce functions more like a 'technician' (p35) with clear expectations for practice standards that are more comparable to other professional groups. By assuming a more educational focus in early years programmes, technicians are leveraged through government policy to enable the achievement of key economic and social goals (p35).

However the introduction of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) appears to represent somewhat of a departure from these traditional perspectives of the workforce towards a third possible model of the workforce that is presented by Moss (2006). This model of the profession, involves the educator assuming the role of a 'researcher' (p36). Under the researcher model, educators are

> constantly seeking deeper understanding and new knowledge, in particular of the child and the child's learning processes. Research is part of everyday practice (Moss, 2006, p36)

This model appears to closely align with the multi-dimensional view of the educator that the provincial government presents in HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). Specifically the document states that 'we encourage educators to be researchers, to try new ideas and test theories' and it further suggests that by engaging with others in critical reflection educators become part of a collective inquiry process (Ontario, 2014a, p20). The success of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) therefore relies heavily on the professional practices of ECEs and their ability to shift from 'teaching to thinking [and] from instruction to inquiry' (Pelo & Carter, 2018, p39).

However, the degree to which 'critical reflection' is merely words in document or sincerely and purposefully intended is unknown. For educators to truly engage in this type of reflective practice they require support on multiple levels. Carol Hayes and her colleagues (2017) argue that

> reflective practice is not going to be effective if the profession as a whole or the setting/workplace does not value its role in providing for the environment with coercive institutional practices (p15)

The emphasis on 'setting/workplace' is particularly significant. Joseph Raelin (2002) argues that managers have a critical role in establishing a culture that 'makes it possible for people to constantly challenge without fear of retaliation' (p68). In establishing such a culture, the potentially disruptive nature of critical reflection must also be recognised and accepted. If critical reflection is truly embraced, those in leadership positions, including the ministry, must be willing to 'lose their grip on the status quo' (Raelin, 2002, p68). The shift to the 'educator as researcher' (Moss, 2006, p36) model of the workforce suggests the adoption of shared responsibility for programme outcomes. Based on this argument, the success and longevity of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) cannot rest solely on shoulders of ECEs. However, the degree to which the ministry and early years programmes are willing to relinquish control to the profession remains to be seen as the implementation progresses.

It should also be noted that throughout the successive change initiatives identified in this chapter, the qualifications required to practice the profession of early childhood education remain unchanged. In introducing new policy documents and expectations on programmes the government has consistently failed to formally acknowledge the changing knowledge, skills and judgement required by ECEs to respond to these changes by examining staff qualifications. Instead, they have relied on providing one-off training activities that do not lead to formal credentials that can be built upon or recognised outside the local context. This omission may be an example of what the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (2001) suggests is a hesitancy by some governments to raise qualifications as a result of the cost implications of a 'major revaluing of early childhood work' (p95). Yet such work must be undertaken if the goal of change is to create high quality early years services for children and families.

1.10: Looking ahead

Education expert Michael Fullan (2009) predicted that 'early childhood—long recognized as key—and even longer neglected, will start to be taken seriously' (p111). If an indication of being 'taken seriously' is the number of change initiatives introduced by government up to and including the introduction of How Does Learning Happen (Ontario, 2014a) then Fullan (2009) is correct. The trend of change appears to be continuing as a cursory review of the online version of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, reveals that there have been more than 27 amendments to legislation and regulations since the document's inception in 2014 although the document itself has not changed (Ontario, 2014a).

Notwithstanding legislative and regulatory changes, HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) remains an important and influential document in the early years sector and the Ministry of Education appears to be committed to it. In 2020 in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the ministry released its plans for a safe re-opening of early years programmes in Ontario (Ontario, 2020b). The document was informed by the recent experiences of programmes that provided emergency child care for health care and front line essential workers in the province, and was structured around the four foundations of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). The document focuses on how the tenets of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) can continue to be implemented despite the public health restrictions and requirements that were placed on programmes during the re-opening process.

At the same time, in 2020 the Ministry of Education undertook a mandatory review of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*. In the published report summarising the finding of the review the government reported that

> both families and sector respondents to the survey indicated that quality programming is a strength of the child care and early years system, but that more can be done to be consistent across different types of programs (Ontario, 2020c)

In response to these findings, the ministry has committed to reviewing and updating the HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) but to date no plans regarding the review have been released.

The seemingly conflicting messages from the ministry about the future of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) can add to feelings of uncertainty amongst the ECEs who have already faced significant change during the course of their career. Beatrice started practising the profession before the Early Years Study (McCain & Mustard, 1999) with the increased focus on child development and the shift to practising as a 'technician' (Moss, 2006). She still has several years of employment ahead of her before she reaches the minimum retirement age and so now is facing whatever new challenges are on the horizon if she continues to practice her chosen profession. To do this she may leverage her experiences with HDLH (Ontario, 2014a).

Beatrice's admission about her reaction to the introduction of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) was startling. I was particularly intrigued by her confession that 'it wasn't always this way. I was the biggest resister' (p13). Perhaps it was her openness and honesty to a stranger that she had just met. Perhaps it was that on some level I could relate her words. I too had felt that way in my career during times of change. I remember feeling frustrated and even angry about new initiatives that I was expected to implement without consultation when I was working directly with young children. Yet Beatrice overcame her feelings to embrace change and by account is seemingly successful.

Since that first encounter I found myself wanting to better understand her story of change. This study is a direct result from that chance encounter three years ago. Drawing inspiration from that encounter I realised that there are other ECEs like Beatrice in the province. As they are approaching retirement age, there is a risk that their unique voices, perspectives, and experiences will be lost and they move onto another phase of life. Although their stories cannot be generalised to the rest of the profession, there are valuable lessons that can be gleaned from their experiences that may be useful to some practitioner as they experience their own changes with the system. Their voices may also provide useful advice to government as future change is considered, planned for, and implemented.

The construction of this dissertation deviates somewhat from the traditional format. For example, the following two chapters examine the literature on change. Specifically the next chapter discusses two traditional perspectives on change and how they influence learning, reflection, and practice as types of change. Following this, Chapter 3 examines the behavioural aspects of how change happens within individuals, organisations and systems. Taken together these two chapters provide the theoretical underpinning for the design of this narrative research study which is described in Chapter 4. The data is then presented as the individual stories of each participant in four separate chapters. This approach to presentation was a conscious stylistic choice designed to preserve and respect the individuality of each participant. The final two chapters revert to more traditional dissertation form as they present the findings from the study as well as analysing the implications for future practice. In keeping with the narrative approach, this paper ends with an Epilogue that looks optimistically to the future of the profession in the province.

Chapter 2: What is Change?

2.1: Considering key aspects of change

This study seeks to understand how early childhood educators (ECEs) in Ontario experienced change through the introduction and implementation of How Does Learning Happen? (HDLH) (Ontario, 2014a). Before considering how change happens it is first important to understand some of the key aspects of change. This chapter examines two ancient perspectives on change and provides examples of how these perspectives manifest themselves in the professional lives of the ECEs. My decision to use the theories forwarded by Heraclitus and Parmenides emerged from an interview with one of the participants in this study which is detailed later in this chapter. As I explored these ancient works, I found that the metaphors that they use held explanatory power that could be applied to this study as a lens to understand different orientations towards change. The chapter that follows provides a more operational perspective by examining modern theories of how change happens at a system, organisational, and individual level. Taken together, these two chapters lay the necessary theoretical groundwork to establish a framework for the consideration and analysis of the participant stories in Chapter 9.

2.2: Change is a constant presence

According to Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher from sixth century BC, change is ubiquitous and omnipresent (Haxton, 2003, p29). It is a fundamental part of our nature and our natural environment and as such, it is synonymous with 'being' (p14). Heraclitus famously uses running water as a metaphor for being when he states 'the river where you set your foot just now is gone – those waters giving way to this, now this' (Haxton, 2003, p27). He later returns to this metaphor to add 'just as the river where I step is not the same, and is, so I am, as I am not' (p51). Continuous change and 'flux' is therefore a constant in the world of being and so in the end 'nothing endures but change' (Müller-Merbach, 2006, p 170). David Shaw (2018) suggests that while many have historically supported this interpretation of Heraclitus's observation that the world is made up of change (p158), the more

nuanced meaning as set forth by Geoffrey Kirk (1951) should be considered with equal merit. Kirk (1951) argues that Heraclitus, while promoting the concept of continual flux, concurrently recognised that change is only possible as a result of the presence of stability (p35). Hugh DeLacy (1969) suggests that accepting this argument of stability and change implies holding the dichotomy of 'difference and sameness' at the same time with equal consideration. He further suggests that 'to understand change one must understand permanence' (p51). Change therefore is simultaneously a function of what is and what is not. Applying this concept to the context of early years practitioners would suggest that professional practice can only can only change within environments that are fixed and stable. However, the previous chapter provided multiple examples of initiatives that resulted in significant changes for both early years programmes and early years practitioners, meaning that there may be more nuance involved with this concept.

David Shaw (2018) provides an alternative interpretation of Heraclitus's beliefs about the relationship between permanence and change (p159). Shaw (2018) argues that Heraclitus acknowledges the importance of the measures that are in place to guide and moderate the direction and speed of change (p159). In the context of the metaphor of a river, the impermeable 'permanent' stones and rocks form the banks and rapids that both slow and provide direction to the water as it flows towards the ocean. The 'permanent' positioning of the stones and rocks is what in part transforms water into a flowing river. If the rock embankments were positioned differently the same water could take on the form of a static, unmoving lake instead. This suggests that a moving river changes within the structure of the fixed and stable permanence of rocks. Paradoxically, permanence is therefore necessary to achieve change. This also suggests that change can be guided by moving the rocks so that the direction of change can be moulded to achieve the desired results.

The paradoxical relationship of permanence and change is particularly relevant to this study, as it speaks to the need to consider how existing structures within the early years system such as employers and municipalities as the local service system manger, can be used to guide and support practitioners towards the desired

change. However, applying this concept would also suggest the need to consider moving fixtures within the system if they are impeding change or if their permanence has created an unmoving lake. Such fixtures would include policies, practices, and possibly even traditional staff positions; all of which may be under consideration during a change initiative. Therefore the change involved in implementing a new government document such as How Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a) is not limited to the ECEs working in the system. Change is also required by the structures within the system to create the necessary stability and support for practitioner change to occur. Building on these concepts, the next section considers Heraclitus's beliefs about initiating and sustaining change.

2.2.1: Igniting the fire of change

Heraclitus uses 'fire' as the metaphor for the driving force of change (Haxton, 2003, pxix). In this metaphor fire is a representation of the living. Just as a fire requires fuel and oxygen to maintain its continual burn, living beings also require a consistent source of fuel and oxygen if they are to continue living. When change ceases, death occurs and the fire is permanently extinguished. Dag Lønning (2015) suggests that all humans face a choice between 'the world as it potently evolves, or… the static, the impotent, and that which is already burnt up' (p40). Lønning (2015) concludes that

> creation and control of one's fate is dependent upon being conscious about change and the room for innovative action that it creates (p40)

Life is therefore not a passive event that is void of change. Change provides the constant supply of new fuel that is required to survive and thrive. Just as a fire can be rekindled after the flames dim, change is still possible even when stagnation has settled, but only if an ember still exists. A carefully directed stoke can create the spark that reignites the flames and initiates the change process. Likewise, change at the individual or organisational level cannot occur if an ember or desire to engage in change does not exist. By identifying the areas within a system or organisation where embers exist, and then applying stoking efforts, the flames of change can be restored. Once established, the fire may spread where other embers or unburnt matter exists. Likewise, focusing change efforts on a small

group of willing practitioners and organisations can establish a core group of change agents from which other practitioners and organisations may learn and spread the change.

2.2.2: Heraclitus in the lives of study participants

The examples of water, rocks, and fire found in Heraclitus teachings (Haxton, 2003) reinforce the perception that change is a part of nature. This characterisation of change positions it as something that should be expected and accepted, just as winter follows autumn. Rosie, an ECE whose story will be presented in Chapter 6, is an example of an individual who holds this belief. In her story she describes her leadership style to her new team by telling them:

> the only constant you will ever see around me is change. That's the only thing you're going to count on being constant and the same (p118)

Change is evidently easy for Rosie and she embraces it as a part of her life. She views change a positive force and seeks it out. This outlook however, is not shared by Beatrice, whose experience with change is quite different. She did not consider change to be natural or easy. In fact, at one point in her story, found in Chapter 8, Beatrice admits that she 'didn't want to change' (p139). The change in pedagogical direction was more difficult for Beatrice, and she needed to work hard to embrace it and make it work. Her orientation towards change is more aligned with Parmenides's (Thornley, 2012) view of change which will be considered in the next section.

2.3: There is no change

Parmenides was a contemporary of Heraclitus, who in contrast argues that change does not exist (Thornley, 2012, p408). There are two aspects of Parmenides' teachings that can contribute to the understanding of change within the context of this study. First, as Joseph Král (2011) notes, Parmenides views change as a difficult process (p3). It requires a forceful intervention from a significant energy source to break free from the stagnancy and complacency of a stasis state (p3). However, even with forceful intervention, once the change process has been

initiated there remains a strong tendency to revert to the pre-change state. Focused energy is required to sustain change throughout the process in order to keep a forward motion until a state of new stasis can be firmly established (Král, 2011, p3). Change can therefore be viewed as something to be overcome rather than a benign natural occurrence of everyday life. I found this aspect of Parmenides's beliefs on change helpful as a way of understanding change in the context of this study. It suggests that the introduction of a new pedagogical document may have been viewed as a disruptive event by the ECEs involved. Furthermore, it suggests that the ECEs that are working to overcome this disruption require sustained energy and dedicated focus on their professional practice. The urge to resist change and revert to the safety of a known stasis may be strong.

The second aspect of Parmenides's beliefs on change, as described by Michael Frank (2012), is that change is 'essentially impossible' (p122) given the difficulties associated with it. Change requires work and some, like Beatrice, view this work as hard or near impossible. Cynthia Wagner (1995) comments on the impossibility of change and notes that Parmenides extended this belief to suggest that change can be construed as a concept that is 'perceived by the senses' (p10) rather than a fundamental difference in the subject. The core supposition is that something cannot emerge from something which does not exist. Matter cannot be spontaneously created or fundamentally changed. Christopher Wolfe (2012) explains that if change is 'a coming into being' then 'something' arguably existed before the so-called 'change' (p747). For example, a boulder may be changed or transformed into small pieces of stones when it is hit by a blunt object, but the essence of the stones is still the same rock. Alternatively, a caterpillar may undergo a metamorphosis to become a butterfly, yet it remains the same being.

From this aspect of Parmenides's belief about change I have come to beleive that within each subject or individual resides an abundance of potential that may or may not be initially visible or perceived. It is through the passage of time and events that individuals come into being. Using this in the context of my study led me to consider how individuals may responds to change. The ECEs involved in the

implementation of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) would be either inherently able or unable of adapting their practice in response to the introduction of a new direction by government, depending on the make-up of their individual capabilities. The figure below represents how practitioners may be grouped by their willingness and capability of change:

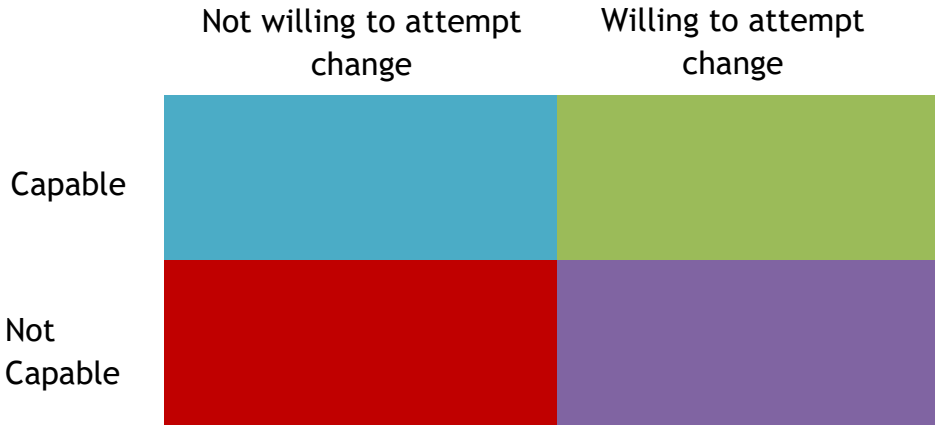


Figure 2: Capability and willingness to change (adapted from Wolfe, 2012)

Individuals in the blue quadrant are capable, but not willing to change whereas individuals in the purple quadrant are willing to change but not capable of change. Conversely, individuals in the red quadrant are neither willing nor capable of change. Ultimately the goal would be to move as many practitioners as possible to the green 'capable and willing to change' quadrant. This way of organizing individual practitioners aligns with the Ölander-Thøgersen (1995) behavioural model of change, which suggests that there an opportunity for change to occur when an individual has both the capability and motivation to change. In Chapter 3 I will further explore how the Ölander-Thøgersen (1995) model can be applied to the individual change process.

2.3.1: Change and time

Jeffrey Ford and Laurie Ford (1994) suggest that 'change is a phenomenon of time' (p758) as illustrated in the figure below:

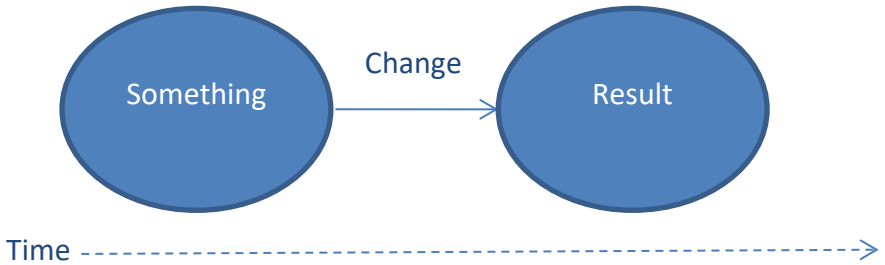


Figure 3: The basic understanding of change (Ford & Ford, 1994, p759)

They further argue that it is as people talk about change that 'something' evolves to become the 'result' or current state. This construct sustains the debate introduced by Parmenides (Thornley, 2012), as to whether 'something' fundamentally changes or if change is simply the perception of 'something' as it evolves to become the 'result'. Applying this argument requires a clear understanding and acceptance of the 'something' so that it can be accurately compared to the 'result'. Taken together, it can be concluded that the Parmenides' (Thornley, 2012) view of change involves the perception of identity and processes of time and thought, concepts that will be further explored in subsequent sections dedicated to reflection and practice.

French philosopher Giles Deleuze (1994) also contemplates the relationship between change and time. Deleuze (1994) suggests that 'repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but it does change something in the mind which contemplates it' (p88). Further Deleuze (*ibid)* maintains that when an object is thoughtfully considered it is re-created in the thoughts of the mind while the actual object remains unchanged. With each subsequent repetition of thought the re-creation of the object is altered slightly (Deluze, 1994, p88). Its newness is therefore ascribed and re-ascribed by time. Deleuze (1994) concludes that 'time is the form of change, but the form of change does not change' (p89). The passage of time is therefore another necessary component for change to be realised, although the duration during which change takes place is not fixed. The length of time involved in change is unique to both the individual involved and their current circumstance, as illustrated by the participant stories of change shared in this study. Their stories represent a segment of time in their lives that involves the same change however the length of time in which change occurs varies by

participant. The complexity of time and change as it relates to the participant stories will be considered in detail in Chapter 9.

2.4: Summary of Heraclitus' and Parmenides' beliefs on change

The previous two sections explored some of the key element of Heraclitus and Parmenides's teaching on change as they relates to this study. The component of these diverse perspectives on change that have been discussed are summarised in the followed chart:

Heraclitus	Parmenides
• a natural part of life • an ongoing, fluid process • requires a source of new energy to be sustainable • may be spread to new objects • can be ignited • occurs within the permanent fixtures of a system • direction can be guided	• a difficult process • a challenge to overcome in order to return to stasis state • considered impossible as the essence of matter is always conserved • a function of time • associated with identity • linked to perception, thought and reflection

Table 2: Comparison of Heraclitus and Parmenides beliefs on change (DeLacy, 1969; Deleuze, 1994; Frank, 2012; Haxton, 2003; Král, 2011; Müller-Merbach, 2006; Shaw, 2018; Wolfe, 2012)

Although it has been more than 2,500 years since Heraclitus and Parmenides postulated about change, their writing endures. For example, Rosie and Beatrice's stories illustrate the influence of these teachings on an individual's outlook on change. Likewise, the previous chapter illustrates government's historical preference for one-off training to support the implementation of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a), suggesting an adherence to the Parmenidean (Thornley, 2012) view of

change. The Parmenidean (Thornley, 2012) and Heraclitean (Haxton, 2003) perspectives also emerge in the literature related to the practice of early childhood education, which the next section will illustrate.

2.5: Professional practice and change

The Heraclitean perspective of change (Haxton, 2003) emerges in the works of Theodore Schatzski (2002, 2006) regarding professional practice. Schatzski (2002) defines practice as 'a temporally evolving, open-ended set of doings and sayings linked by practical understandings, rules, structure, and general understandings' (p87). This definition would suggest that the nature of practice is fundamentally open to ongoing change within fixed structures that serve to guide and direct.

Schatzski (2006) emphasises that questioning facilitates professional learning when professionals come together to examine each other's practices (p1868). As part of this process practitioners may question how a specific practice may be performed within a specific context or organisation in addition to sharing their own experiences with the practice (Schatzki, 2006, p1868). By questioning and sharing experiences practitioners contribute to a collective knowledge base that is drawn upon to inform their future practice or guide the practice of others. Practice continually evolves by drawing on the changing knowledge base which is produced by practitioner questioning and discourse as a part of ongoing professional practice.

Likewise, Silvia Gherardi (2012) also argues that change is an integral part of professional practice because of the central and ongoing role of professional learning (p228). However her assertion is rooted in the belief that

> knowledge is [not] a simple "object" that can be transferred from one person to person …on the contrary, it is something that emerges from participation in a practice (p220)

She further suggests that knowledge acquisition in a professional context is dynamic and socially constructed through interactions with other professionals (Gherardi, 2009a, p356). Within a community of practitioners practices are assessed for value and worth, during interactions with others before, during, and

after their performances in which an understanding of how practices could be enhanced in the future is gained and eventually integrated into practice (Gherardi 2000, p214). Furthermore practitioners apply judgement to differentiate good or exemplary practice from poor or bad practice and determine which practices are worthy to be integrated into their own practice (Gherardi, 2009b, p547). Gherardi (2009b) further contends that practitioners may become so attached to their practices that they become linked to their professional identity and they passionately defend them in their interactions with colleagues (p545). This argument suggests that for some practitioners, some practices may be deep seated and difficult to let go of, which is much more aligned to the Parmenidean (Thornley, 2012) perspective of change. However the model of practice advanced by Gheradi (2009b) does not preclude equally passionate practitioners from swaying the assessment of value and worth, and good and bad practice in favour of changing practices.

The models put forward by Schatzski (2006) and Gherardi (2009b) present a complex picture of professional practice. Within the complexity, three prominent and inter-related features of practice emerge as relevant to this study: learning, reflection, and professional identity. Each will be examined in the sections that follow, beginning with learning.

2.6 Learning and change

Learning is central to the practice of early childhood education. For example, ECEs are responsible for creating learning environments for young children and fostering a joy of learning (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2017a, p7). However they are also responsible for engaging in lifelong professional learning to support their own professional growth as well as the collective growth of the profession (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2017a, p7).

As part of their practice with young children ECEs are knowledgeable about and utilise a range of learning theories (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2017a, pp 8-12). According to Jan De Houwer and his colleagues (2013), the learning

process, regardless of theoretical orientation, can be broadly defined as a type of change (p631). Paul Hagen and his colleagues (2012) examine change in relation to three groups of learning theories: social constructivism, behaviourism, and cognitivism. Each group will be presented and discussed in relation to the Heraclitean (Haxton, 2003) and Parmenidean (Thornley, 2012) perspective of change.

2.6.1: Behaviourism

Behaviourist approaches to learning, as outlined by such theorists as John Washburne (1936), Burrhus Frederic (BF) Skinner (1938), and Gregory Kimble (1961), emphasise the connection between the learner and their surrounding environment. Specifically Washburne (1936) argues that learning results when 'through experience, [an] ability to gain goals in spite of obstacles' (p603) is gained. Similarly Skinner (1938) contends that learning occurs as the individual engages with changes in their environment and their behaviours are conditioned for consistent performance through a series of positive and negative reinforcements (p161). Kimble (1961) agrees and concludes that that learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour potential that is achieved through reinforced practice (p6). Taken together these definitions put forward the idea that learning is a series of discreet items that are mastered as a result of a disruption and struggle. According to Paul Hagen and his colleagues (2012), change, as the process or outcome of learning within the context of behavioural theories, could then be considered a temporary disruption that must be overcome in order to achieve a normalised static state (p10). This orientation towards learning closely resembles Parmenides (Thornley, 2012) beliefs about change in which change is viewed as a discreet challenge to be overcome.

2.6.2: Cognitivism

Like the behavioural models of learning, cognitivism also approaches learning as the mastery of one-off discreet problems which is characteristic of Parmenides (Hagen et. al, p10). The work of child development theorist Jean Piaget (1971),

which exemplifies this model, suggests that children learn through increasing complex cognitive processes that develop over time (p63). Children learn by thinking about, making connections to, and building upon their experiences to create new knowledge and meaning. Their learning becomes more complex as their thinking becomes more complex following developmental sequence. The Deleuzean (Deleuze, 1994) connection between thought, time, and change as discussed in an earlier section, suggests that reflection is a central to both the learning process and to enacting change.

2.6.3: Social constructivism

Social constructivism, as advanced by Leo Vygotsky (1978) suggests that learning is a socially mediated process in which children acquire knowledge, values, and beliefs as well as problem-solving skills through collaboration and interactions with others in their community (p82). Central to his theory is the important role that community plays in supporting children to create meaning as part of a natural and ongoing learning process. Accordingly, learning in a constructivism context is ongoing as it builds off and extending prior learning. Paul Hagen and his colleagues (2012) suggest that this approach to learning aligns with the Heraclitus (Haxton, 2003) belief that change is a part of the norm (p11). Further extending this alignment would suggest that the learning community provides the continual source of new energy that is required to sustain the fires of change and learning.

The mandated pedagogy in Ontario, HDLH (Ontario, 2014a), is strongly influenced by social constructivism learning theories. In fact Vygotsky (1978) is referenced throughout the document. An influence by the Heraclitean (Haxton, 2003) perspective of change is also evident. For example the document (Ontario 2014a) characterises learning as ‘constantly evolving and shifting’ in relation to a constantly changing understanding of the world that surrounds educators, children, families and community (p5). Given that the use of the document in early years programmes has been mandated through legislation, it is possible that educators who have a preference for behaviourism or cognitivism may find themselves at odds with the document.

Furthermore, ECEs in Ontario are required by the provincial professional regulatory body to participate in a self-directed Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) program (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2020a). Commenting on similar teacher professional learning programs, Michael Stevenson and his colleagues (2016) argue that the term 'continuous' implies 'the need for such learning to be responsive to change' (p818). This characterisation of professional learning suggests that such required programs are designed to be more closely aligned with Heraclitus (Haxton, 2003) view of ongoing change and therefore more social constructivism by nature. As is the case with HDLH (Ontario, 2014a), challenges may arise for ECEs whose preference for professional learning lean towards discreet, one-off activities that are reminiscent of Parmenides (Thornley, 2012). Furthermore HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) and the Continuous Professional Learning Program (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2020) requires ECEs to engage in reflection as a part of their practice, which as the next section illustrates, is also aligned with the Heraclitean (Haxton, 2003) perspective of change.

2.7: Reflection and change

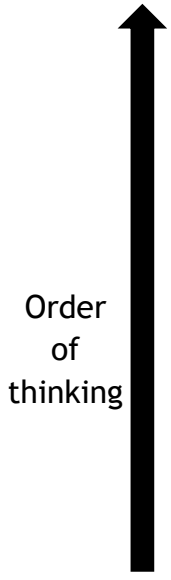
John Dewey (1933) argues in his seminal work that the fundamental purpose of education is to develop habits within individuals that allow them to carefully and thoroughly think and solve problems (p78). Dewey (1933) asserts that reflection:

> emancipates us from merely impulsive and merely routine activity...[It] enables us to direct our activities with foresight and to plan according to ends-in-view, or purposes of which we are aware...to act in deliberate and intentional fashion...[and] to know what we are about when we act. It converts action that is merely appetitive, blind, and impulsive into intelligent action (p17)

Dewey (1933) further suggests that reflection is a key cognitive process that is employed in problem-solving as it is characterized by deliberated and focused thinking about past experiences that are then applied to a current problem (p9). Within a learning context that is focused on problem solving, the educator's role is not simply a conveyer of information; rather, an educator acts as a nurturer and a

role model that creates learning environments and experiences for young children so that learning can be internalized and applied in other contexts.
The College of Early Childhood Educators (2017b) suggests that educators may use the reflective process to learn, develop or improve their skills and practice (p2). As part of the process they shine a light on the beliefs, biases, and assumptions that reside below the surface of the apparent (ibid). They also weigh competing claims about what is really influencing their behaviour and practice while suspending judgement in search of evidence of truth (ibid). Importantly, ECEs use reflection to 'create change' (ibid).

Max van Manen (1977) sets out three levels of sequential reflection. Each level builds on the previous level and as the practitioner progresses these levels, their reflection becomes deeper and more complex, requiring a higher order of thinking skills. The table below provides a description of each level in relation to its contribution to problem-solving:



Level of reflection	Description
Critical	• Assessing the identified options in relation to their contribution toward achieving educational or societal worth • Selecting a course of action is based on the ability to achieve equity, justice, and freedom
Practical	• Analysing the identified options to determine the underlying interpretive frameworks • Orienting future actions within personal and cultural experiences as well as beliefs and assumptions
Technical	• Identifying a range of possible technical or practical solutions that may be applied to solve the problem at hand • Selecting a course of action is based on the efficiency and effectiveness of achieving a pre-identified goal

Table 3: Levels of reflection (van Manen, 1977, pp226-27)

An ECE engaged in reflection at the technical level may be focused on solving classroom problems. For example, upon reflecting about the children's engagement at the art table they may decide that more paint is required the next day. At the practical level the same ECE may contemplate what skills the children demonstrated as they engaged with the art material and how they may be extended. During critical reflection they may debate the ethics of using perishable consumables as art. The foundational work of Donald Schön (1987) built on van Manen's (1977) work to focus on the role of critical reflection.

Schön (1987) describes the reflective process as engaging in a 'dialogue of thinking and doing' (p31) suggesting that reflection is not limited to thinking; it involves action as well. Such action however is not mindless or without purpose. According to Schön (1987) 'we take action in order to produce an intended change' (p170). However according to Robert Ennis (2015) simply having critical thinking skills does not guarantee that critical reflection will occur. Martin Davies and Ronald Barnett (2015) argue that having the 'skills without the disposition to use them are not much use' (p9). Lilian Katz (1988) suggests that dispositions 'can be thought of as habits of mind, tendencies to respond to situations in certain ways' (p30). Building on this definition Brenda Peterson (2016) suggests that dispositions have four characteristics:

> [dispositions are a] pattern of behavior exhibited frequently and in the absence of coercion, and constituting a habit of mind under some conscious and voluntary control, and that is intentional and oriented to broad goals (Peterson, 2016, p3)

Reflection has become the 'hallmark of effective professional practice' (Peterson, 2016, p8). She (2016) argues that effective educators need to have

> the temperament or disposition necessary to step back and analyze the effect of context on their practice in order to improve the quality of his or her practice (p3)

Individuals therefore require an associated positive disposition that enables them to engage in the kind of higher-order thinking and reflecting contemplated by van

van Manen (1977) and Schön (1987). Since Schön (1987) has argued that it is the action from critical reflection that results in change, it can then be argued that being open-minded and holding multiple perspectives (Ennis, 2015, p32), which are dispositions that are required for critical thinking and reflection, are also key drivers and components of change. As this applies to professional practice, it is the continual upward spirals of critical reflection that mutually reinforces and continually guides practice in a Heraclitean (Haxton, 2003) manner.

Chapter 9 of this dissertation provides examples of how the participants in this study used reflection to resolve their internal challenges with change. Drawing on the beliefs and values at the core of their professional identities they were able take positive action towards embracing the system-wide change in pedagogical direction. The subsequent section considers professional identity and change.

2.8: Professional identity and change

Marla Scherr and Tricia Johnson (2019) argue that professional identity is the 'intersection of personal history, self-perception, professional knowledge, and practices, beliefs, and values' (p405). Identity is built internally by the professional's own view of themselves and their work however it is influenced by external factors such as their work environment and conditions as well as the system and public perception of the collective professional identity (p406). Several other authors agree including John Coldron Robin Smith (1999); Judyth Sachs (2003); Christine Forde and her colleagues (2006); and Mary Moloney (2010). Forde and her colleagues (2006) contend that identity is largely founded on the 'legacy of traditions' associated with the profession (p9). Furthermore, as discussed in the previous section, Silvia Gheradi (2009b) argued that professional practice is closely connected to identity (p545). Taken together these two arguments suggest that historical practices which are strongly associated with the profession are passed down by veteran professionals and become embedded in the practice of newer professionals. Carol Anne Wein (1996) refers to practices such as repeated routine actions as 'teacher scripts' (p381). Examples of such practices in the early years context may include daily routines such as 'calendar', 'weather',

or ‘circle’ where large groups of young children sit on the floor for extended periods of time. Ann Pelo and Margie Carter (2018) suggest that teacher scripts get bound so tightly into the identities of ECEs that they ‘narrow and constrain’ their role so that it becomes difficult to change (p55). It is not surprising then that the transition from traditional instruction-based teacher scripts and identities to the inquiry-based role of the educator that HDLH (Ontario 2014a) requires may be challenging for some. Sachs (2003) offers an encouraging reminder of the ‘profound impact’ that other educators have on the development of classroom practices and professional identities of their peers (p133). As much as historical scripts can influence educators, so too can those educators who have adopted an inquiry approach in their practice. Professional identities are therefore not fixed. They can, and do, change.

Coldron and Smith (1999) suggest that throughout their career educators actively create and re-create themselves as teachers (p712). The evolving nature of professional identity is reminiscent of Heraclitean (Haxton, 2003) perspective of change. However Corey Seemiller and Kerry Priest (2015) argue that that while professional identity may continually evolve and change as a result of ongoing influences, and individual may also be challenged to re-examine their identity as a result of a critical incident (p138). Critical incidences cause educators to reflect on and question ‘who they are’ and ‘who they want to be’ and make decisions about their future accordingly (pp141-42). The future action may be considered a discreet Parmendean (Thornley, 2012) challenge to be overcome.

Forde and her colleagues (2006) argue that the development of professional identity is highly personalised and closely associated with feeling valued for the work with they do (p36). This may look slightly different for each educator. However, Smith and Coldron (1999) suggest that collectively educators strive to acquire ‘an identity that is socially legitimated’ (p712). Yet the value and worth of ECEs is consistently diminished as merely ‘babysitting’ (Harwood & Tukonic, 2017, p589) or ‘work that “anyone” can do’ (Mooney & McCafferty, 2005, p226). Moloney (2010), commenting on the Irish early years workforce, asserts that the lack of recognition by both government and society means that the ‘workforce is

characterised by a marked absence of professional identity' (p184). The same has been said of ECEs in Ontario (Harwood & Tukonic, 2017, p589).

2.9: So what is change?

The differing beliefs about the nature change as presented by Heraclitus (Haxton, 2003) and Parmenides (Thornley, 2012) suggest that it may be considered an evolutionary process that reveals full potential; or an omnipresent force that is a natural part of existence. It may be difficult to initiate and sustain or it may be a continuous state of flux. These juxtaposed theoretical underpinnings determine the outlook towards and approach used to managing or facilitating the process.

Change is also a distinguishing feature of professional practice (Hagen, 2012, p11). Professional knowledge is created through an ongoing process of critical reflection within a community of practitioners. As the knowledge base changes and adapts, so too does the practice as new learnings are assimilated and normalised. As Paul Hagen (2012) and his colleagues conclude, 'practices change by being practiced' (p11). Learning and reflection beget change, and thus, practice, learning, and change are inextricably linked. Building on this foundational understanding of change the next chapter examines the behavioural aspects of the change process at the system, organisational and individual levels.

Chapter 3: How Does Change Happen?

3.1: Change at many levels

This study explores four early childhood educators' (ECEs') stories of the provincial implementation of How Does Learning Happen (Ontario, 2014a) in order to better understand how they experience change. Arguably this focus may imply that the primary consideration of the relevant theoretical frameworks that will guide the research process should be limited to individual behaviour change. Isauro Escamilla and Daniel Meier (2018) argue that 'individual change is intimately linked with professional and institutional change' (p16). However, considering changes in professional practice may require an even broader view. Stephen Kemmis (2009) argues that

> changing practice requires changing things frequently beyond the knowledge or control of individual practitioners, and frequently outside the individual practitioner's field of vision (p38)

Ann Douglass (2017) also cautions against the use of a narrow individual focus when considering change as it may neglect the underlying influential relational factors that may exist at the organisational or systems level (p14). Brigid Wagner and Lucia French (2010) further purport that a teacher's motivation for change is highly influenced by their work environment (p169). Gillian Rodd (2015) builds on this to suggest that the implementation of complex changes such a new pedagogical policy document with the early years environment requires 'considerable systemic, structural and personal transformation in order to be successfully and sustainably implemented' (p6). Taken together, it can be concluded that it is therefore necessary to not only view how change happens for the individual practitioner but to also consider how change happens within the complex ecosystem of Ontario's education system. While this chapter provides a considerable focus on individual change through a modified motivation-ability-opportunity change model, it is important to first begin with a consideration of system organisational change that is simultaneously occurring during a large scale change initiative.

3.2: How do systems change?

Peter Senge (2000) notes that understanding change within the 'education system' may be influenced by the conflicting definitions of 'system' (p54). Since the beginning of the industrial age all systems, including the education system, have traditionally been viewed as a machine which focuses on rules, regulations and power relationships (p54). If the system is viewed through an industrial lens, then system change is considered a mechanical process which is applied sequentially to individual isolated elements within the system. However this approach suggests that individual elements have no influence on other elements of the system. For example change that is applied at the programme leadership level would have no effect on classroom educators.

A more recent trend has been to view the education system through a systems lens that emphasises the relationship between the components of a 'living system' (Senge, 2000, p55). Accordingly, systems theory purports that individuals and organisations with a common purpose are interconnected within the 'system' (Senge, 1990, p23). While individuals or organisations within a living system are independent, their interactions are dynamic and affect each other. Uri Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems model provides useful organising framework to examine the interconnection of various players within Ontario's education system, which includes early years programmes and services.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests that children develop within concentric layers of influence with the proximal layer surrounding the child providing the most influence over their changing development (p7). Adapting and applying this theory to the context of this study, suggests the relationships between the spheres of influence could be visually represented as follows:

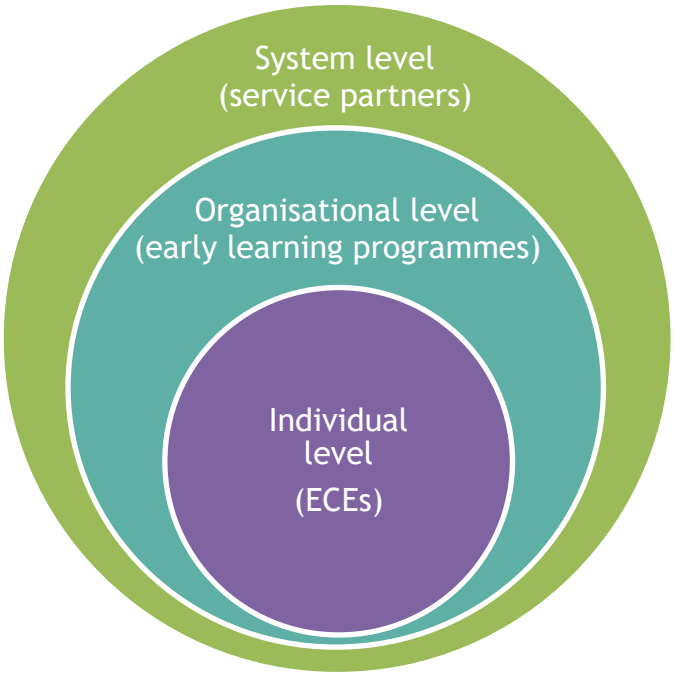


Figure 4: Systems of change (adapted from Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

At the centre of the model the purple circle represents the ECE. Their behaviour and practice is most significantly and directly influenced by the teal circle that directly surrounds them. This circle represents the organisation that administers the early learning programme where an ECE practices. Moving a layer beyond, the green circle represents other community partners that provide direct influence over organisations, and indirect influence over ECEs. It includes other early learning programs delivered in the community, other programmes providing support services to children and educators as well as local levels of government and administrative school boards.

If each layer within the system is further examined, it would reveal that elements within the layer also comprise elements of other systems. In some cases elements form entire systems within the original system. For example, an organisation that delivers an early learning programme is part of the provincial education system, but at the same time it is also part of a local community system that might include other programmes that serve children and their families within the health care system. However the same organisation could also be defined as a self-contained system because it includes individual classrooms with individual practitioners that

function independently and at other times function collectively and simultaneously.

Michael Jacobsen and his partners (2019) describe that systems within other systems of are examples of complex adaptive systems. According to Jacobsen (2019) complex adaptive systems are thought of as a self-organising network, in which individual components have some behaviours that are independent of the other components within the system as well as collective behaviours that are shared across the system (p113). Because of this interdependence, change within a system may be compared to dropping a stone in a body of water. While the stone only directly touches a small part of the water, its impact causes a ripple that disrupts water across the entire body of water. This means that as change occurs in one part of the education system it causes a ripple effect across the rest of the system and spreads the change. Extending the analogy of the stone further, would suggest that when the provincial government introduces a new policy document such as How Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a), it disrupts the system by directly influencing one part of the system. The ripple effect then naturally spreads change through indirect influence across the system so that individual practitioners and all organisations within the system are eventually affected by change. Chapter 1 of this dissertation provides several examples of government, either consciously or unconsciously, using this approach to change implementation by releasing policy documents on their website without any additional implementation supports.

Similarly several authors including Beverly Anderson (1993), Benyamin Lichtenstein (2000), Alexander Styhre (2002), as well as David Bamford and his partner Paul Forrester (2003), argue that system change is achieved through an incremental process. However in contrast to the approach of applying a disruption in only one area of the system, Beverly Anderson (1993) suggests that whole system change occurs when change is advanced across a set of six elements across the system (pp16-17). I have listed the elements that she identifies and have provided a summary description of what change looks like for each element in the table below:

Element	Description of change
Vision	• People's perspective of what the system should look like shifts to align to the new system as change is implemented so that everyone is working towards a common goal
Public and political support	• Support should grow as the change is implemented so that a deep understanding of what needs to change and why it needs to change develops across all levels
Networking	• New networks to study and communicate changes emerge and link people across the system as change is implemented
Teaching and learning changes	• Changes in practice should become visible in the classrooms as change is implemented • If this change does not occur in this element there is little value in other changes in the broader system
Administrative roles and responsibilities	• Traditional hierarchical roles shift to embrace more collaborative approaches to governing programmes as change is implemented
Policy alignment	• Legislation, regulations and policies change to align to the system change • Change in this element creates permanence

Table 4: Change across key elements in the education system (Anderson, 1993, pp16-17)

Initially, following the introduction of change, the system strives to maintain the features within the existing system, however through sustained efforts, the system shifts to a stage where the desired features of change become predominate (p16). Over time, by focusing on the core elements, the system progresses through a series of incremental stages to ultimately end up the desired state (p16).

Anderson views the progression of these stages as 'developmental' rather than linear (p17). Systems may initially progress in a linear fashion however they may also toggle back and forth between stages reverting to one after a period of time. Additionally systems may progress through the stages at variable rates depending on the individual circumstance (p17). In a complex system such as the education system, as change at the system level progresses, organisations within the system are simultaneously going through their own change process. The next section considers how change happens at the organisational level.

3.3: How do organisations change?

Maia Connors (2016) notes that when implementing a new curriculum or policy document programmes must change to adapt their internal policies and practices to stimulate educators' learning and change (p37). Richard Beckhard and Reuben Harris (1987) argue that when an organisation goes through a change process they experience a stage in which the old ways of doing things exist alongside the new ways of doing things (p5). This transitional state is considered a discreet and unique stage in the change process that must be thoughtfully approached since successful management of this stage often determines the overall success of the change effort (p57).

Business leader Linda Ackerman Anderson (2010) also acknowledged the importance of transitional states in change initiatives. She suggests that change is the result of shifts or stimulus in the internal or external environments (p55) and involves replacing 'what is with something entirely different' (p56). This type of change is considered complex as it involves envisioning an in-between state in which the transition between the current state and desired future state occurs. While it is considered a discreet state, the transition state must holds true to the tenants of the future state so that the future state can eventually be implemented as originally envisioned (Ackerman Anderson, 2010, p58).

The identification of a transitional state in the work of Beckhard and Harris (1987) and Ackerman Anderson (2010) are both influenced by the work of Kurt Lewin

(1947); whose model of organisational remains enduring and relevant despite the fact that it was introduced more than seventy years ago. Saboohi Nasim and Sushil (2011) suggest that Lewin's (1947) model 'changed fundamentally the course of social science in its most critical period' (p187) with its simplistic elegance. Notwithstanding recent critics who find the model too simplistic and linear, Lewin's (1947) work is widely recognized as the foundation upon which other models for understanding the change process are based (Hagen, et. al, 2012, p9).

Lewin's (1947) asserts that organisational change is the result of the collective change in the behaviour of the individuals within the organisation (p75). He further suggests that change happens through a re-education process that progresses in three consecutive steps. I have a visual representation of three stages in the figure below:

Figure 5: Lewin's three step model of change (1947)

The first stage of the change process as articulated by Lewin (1947) is 'unfreezing' (p76). Gordon Allport (1945) suggests that in cases where behaviours are firmly entrenched it is necessary to 'to break open the shell of complacency and self-righteousness' and 'deliberately bring about an emotional stir up' (as cited in Lewin, 1947, p76). Allport (1945) describes this stage as a necessary 'catharsis' that must occur to 'let the air out of an inner tube' so that repair and change can occur (p4). Harry Schein (1964) suggests that un-freezing makes the organisation more 'fluid', malleable and receptive to new ideas (p78).

The second step of the model, which Lewin (1947) defines as 'change' (p76), is characterised by discomfort and action. While in this step, the organisation will attempt 're-establish a comfortable equilibrium' (Schein, 1964, p78) as quickly as

possible through active education. It seeks out new information, behaviour, and attitudes that can be adopted. In the final 'refreezing' step (Lewin, p 76), the 're-education' process is complete, and the new behaviours have been incorporated. However, there is a risk that the progress will not be sustainable unless there are others that have also made similar changes (Burnes, 2004, p234). Working together, individuals can re-establish new group norms and maintain the organisational change achievement. Several authors including Gordon Allport (1945) and Edgar Schein (1964) and more recently Janice Prochaska and her colleagues (2001) observe a natural alignment between collective human change in organisations and individual behaviour change. Specifically, Janice Prochaska and her colleagues (2001) suggest that change theories can be applied to both organisations and individuals due in part to fact that organisations are made up of people who are involved in the change process (p248). The alignment and interrelationship between organisational and individual change will be further explored in the next sections on individual change.

3.4: How do individuals change?

One of the ways that change can be understood at an individual level is from a behavioural perspective. Folke Ölander and John Thøgersen (1995) developed a model of behaviour change that was originally designed to help economists understand and influence consumer behaviour. Their model suggests that behaviour occurs when an individual has the motivation, opportunity and ability to change. For the purposes of this discussion, I have created a visual representation of the model in a simplified form below:

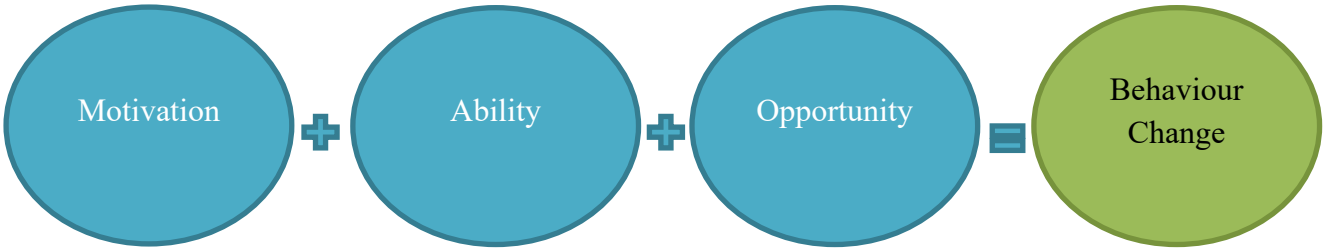


Figure 6: Motivation-Opportunity-Ability behavioural model of change (adapted from Ölander & Thøgersen, 1995)

Motivation, ability, and opportunity are necessary pre-conditions for change to occur. The absence of one or more component inhibits change (Ölander & Thøgersen 1995, p360). This has proved to be a useful model that has been built upon, modified, and applied in other fields including human resource management (Appelbaum et. al, 2000) and higher education (Lai et al., 2018). While I have visually presented the theory as a linear model, the individual components are in actuality interrelated and mutually reinforcing as the subsequent discussion will illustrate.

Motivation is a complex component of the model as it incorporates both factors that are internal to the individual such as beliefs, attitudes, and intention, as well factors that are external to the individual such as social norms an expectations (Ölander & Thøgersen, 1995, p361). More recent work by Julia Specht and her colleagues (2018), and Jenna Breckenridge and her colleagues (2019), both show that change is more likely to occur when there is alignment between an individual's internal motivation to change and external condition which encourage change. Mary Clasquin-Johnson (2016) found that implementing changes to an early years curriculum was most successful when the changes aligned ECEs' beliefs about professional beliefs and their daily practices (p7).

Similar findings have also been illustrated through the work of Brigid Wagner and Lucia French (2010), and Karen Thorpe and her colleagues (2020) who studied changes ECEs involved in professional development change initiatives. Specifically Wagner and French (2010) found that educators, who were intrinsically motivated

to work with children for reasons such as a sense of calling or duty, or achieving a higher social purpose, were more likely to continue to participate in change initiatives even when they were imposed (p168). Furthermore, they found that regardless of whether educators had natural tendencies towards intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, when they

> perceived changes in the children as a result of their participation in [the change initiative], they were strongly motivated to continue their efforts toward change in practice (p169)

Thorpe and her colleagues (2020) also found that external factors such as workplace ethos and supports played a critical role in motivating change (p642). These factors were found to have a particularly powerful effect on intrinsically motivated educators in continuing with change and remaining in their roles as these educators were found to leave their roles if expectations of change remained unmet (p640). Martin Maehr (1976) in his seminal work identified continued motivation as a key consideration of change, defining it as

> the tendency to return to and continue working on tasks away from the instructional context in which they were initially confronted (p443)

This definition has endured, as educational psychologist Dale Schunk and his colleagues (2008) note, continued motivation continues to be used as a key behavioural indicator, particularly in educational psychology research. Arguably, without initial and sustained motivation, whether originating internally or externally, behaviour change cannot occur. While efforts may be made to influence motivation to affect change, it is challenging to verify its existence in any given situation as it is unique to each individual involved and is not visible to others.

Ability is also considered one of the preconditions for change to occur in this model (Ölander and Thøgersen 1995, p364). In the absence of ability a specified behaviour cannot be performed; however the presence of even limited ability can result in behaviour change through individual effort, providing the motivation is strong enough (p364). Furthermore, an individual's ability to master certain behaviours may change over time with the natural development process, or through intervention such as learning or training opportunities (p365). The more

proficient an individual is with a set of behaviours the easier the change process becomes which then may serve to reinforce the motivation to continue with change (p364). In this regard, ability may be viewed as a facilitator of change.

Like ability, Ölander and Thøgersen (1995) suggest that opportunity is also a precondition that facilitates the change process (p365). They further argue that opportunity has both an objective and subjective nature (p365). It is an individual's perception of opportunity that enables change to occur. Objective opportunities become subjective opportunities when they are not visible or apparently obvious. In these cases individuals may believe that opportunity does not exist even when it was purposely designed to facilitate change. Furthermore the perspective of opportunity may differ between individuals depending on their individual make up of ability and motivation. This means that the same incident may be viewed as an opportunity for some but not for others.

3.4.1: Deciding to change

While the Ölander and Thøgersen (1995) model for individual change is a useful way to understand behaviour change at a basic level, the model is incomplete. The next several sections address notable gaps by discussing variations that may be encountered during the change process, beginning with the decision point. The model as commonly presented assumes that behaviour change occurs and does not necessarily show the inter-relationship between the elements. In some cases the individual may not choose to engage in the behaviour change either because they do not want to, or because they are unable to make a decision about the change. The model can be revised to accommodate a decision point as follows:

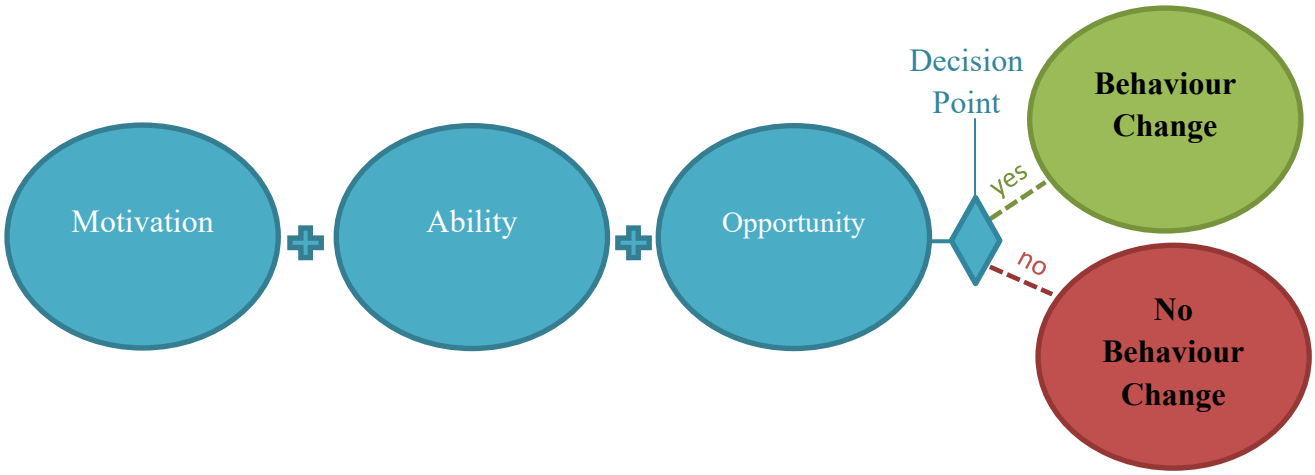


Figure 7: Decision making and behaviour change (adapted from Ölander and Thøgersen 1995)

However, even this visualisation does not fully capture the complexity of the individual change process. In some cases the individual may initially make an affirmative or negative decision, but in other cases the individual may make a neutral 'maybe' decision as such:

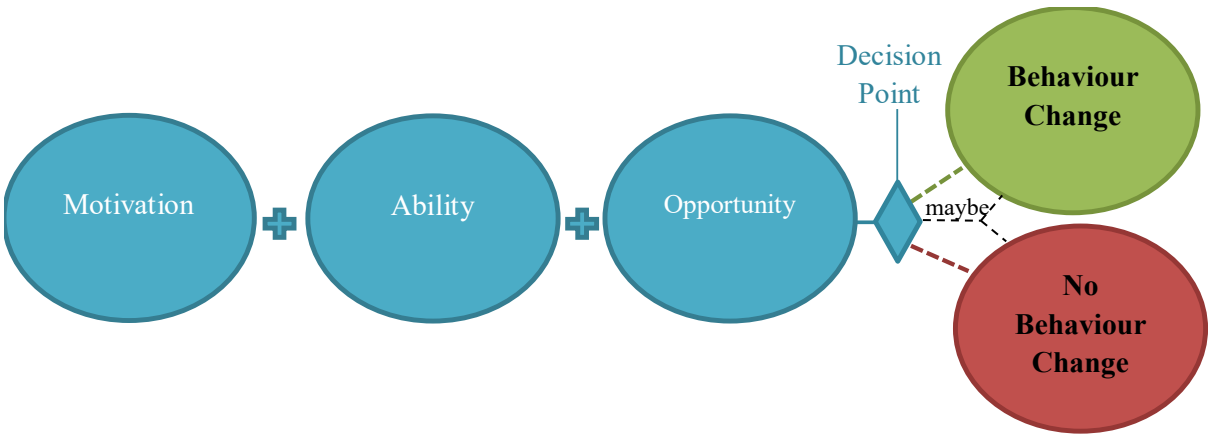


Figure 8: Modified decision making and behaviour change (adapted from Ölander and Thøgersen 1995)

While this modified image presents a more complete model than the theory presented by Ölander and Thøgersen (1995) to reflect a decision point, it does not account for any processes beyond that point. The following sections explore the intermediary process between the affirmative decision and the resultant behaviour

as well as circumstances where the individual chooses not to change or is unable to make a decision about change.

3.4.2: Saying 'yes' to change

Once an individual has made a decision to change the resulting behaviour is not immediate. James Prochaska and his colleagues (1979) present the Transtheoretical Model (TTM), sometimes referred to the Stages of Change, to provide insight into the temporal stages that individuals go through when working towards a defined behaviour change or goal (Prochaska et. al, 1994, p1107). TTM is commonly used by clinicians in health and health promotion settings to develop treatment plans and monitor the progress of patients through a behaviour change process (West, 2005, p1037). More recently it has been used in education settings to support intentional behaviour change (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2005, p486) and has been promoted as a tool to understand organisational change (Prochaska et. al, 2001, p247). The figure below is a representation of the original model as a circular process as conceptualised by James Prochaska (1979):

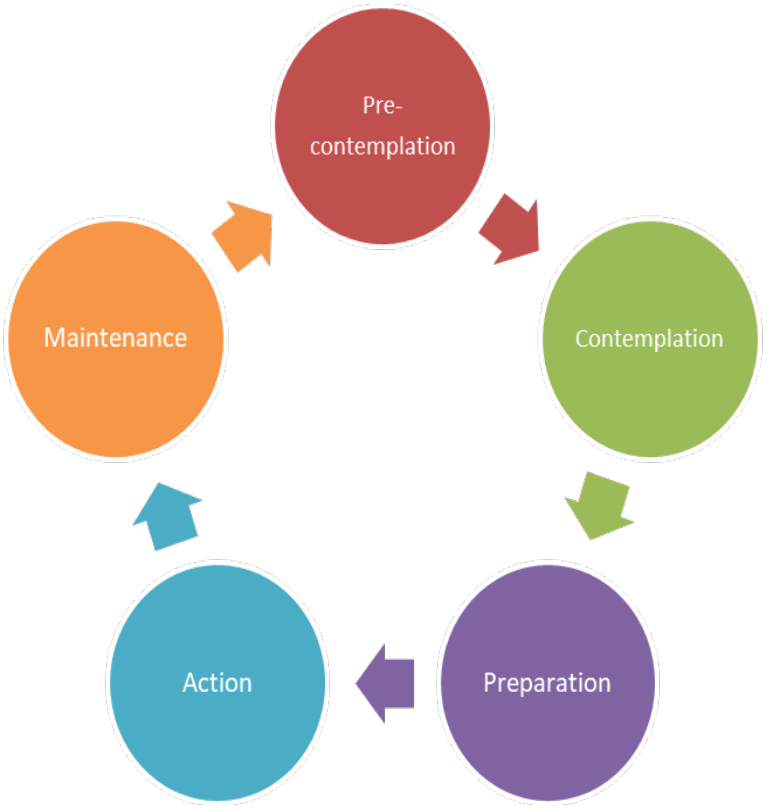


Figure 9: Transtheoretical model of change (Prochaska, 1979, pp 460-464)

In the initial ‘pre-contemplation’ stage individuals are not considering change in the immediate future. In some cases they may be unaware of the need to change or if they are aware, they tend to overly focus on the challenges and potentially negative consequences associated with changing behaviours (Prochaska, 1979, p460). By the time of the ‘contemplation’ stage individuals have begun to integrate a more balanced consideration of pros and cons associated with changing behaviour. They recognise that their current behaviour is incongruent with the future state but may also still feel some ambivalence towards engaging in behaviour change (p460). At the point of ‘preparation’ the individual is committed to change and is ready to take action. They may initially try out the change by taking small, experimental steps (p460). During the ‘action’ stage the individual has changed their behaviour and have the intention to maintain their direction and progress to the point that during ‘maintenance’ they are able work on strategies that will prevent slipping back into old habits of behaviour (p461). TTM is circular, suggesting that the process reinforces itself as it repeats and builds upon existing processes. The individual may repeat the stages two or three times before arriving at a final stage. By the ‘termination stage’ the individual has fully integrated the new behaviour into their regular behaviour and has no desire to return to their old ways of doing things (Prochaska, 1979, p463).

The TTM model illustrates the complexity of achieving sustainable behaviour change even when the individual has the motivation, ability and opportunity to change. It is a useful model as it illustrates that behaviour change is not guaranteed. Furthermore, it demonstrates that there are many points along the model where an individual may fall off the path to achieving change in favour of not changing or resisting change.

3.4.3: Saying ‘no’ to change

There are a several types of behaviours associated with resistance to change ranging from what Alice Bradbury (2019) refers to as mundane questioning to overt system or structural challenges and refusal (p821). Betty Achinstein and Rodney Ogawa (2006) suggest that within the teaching profession resistance most

commonly ‘involves challenging extant definitions of the situation, or questioning the previously unquestionable’ (p56). They further argue that ‘uncertainty and questioning lie at the heart of teaching’ (p56). This would suggest that resistance in form of challenging and questioning is a means to identifying new learning and generating alternative solutions to problem that are commonly utilised by teachers during unfamiliar change situations.

There are several theories that expound the underlying causes of resistance to change. Michael Fullan (2001) suggests that individuals resist change either because of ‘the social-psychological fear of change, [or because of a] lack of technical know-how or skills to make the change work’ (p41). The first part of this quote speaks to the need for clear communication during the implementation of change so that the change can be demystified and fear overcome (Fullan, 2001, p42). The second cause identified by Fullan (2001) reinforces the interconnection of the ‘ability’ and ‘opportunity’ components of the Ölander and Thøgersen (1995) model described earlier. As noted in the early discussion regarding the ‘opportunity’ component, multiple and individualised opportunities should be provided for individuals as a part of the change process so that they can gain the technical skills they need to be able to achieve the desired change.

Andrew Gitlin & Frank Margonis (1995) present a different perspective of resistance as they argue that

> resistance may be nothing more than laziness or an excuse of some kind, on the other hand, it can reflect important political insights (p392)

Returning again to the Ölander and Thøgersen (1995) model, an individual whose resistance is rooted in ‘laziness’ may arguably be moved back onto the ‘yes’ path by addressing the ‘motivation’ component of the model. The second characterisation of resistance in this quote however, raises the possibility that resistance to change may have altruistic overtures. Gitlin and Margonis (1995), writing specifically about teachers implementing new curriculum documents, suggest that teachers may resist change because of ideological differences (p392).

Betty Achinstein and Rodney Ogawa (2006) refer to this 'principled resistance' (p32). Achinstein and Ogawa (2006) further notes that 'not all resistance should be considered in a positive or emancipatory light' (p53). In some cases educators may be engaging in 'principled resistance' while in other cases they may simply be obstructing change. Gitlin and Margonis (1995) suggest that the difference between the two types of behaviour 'depends on the accuracy of [the teacher's] judgement' (p393). In some cases educators may view their resistance as justified, although the resistance may be futile in cases where the change is mandated or imposed on them.

According to authors such as Judith Butler (1990), Stephen Ball (2003), and Jayne Osgood (2004) resistance does not always manifest itself in an overt manner. Judith Butler (1990) describes 'enacted fantasy' as situations when people comply with a change in policy or practice despite the fact that they may not agree with it (p135). Stephen Ball (2003) suggests that in some cases educators may even vocalise support for the change even though they do not believe in it (p218). Jayne Osgood (2004) builds on these concepts to argue that underlying feelings associated mandated change such as 'powerlessness and fatalistic resignation' leads to what she calls 'passive resistance' (p18). Passive resistance implies that educators may voice their opposition but at the same time they also comply with changes because they feel they have no choice except to do so.

According to Ann Douglass (2017) in recent years educators have become accustomed to having 'change thrust upon them from some external source' (p13). Although they may be 'accustomed' to this kind of imposed change, Gitlin and Margonis (1995) assert that 'mandates make people resist change' (p393). Mandated change can have serious consequences according to Jim Ryder (2015) who found that when teachers do not proactively choose the adoption of curriculum changes they doubt their professional efficacy. Similar studies on mandated curriculum change by Justine MacLean and her colleagues (2015) and Damian Merekus and Cosmas Merekub (2015) found that mandated change that is not informed by teachers' practical experiences led to teachers feeling marginalised (MacLean et. al, 2015, p79; Merekus & Merekub, 2015, p21). These

findings suggest that leaders who are responsible for implementing change need to be mindful of, and prepared to address resistance.

In their seminal work about managing organisational change Richard Beckhard and Reuben Harris's (1987) suggest that resistance can maintained at a manageable level by applying the following formula:

$$D \times V \times F > R$$

Figure 10: Formula for overcoming resistance to change (Beckhard & Harris, 1987, p98)

In this formula D represents the level of dissatisfaction with the current state, V represents the vision for change, and F represents the first step that must be taken by staff to achieve change (p98). The multiplied effort of D, V and F must exceed the amount of resistance, represented by R in the formula, if it is to be contained. Michael Murphy (2016) suggests that leaders can address resistance through this formula by focusing their conversations with staff on aspects of things that are not working well, the positive aspects of change as well as their comfort with taking a first step towards change (p6). These conversations should be conducted in such a manner that taken together their combined effect outweighs the level of resistance put forward by staff.

It is important to note that even if individuals initially say 'no' to change and engage in forms of resistance, it does not necessarily lock them into that path of behaviour forever. At some point they may choose to adopt, or simply accept the change. The next section examines the transition process that progresses within an individual from the initial introduction of change to the final stage of acceptance.

3.4.4: Changing from yes to no

Engaging in change can be hard work, and as Ann Douglass (2017) notes, it may not always be sustainable over an extended period of time (p13). This means that although an individual may initially choose to change, and even begin to engage in

the change process, they may not achieve the desired change end state. Michael Fullan (2001) suggests that this can happen when people are surprised when they discover the full extent of what the change requires of them (p40). Fullan (2001) describes this as a gap between perception and reality that generates in decline in performance or resistance, which he refers to as an 'implementation dip' (p40). In a later work, Fullan (2011) notes that when the implementation dip is openly acknowledged and discussed, people often feel better knowing that others have similar feelings and are similarly struggling with change (p71). The strength of this strategy is the acknowledgement of the humanness of change, an aspect that is shared with the strategy discussed in the next section.

3.4.5: A transition to yes

William Bridges (1986) developed the Bridges Transition Model to help organisations and individuals understand the humanity of change. The model has been used for a variety of purposes across a range of sectors including the business sector to study employment transition (Gimba, 2017); the social services sector to provide insight into youth leaving foster care (Anghel & Beckett, 2007; Pinkerton, 2008); and to guide student (Hooker et. al, 2020) and educator (Robertson, 1997) support in the higher education sector. In the model, Bridges (1986) differentiates change from transition. 'Change', he argues, is a disruptive external event that can happen very quickly whereas 'transition' is the internal process that individuals go through as they acclimatise to the new situation and expectations (pxii). There are three sequential stages in the model:

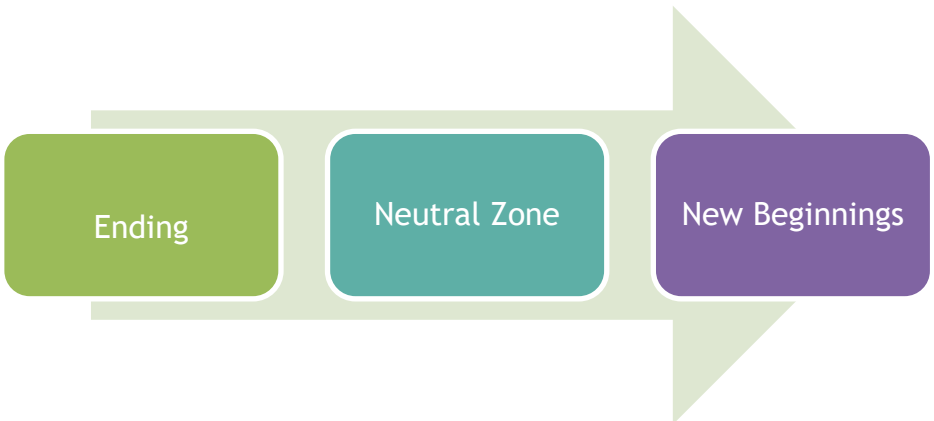


Figure 11: Stages of Bridges Transition Model (2004 p8)

The beginning of the model is paradoxically an ‘ending’. It is initiated by the introduction of the change event. During this time the individual asks the questions: ‘what is being lost?’ or ‘what is over?’ as well as ‘what is being kept?’ (Bridges, 1986, p28). By considering these questions they are able to classify a range of topics within the relevant context such as relationships and processes, team members, and in some cases physical locations. Only once ‘the old way’ has been identified can the individual work towards ‘letting go’ of them (Bridges, 1986, p28).

The concept of ‘letting go’ closely aligns to the seminal work of Elizabeth Kübler-Ross (1969) in which she suggests that individuals experiencing grief following the loss of a loved one go through a series of stages beginning with denial. It is not until the individual reaches the acceptance stage that they are able to accept the loss and move on with their life (Corr, 2020, p. 295). There are also parallels to Lewin’s (1947) three step model of change. The ‘unfreezing’ step can also be thought of as ‘letting go’ of the preconceived notions of the status quo so that the organisation or individual is receptive to new idea ideas presented during change. Once the individual has successfully ‘let go’ of the old they move into the ‘neutral zone’ of the next stage.

The second stage in the Bridges (1986) model refers to the ‘neutral zone’ which is characterised as a vast amorphous space in which the ‘old’ is no longer and yet the ‘new’ does not fully exist (p8). During this time the individual may be worried, confused, or even distressed about the uncertainty of the future and their identity in it. Ann Pelo and Margie Carter (2018) suggest that ‘it is hard to write a new story while you live in the old story’ (p375). Yet, at the same time despite these challenges, the neutral zone provides a fertile ground for a seedbed of innovation (Bridges, 1986, p29). New, improved practices can emerge in the final stage.

The final stage of the Bridges (1986) model is the ‘new beginning’ (p30). Having successfully navigated and moved through the neutral zone the individual presents themselves as reoriented, or in the case of the Lewin (1947) model, their ‘re-education’ is complete. Although initially being slow to or resistant to change,

they now possess new values and renewed energy for the new direction and have come to peace with the change.

3.5: So how does change happen?

This examination of various change models and theories supports Bernard Burnes's (2004) assertion that change process is a 'complex and untidy cocktail' of individual factors and decisions, as well as organisational and systems relationships (p989). The introduction of a new government pedagogical document requires an appreciation of both the individual and organisational change factors at play so that desired system wide change can stick. However at its heart, large scale system change is experienced by individuals in individual ways. For example, the temporal span of each stage within both the Bridges (1986) model is positioned as being unique to both the individual and their unique circumstance (Bridges, 2004, p143). Similarly, the steps with the Lewin (1947) model are not bound by predefined time limitations (Robbins, 2003, p564). This suggests that not only do individuals approach the stages or steps of change in their own unique way, but the same individual may approach different change events in a different manner based on their unique contexts and circumstances. Taken together, these concepts can be visually represented as follows:

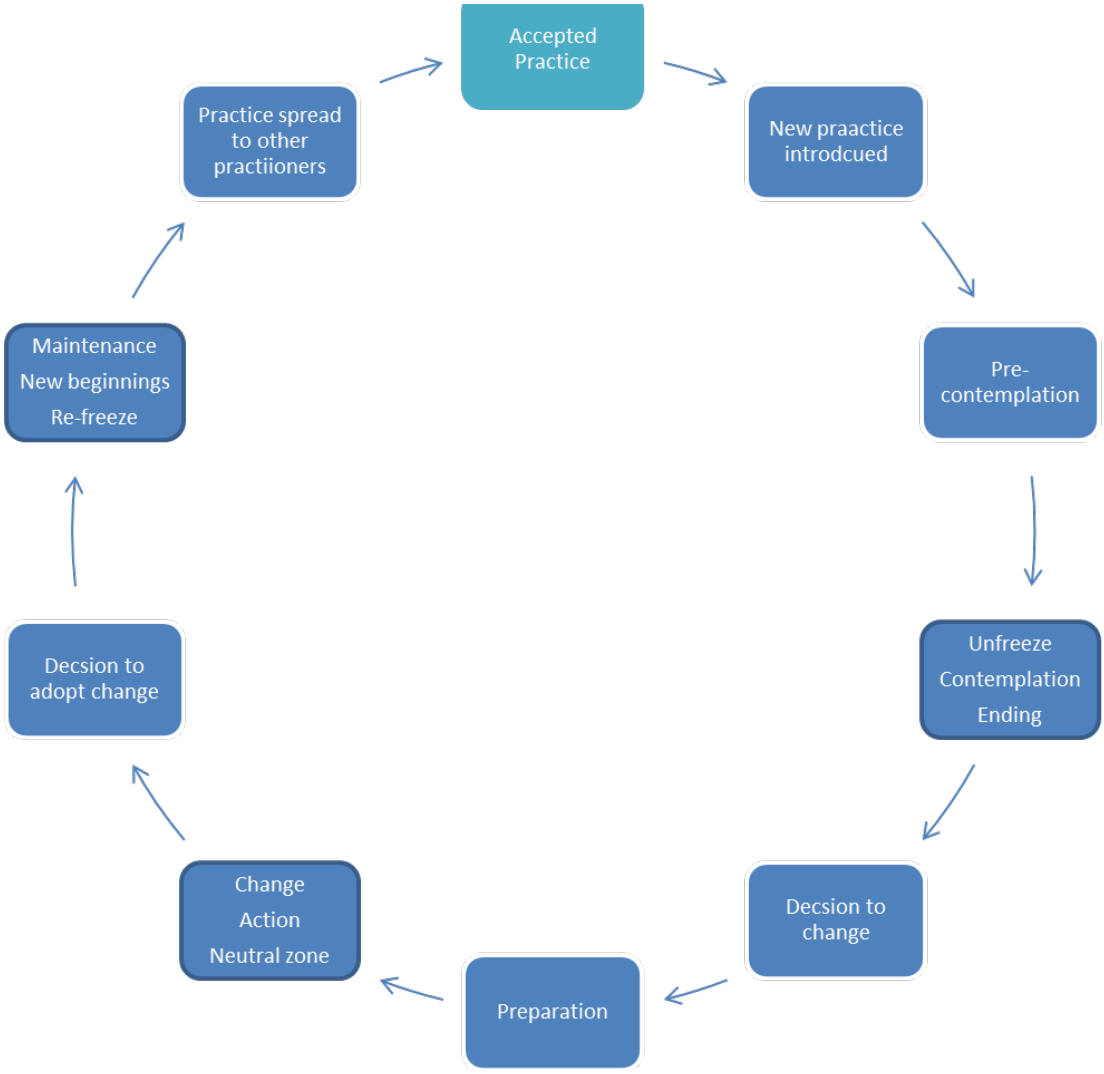


Figure 12: Integrated individual and system change model (Bridges, 2004; Lewin, 1947; Prochaska, 1979)

This model acknowledges that within any profession, there are a set of accepted practised that are utilised by practitioners. Over time, new practices may be introduced, either through research, or practice. When an individual becomes aware of the change, they weigh the benefits of engaging in change through pre-contemplation (Prochaska, 1979, p460). They then enter a stage in which they become more aware of their current practices as well as their limitations (Lewin, 1947, p76). As they further contemplate the present change (Prochaska, 1979, p460) they acknowledge that there is an 'ending' to the old way of doing things (Bridges, 1986, p28). Following this, the individual makes a decision to either engage in change or to resist or refuse change.

If they choose to engage in change they begin to prepare for change before taking action (Prochaska, 1979, p460). Action during change (Lewin 1947, p76) is predicated on having the necessary motivation, ability, and opportunity (Ölander & Thøgersen 1995, p360) in order to engage in change. In addition to purposeful actions leading to change, this stage may also include undirected experimentation associated with the neutral zone (Bridges, 1986, p30). Resistance may also appear at this point as the individual experiences an implementation dip (Fullan, 2001, p40). Providing the individual is able to move through the neutral zone and maintain the forward motion of change, they are able to then integrate the change into their regular practice. The individual returns to stasis by re-freezing (Lewin 1947, p76) their practice, and initiates a new beginning (Bridges, 1986, p30).

Beyond this point, additional actions are focused on maintaining the change progress achieved (Prochaska, 1979, p460). As this process simultaneously proceeds with individual practitioner and organisations adopting the new practice, change slowly spreads across the system. The process may be facilitated when practitioners engage group discussions about practice to support others in adopting similar practices (Gherardi 2000, p214). Once the practice has spread across the system, it becomes the new accepted practice amongst practitioners. Acknowledging that practice is continually evolving as new research and practice emerges (Schatzski, 2002, p87), the change cycle then begins again. I will return to this model again in Chapter 9 to illustrate how the introduction of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) fits into this process in relation to each of the participant's stories.

Over the course of the past two chapters I have highlighted the prominent perspectives of change and beliefs about how it happens by examining key aspects from the literature. Taken together it provides a theoretical foundation to underpin the research study. The next chapter builds on this work, to set out the rationale for the methodology as well as methods used in this study.

Chapter 4: Working With Alluring Narratives

4.1: Stopping before starting

It was after I spontaneously declared to Beatrice that 'you need to tell your story' (p13) that I realised that I had inadvertently started to make key decisions about a research study that had yet to be formally designed. In my naïve and almost instinctive response I had committed myself to using 'narrative' in this study, without fully understanding what was meant by 'narrative' and the implications associated with this choice. Susan Chase (2005) points out that the term 'narrative' might be used to describe any text or discourse, or it may be used to describe a mode of inquiry (p651). Jean Clandinin and her colleagues (2017) argue that this lack of specificity has led to confusion (p90). It was therefore necessary to seek clarity before decisions about the project could be made.

My intention was borne from the excitement of wanting to share the experience because I could see value in potential learning that would help others. However Susan Jones and her colleagues (2014) caution that studies that are not firmly anchored become at risk of 'running adrift without direction' and potentially harming participants or communities (p1). It was therefore necessary to pause and consider how this study would be anchored within an identified research paradigm before advancing any further. Egon Guba (1990) defines research paradigms as worldviews that are 'a basic set of beliefs that guide action' (p17). The identification of the underlying beliefs would then lead to a chain of other decisions related to the research design. For example, the ontological assumptions stemming from the research paradigm would

> give rise to epistemological assumptions, which give rise to methodological considerations which in turn give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2017, p3)

Vera Caine and her colleagues (2013) note that that if these commitments are not clearly defining these commitments at the onset of the study 'much is blurred and much becomes tension-filled' as the research progresses (p575). The remainder of chapter sets out to define the underlying assumptions about this research study

that will guide its design and implementation. The methodology and methods used as well as ethical considerations are also discussed.

4.2: Situating the research

By declaring my intent to engage in a narrative study to tell Beatrice's story, I had unconsciously aligned with an interpretive research design. Ruthellen Josselson (2012) confirms that the interpretive paradigms are most commonly associated with narrative based research because they focus on 'describing and understanding…human complexities' (pp869-70). As this study's focus broadened to include other participants beyond Beatrice, it was important to maintain a focus on 'making meaning' from the information gathered rather than slipping into a more traditional hypothesis testing positivist stance (Bruner, 1986, p8). This interpretive stance was foundational to identifying ontological and epistemological assumptions.

This study stems a genuine curiosity about humans and their lived experiences. From an ontological perspective, it acknowledges John Dewey's (1934) belief that reality is perceived through the lens of 'ordinary experiences' (p3). It also acknowledges that storying lives is central to being human (Bruner, 2008, p37). In an earlier work Bruner (2002) explains that

> We are a species whose main purpose is to tell each other about the expected and the surprises that upset the expected, and we do that through the stories we tell (p8)

Gillie Bolton (2006) suggests that stories are 'an attempt to create order and security out of a chaotic world' (p204) and Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin (2006) further offer that stories provide a means by which individuals symbolically enter the world (p479). Molly Andrews (2007) notes that stories are both documents of experience as well as a way of creating 'self'. She (2007) concludes that 'we become who we are through telling stories about our lives and living the stories we tell' (pp77–78).

Taken together this suggests that reality is made up of both experiences and the stories that are told about those experiences. Vera Caine and her colleagues (2013) argues that such a perspective must also acknowledge that experiences 'are continuously interacting, resulting in changes in both people and the contexts in which they interact' (p 576). Stories too are ever-changing as the time, space and context that surrounds them evolves (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p9). In this sense reality is then also in a constant state of being composed and recomposed in relation to the surrounding change. Caine et. al (2013) suggest that this 'ontological commitment underpins the epistemological commitment that experience is knowledge for living' (p576). As stories and experience evolve as life progresses, so too does the knowledge which is conveyed through stories. Knowledge is therefore actively constructed through the experience of living and being.

Influenced by these perspectives, I have situated my study in a constructivism stance, where knowledge is actively co-constructed by the researcher and participant during the course of the study. Recognising my involvement as the researcher in constructing knowledge suggests that I am experiencing my own living stories which contribute to the research project. For this reason, I have opted to include elements of my story, told in my own voice, throughout this dissertation. Initially I was uncomfortable with this choice, as it differs from my preferred writing style. However as the project progressed, I warmed to, and eventually embraced, the idea. Now I feel that the personal insights sprinkled throughout the document enhances the authenticity of the project and adds an additional layer of richness to the overarching story I am trying to convey. These preferences and choices influenced the selection of a methodology as it was necessary to ensure the alignment between the methodology and the ontological and epistemological assumptions.

4.3: Narrative as methodology

Petra Munro Hendry and her colleagues (2018) argue that using narrative in research has an 'allure' for many people as a means 'to counter the objectifying

tenets of positivist research' (p4). Scientific research can produce results that are verifiably quantifiable however the results tell you little about the experience of the participants. It was my interest in understanding the human experience combined with the complexity of stories that led me to select narrative as the methodology for this study. I acknowledge that there is debate as to whether narrative can be considered a distinct methodology. For example, while John Creswell (2012) purports that narrative is a 'distinct form' of qualitative research (p502), Susan Chase (2005) argues that it is better defined as a 'subtype of qualitative inquiry' (p651). For Pinnegar and Gary Daynes (2012) 'narrative is not simply another cadre of qualitative research strategies' (p3); a point that Gabriela Spector-Mersel (2010) pushes further to argue that narrative should be considered a distinct paradigm (p209) because of its unique 'philosophical infrastructure' (p218). For the purposes of this study, I have used narrative inquiry as a methodology, defined by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) as '…a way of understanding experience' (p20). In later works Clandinin et al (2017) suggests that narrative inquiry is 'a way of thinking about experience as a story' (p14). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe the process as a

> collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that made up people's lives, both individual and social (p20)

From a practical standpoint this means that researcher gathers 'stories' from the participants through interviews and observations over an extended period of time. This is then augmented by field texts and other relevant documents. When considered together these documents provide a comprehensive of both the participant's experience and the surrounding context. The researcher can then use this information to 're-story' the participant's stories in the form of a story, letter or other narrative format (Creswell, 2012, p517). Each of these phases and methods will be discussed in relation to this research study in later sections of this chapter.

4.4: Using stories

The Clandinin and Connelly (2000) model of narrative inquiry is not unique in using stories however a distinguishing feature is the adoption of David Morris's (2002) orientation of 'thinking *with* stories rather than thinking *about* stories' (p56). Andrew Estefan and his colleagues (2016) suggest that when the researcher thinks *about* stories they are separated from it and engage with it in an 'analytical and perhaps reductionist fashion' (p16). Conversely, thinking *with* stories embeds the researcher within a reciprocal relationship that allows them to question the existence and complexity of multiple stories, including their own (p16). Narrative inquiry can then be thought of as a way of inquiring into the lives of individuals while attending to larger societal contexts and relationships in which 'lives are nested' (Clandinin et. al, 2017, p91).

Many societies have well-established traditions that involve stories. For example, in Canada our Indigenous peoples use stories as a means to share their histories and culture, educate their children, and honour their ancestors (Thomas, 2015, p242). Similarly, Scottish culture includes a tradition of oral and written folk tales that are shared and passed down through families from generation to generation (Whinnett, 2020, p7). Stories are ubiquitous, even in the early years world. Kerry-Moran and Aerila (2019) note that stories can

> fill pedagogical roles in any subject area by taking advantage of the dual effect of connecting facts to the images aroused by the stories (p4)

Exposure to and experimentation with narratives can support children in developing critical thinking, logic, and inference skills (Kerry-Moran & Aerila, 2019, p4). In Ontario, HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) promotes the use of pedagogical documentation to make children's learning visible (p16). Stories and other narrative forms may form the basis documentation. Elsewhere, stories, in the form of learning stories, have been used in early years programmes as developmentally responsive forms of assessment in New Zealand (Carr & Lee, 2012). It is therefore fitting to consider using stories in research project that focuses on the early years sector.

Andy Hargreaves (1996) argues that all human voices are worthy of being heard, especially the voices of educators who can provide practical insights that influence policy direction (p16). Placing the natural voice of ECEs at the centre of this study may be an empowering experience for participants by elevating voices and telling stories that may have otherwise gone untold. However Michael Gottlieb and Jon Lasser (2001) suggest that telling the stories of individuals privileges some voices over others, which can contribute to systemic inequities (p192). William Smythe and Maureen Murray (2001) refute this claim and assert that this ethical issue could arise with any research methodology that assumes an emancipatory stance since the researcher ultimately selects who will participate in the study and what information is shared in the final report (p197). Smythe and Murray (2001) suggest that the researcher make careful consideration when selecting of participants to ensure that they fully understand and consent to the multiple narratives that may be presented in a narrative inquiry. I will describe how I integrated these concepts in to the study over the course of the next two sections where I discuss participant selection and ethical considerations.

4.5: Participants

This narrative inquiry examines the stories of four ECEs: Claire, Rosie, Olivia and Beatrice. John Creswell (2012) suggests that participants of a narrative inquiry should be limited individuals who are familiar with the phenomena under study (p515). As this study focuses on the experiences of ECEs during the implementation of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a), it was necessary to select participants who had a direct experience with the document as a part of their professional practice. Candidates who were aware of the document, but did not directly use it were excluded from consideration.

As described in the Prologue, I came across the first participant, Beatrice, by accident. Her enthusiasm for How Does Learning Happen (Ontario, 2014a) and optimism for the future of practice was intriguing and it guided the development of the overall research study. I sought to find additional participants who held similar outlooks so that I could focus on learning about the aspects of successful

change. Selection of the participants was further guided by the fact that narrative inquiry requires a 'caring' and 'safe' relationship between researcher and the participant that develops over time (Moen, 2006, p62). To help form such a relationship from the onset of the study, I used my professional network as a way of identifying potential participants. Through conversations with two trusted colleagues, I identified a short list of ten ECEs who met the criteria.

In determining how many participants to include in the study I considered the amount of data required to complete a fulsome analysis of the topic to generate significant findings. Kathy Charmaz (2007) suggests that researchers should continue to collect data until the data becomes 'saturated' and no longer reveals new insights (p133). I had a sense of the amount of data required to create one story based on my experience with the trial study conducted in Spring 2019. I decided to start with four stories recognising that I could always invite additional participants if needed at a later date. Accordingly, I invited three ECEs from this list and Beatrice to participate in the study fully expecting that I may need to return to the list to invite additional participants. I provided each participant with a 'Participant Information Sheet' that provided background about the research topic, narrative inquiry as well as the risks associated with participation. I arranged follow up phone conversations with two participants upon their request to provide further information about the process. All four of the original invitees agreed to participate.

All of the participants are female, ranging in age from their early 50's to their late 60's. Although all four participants had worked in the early learning and care field in Ontario for more than 25 years as ECEs, they had all taken different career paths and held different types of positions within the sector. At the time of the data collection Rosie working directly with children in a municipally operated multi-site licensed child care program; while Olivia held a supervisory role in a small independent non-profit licensed child care program. Claire was employed in an executive role as a local service system administrator while Rosie consulted to service system managers facilitating local system planning and leadership development. Because of this wide range of experience readers may find the rich

descriptions produced in the participant stories similar to their own stories of changes. They may relate more to one participant story than another; while some may not relate to any of the stories. Indeed the findings generated from the stories of this study cannot be generalised to the entire ECE population, as such is the case with all narrative inquiries (Josselson, 2012, p874). Rather, the uniqueness of the participants highlights the peculiarities of the experience of system change in Ontario and readers are invited to apply the learning to a context the context that is most meaningful to them.

4.6: Ethical considerations

Procedural and relational ethics guided all aspects of this study. From a procedural perspective, I integrated principles from the *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* with human subjects as set out by the British Educational Research Association (2018) into the study design. Participants were all adults, from a professional group, and not members of a vulnerable population. They each participated in the study as individual professionals, not as a representative of any particular group or employer. Approval from the University of Glasgow's College of Social Science Ethics Committee was obtained prior to extending invitations to participate. Each participant was provided information about the study as part of the invitation and they acknowledged their informed consent to participate prior to beginning the study.

However, both Susan Groundwater-Smith and Nicole Mockler (2007) and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that ethics should be considered an orientation of research practice rather than a procedural condition in the approval process. Additionally, the iterative nature of constructing stories means that ethics can evolve as the study progresses (Bold, 2012, p58). With this in mind, ethical implications continued to be examined throughout the study. For example, Maggi Savin-Baden and her writing partner Lana Van Niekerk (2007) note that through narrative inquiry the participants 'reveal themselves' (p467). Although the participants provided consent prior to beginning the study, there was a risk that they revealed personal or sensitive details in their story that were beyond that

which they were comfortable sharing in a written research study (Bold, 2012, p61). To militate against this, consent was reviewed with participants at the end of each interview and during the development of the stories.

In addition to considering the impact of sharing sensitive information, it was equally important to consider the potential benefits of the research. Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2007) argue that all practice related research should be accountable to the community of practice by only producing information that benefits the profession (p206). My decisions throughout the study were therefore guided by their ability to 'enhance the human experience' (Clanindin, 2007, p46). Similarly Clandinin et al (2018) suggest that researchers have an ethical responsibility that extends beyond morality to encompass a genuine care for the participants and their communities through 'relational ethics' (p6). Relational ethics

> recognizes and values mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness between researcher and researched, and between researchers and the communities in which they live and work (Ellis, 2007, p4)

By assuming a stance that was aligned with the tenets of relational ethics, I strove to continually act with both my heart and my mind to ensure that this project would produce a beneficial experience as well as beneficial results. This commitment influenced all aspects of the research study including the selection data collection and analysis methods as well as my role within the research study. These concepts will be further developed in the next section.

4.7: Narrative methods

In a narrative inquiry, inquiry is iterative and begins long before any data is formally collected for the project (Kim, 2016, p94). According to Jeong-Hee Kim (2016) inquiry begins with the researcher 'narrative thinking' (p144) about where the project is situated within a broader context and then thinking about the role that they will play in the project (Kim, 2016 p144).

Corrine Glesne (2011) argues that there is a continuum of involvement that the researcher may have with participants during the data collection phase of the study (p64). The role of researcher ranges from mostly observation to mostly participation as illustrated in the figure below:

Observer	Observer as Participant	Participant as Observer	Participant

Figure 13: Participant-Observer continuum (Glesne, 2011, p64)

Glesne (2011) further observes that

> a paradox develops as you become more of a participant and less of an observer. The more you function as part of the everyday world of the researched, the more you risk losing the eye of the uninvolved outsider, yet, the more you participate the greater your opportunity to learn (p65)

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) suggest that in order to develop authentic stories it is essential to develop a relationship that is more 'akin to friendship' than mere acquaintance (p281). This suggests that the role of the researcher in a narrative inquiry would fall into 'participant as observer' (Glesne, 2011, p64) category, a conclusion that is also supported by Jeong-Hee Kim (2016, p101). Maintaining a participatory role is central to the walking interview method, discussed in the next section.

4.7.1: Solvitur ambulando

In order to develop robust stories it is important to utilise methods that will capture not only the voice of participant, but all of the nuances of the surrounding environment that influence the participant (Elliot & Bonsall, 2018, pp242-43). John Creswell (2012) notes that interviews are commonly used as the primary data collection method for developing participant stories (p508). Of the various types of interviews that could be employed, the walking interview was deemed to be most appropriate for collecting data from the participant as well as their environment.

Rachael Dwyer and her colleague elke emerald [sic] (2017) refer to this method as ‘go-along’ or ‘walk-along’ interviews because the researcher facilitates the interview while walking alongside the participant (p15). The interview may take place as the participant goes about their daily activities, or simply as a planned walk in a neutral location such as a park. As the interview progresses, the environment, or another person within the environment, may insert itself into the process. The participant’s connection with the surrounding environment may trigger a memory or prompt a change in thoughts taking the discussion in a different direction (Evans & Jones, 2011). These intrusions can be challenging for inexperienced researchers who prefer a degree of predictability and control, however the process can help to put the participant at ease and does produce robust, authentic data from which context-rich stories can be constructed.

Alexandra King and her colleague Jessica Woodroffe (2011) argue that walking interviews ‘loosen up’ the interview experience allowing for information to be more easily elicited from participants with fewer awkward gaps that might occur in traditional sit-down style interviews (p6). They further suggest that because walking interviews create a more natural, conversational context, the constraints of building rapport and trust between the researcher and the participant that exist in traditional interview forms. The environments are familiar to the participant, sense of ease the researcher to ‘appear and feel like a friendly visitor in the participants’ lives and less like an interrogator an indifferent observer’ (p7). For this project, the use of the natural contexts for these interviews made it easier to integrate myself into the environment and assume a participant-observer role.

Tom Wengraf (2011) suggests that when interviewing to gather information for stories, the initial interview should be relatively unstructured to allow the participant to share information as freely as possible (p113). Over the course of several months and through a series of walking interviews with the participants, their stories of experiences revealed themselves; first tentatively, then more freely as the safety and trust within our relationship built. The closeness of the relationship is particularly important when working with what Connelly and Clandinin (1988) describes as ‘connected knowing’ (p289). In the case of this study

the participants were personally attached and connected to their experiences with change and I was asking them to share with me. My role as a researcher was to enter into their way of thinking and perceiving (p289) so that I could become more closely connected to their way of knowing, recognising that I could never be as completely connected to that knowing as the participant.

While many of the interviews involved actually going for a walk together this was not always safe or feasible because of Canadian winter weather conditions. In instances when walking was not possible I re-created the intended natural atmosphere of the walking interviews by joining and participating in their daily work routines. Follow up interviews held by phone were much more structured as they were used to clarify and fill gaps in information.

4.7.2: Field notes and reflective research journal

Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000) argue that field notes are the most important way of documenting our experience of the inquiry (p104). In addition to documenting the experience of the interview, field notes also provide the contextual information that contributes a rich landscape for the development of participant's story. They become a stable reference point and aide-memoire to our fickle memories that will naturally smooth out or erase the small, but potentially important, details and nuances of events and environments (p83).

Typically field notes are taken by the interviewer during the course of the interview however, Tom Wengraf (2011) notes that when interviewers focus too hard on taking notes they fail to listen to participants during interviews (p204). In doing so, opportunities for active listening are lost and the conversational tone of the semi-structured interview is lost. Alexandra King and her colleague Jessica Woodroffe (2017) also note that walking interviews require the researcher to simultaneously draw on multiple skill domains (p14) further adding to the challenge of producing field notes that are useful. To avoid this unnecessary complication, I limited the development of field notes to the time period immediately before the interview. Field notes were detailed and descriptive so

that it could serve as a written image of the environment in which the interviews took place when required at a later point in the research study.

A reflective journal was used to capture my personal experience with the interviews. Journals, as defined by Gillie Bolton (2018), are 'records of experiences, thoughts and feelings about particular aspects of life or with specific structures' (p128). Journal entries are primarily written a means for the writer to engage in reflection and reflexivity. They provide one perspective on an issue or experience and examined in isolation of other artifacts they cannot provide a comprehensive, objective picture. As such, the process of writing the journal entry is valued over the resulting product.

Terry Borton's (1970) framework for critical reflection, illustrated below, was used to provide structure, consistency and focus to the journal entries.

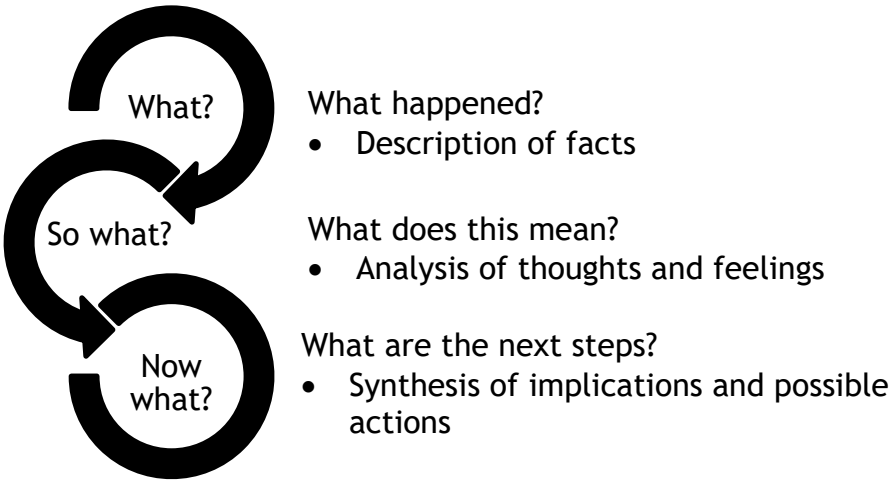


Figure 14: Framework for guiding reflection (adapted from Borton, 1970)

Entries were completed immediately following each interview so that critical information and insight was not lost as time elapsed. Following the first interview I found it necessary to augment the framework to further support the reflective process as follows:

Question	Rationale
What surprised you?	Tracks assumptions
What intrigues you?	Tracks personal interests and positions
What disturbs you?	Tracks tensions and possibly stereotypes and prejudices

Table 5: Additional questions for reflection (adapted from Chiseri-Stater & Sunstein, 2002 pp95-96)

The addition of these questions proved to be useful in generating deeper reflection and producing a more thoughtful written commentary on the interview. Excerpts from these journal entries have been included at the beginning of each of the stories presented in Chapters 5 – 8. I felt it was important to include these entries in order to be transparent about my feelings and responses to the interviews. As a participant-observer in the research process these feelings and responses influenced how I approached writing the story. I describe the re-storying process that I undertook in a subsequent section of this chapter.

4.7.3: Transcribing

Following each walking interview a written transcription was produced from the audio recording of the interview. Catherine Riessman (1993) argues that transcription process cannot be separated from data analysis as through the transcription process the researcher makes decisions about how and where to account for contextual information that may not be verbally communicated (p59). The way that the transcription document is crafted and arranged ultimately aligns to the researcher's thinking about the meaning of the interview (p61). Once complete the transcripts were reviewed in order to develop a set of core follow-up questions to facilitate the next interview. This enabled the interviews to build on each other creating a well-rounded and rich account of the experience being studied (p61).

Transcription is commonly approached in one of two ways. The first approach is a verbatim transcription in which all filler words, utterances, pauses, and other verbal idiosyncrasies are captured. The second approach is to transcribe, edit and interpret at the same time so that the final transcription conveys a summative meaning of the interview. Choosing an approach to transcription depends on the research purpose. A verbatim transcript would be preferred if a linguistic analysis of the text was desired, whereas, according to Robert Atkinson (2011) if the intention was to engage in a thematic analysis for the purpose of creating stories a summative transcription would be sufficient (p55). However Blake Poland (1995) takes the position that the quality of transcription, as measured by its accuracy, contributes not only to the trustworthiness and rigor of a qualitative research study, but provides for future opportunities for subsequent interpretations of the data (p291). Atkinson (2011) suggests that the accuracy of a transcription should be determined through a member-checking process in which participants are provided a copy of the transcription to verify (p56). Poland (1995), although supportive of member-checking and validation by participants, cautions against this practice in the transcription phase as there is a risk that participants may attempt to clarify, or even justify the words used during the interview (p305). Given that I provided each participant with the opportunity to validate and provide comments on their stories, I felt it was unnecessary to also have them review the transcript.

I ensured the accuracy of the transcription by transcribing the interviews as soon as possible. Although time consuming, by engaging in the transcription process myself, without the support of additional technology or assistance, I was able to capitalize on my memory of conducting the interview for cues in deciphering passages of more challenging text. This process was augmented by referring to the rich contextual information in the field notes and supporting documents so that, when used together, errors in the transcripts were minimized and avoided. As a final step in the transcription process, each audio recording of the interviews was replayed in its entirety at least twice while the transcript was read alongside. This provided a final opportunity to catch and rectify any omissions and ensured the

transcription was accurate and complete, setting the stage for re-storying process to begin.

4.7.5: Creating the story

Once the transcriptions were complete I began to create the participant stories. Storytelling, for the purposes of research is a relationship-based activity in which the researcher gathers the stories of others, analyses the information gathered, and then re-stories the information into a new form incorporating the researcher's understanding and insight (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002, p332). The re-storying process can therefore be considered both a data collection and analysis method.

Multiple, nested stories emerged from the walking interviews. The following table summarises the characteristics of these stories:

Stories	Characteristics
Original experience of change	• Unconscious feelings, thoughts, and biases experienced by the participant during the experience
Participant's reflection of their experience	• Conscious feelings and thoughts that are experienced by the participant but are not shared during the walking interviews
Participant's re-telling of their story during the walking interview	• An account of the experience as told by the participants • May contain aspects of the event that did not actually occur
My experience of hearing the story	• Feelings and thoughts about the story • Influenced by the interview context, time, and setting • Reflections on how the story aligns with the literature
Our shared experience of the walking interview	• Co-constructed based on the shared experience of the walking interview • Influenced by the interview context, time and setting

Table 6: Stories from walking interviews

As far as I am aware, all of these stories were what Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (1995) call 'secret' stories (p15) that are true accounts of the storytellers perception of what happened. Secret stories are closely personal and vulnerable accounts of events that are only shared with trusted colleagues (p15). While I believe that all participants were forthcoming with information, naturally there will be aspects of their stories that remain too personal to share and they will remain secret to the participant. Parts of these aspects may be shared through a 'cover story' (p10) of alternate facts that is constructed by the participant to protect their insecurities and vulnerabilities.

Through the re-storying process I worked closely with the participant to determine what key and prominent points and details from our shared secret stories would ultimately be included in the participant's written story. In crafting their stories I strove to write what Ann Pelo and Margie Carter (2018) call 'stories worth telling' (p273) which they describe as follows:

> When we ready a story that catches our hearts and our minds, we feel connected to the characters, like we know them, like we've become friends; we want to know more about them and about what happens to them. We care about them (p273)

I had 'fallen in love' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p81) with my participants and hoped that the stories I wrote conveyed my care for them. In my care for each participant words were carefully chosen. I felt a responsibility to honour their experiences and ensure that it reflected their perceptions and intentions.

Laurel Richardson (2000) argues that the creation of a written product is a process of discovery: 'the researcher's self-knowledge and knowledge of the topic develop through experimentation with point of view, tone, texture, sequencing, metaphor, and so on' (p936). Selecting a writing format required careful consideration of my own disposition and preferences. The re-storying in narrative inquiry may take a range of forms including fictional passages, letters, or even poetry and other arts based text. My preferred writing style is what Michael Agar (1990) refers to as 'creative non-fiction' (p75) because it produces rich descriptions of people and events, and intersperses dialogue that replicates the participant voice. The results produce stories that move and engage the reader.

There is no one write way to write a story (Creswell, 2012, p515). Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000) argue that you need to pay attention to the boundaries such as time, place, and space, making decisions about setting, plot, tension, end point, narrator, and tone before writing can begin (p131). Martin Cortazzi (1994) on the other hand, asserts that when you develop a story you are mainly concerned with only three main elements:

1. Temporality – the sequence of events that move the reader from a beginning stasis state to a middle full of tension, change, and disequilibrium; and ending with a resolution that returns the reader to their stasis state;

2. Causation – the actions in the middle of the story that heighten the tension and spur the story on to the ending resolution; and
3. Human interest – the portrayal of values and character motivation that (p158).

Taken together these elements provide the basic framework for a story plotline onto which other story elements such as characterisation, dialogue, and voice can be layered. Coralie McCormick (2004) further suggests that every story is made up of several mini-stories that are created individually beginning by developing the middle of the story. The story middle provides the basis to which a beginning and end can be added. Once several mini stories are developed they can be woven together to form a grand chronological narrative (p221).

Using Coralie McCormick's (2004) approach for re-storying as a reference point, all of the raw data, including the interview transcriptions, supporting documents, field notes and research journal entries were reviewed to identify mini-stories and plot chronology. One of the challenges I encountered, which is common when using stories in research, was that the data was not exact records of what happened. They do not necessarily represent reality; rather they represent an individual's interpretation of an experience (Bold, 2012, p20). There is also no single way, or a best way to tell a story. It may be told from multiple perspectives using different styles with varying amounts of detail. Each approach has its own value and purpose (Smythe & Murray, 2000, p326).

There was a multitude of perspectives and possible stories that could be told from the data I collected. Decisions had to be made regarding whose story to tell and how best to tell it. I found reassurance in the work of Thomas King (2003), who, in sharing traditional Indigenous stories, reveals his perspective on the changing nature of stories:

> there is a story that I know. It's about the earth and how it floats in space on the back of a turtle. I've heard this story many times, and each time someone tells this story, it changes. Sometimes the change is simply in the voice of the storyteller. Sometimes the change is in the details. Sometimes in the order of events…but in all the tellings of the tellers, the world never leaves the turtle's back. And the turtle never swims away (p1).

By keeping this reflection close to mind, I was able to focus my efforts on identifying the 'turtles' and the 'earths' in my data whose integrity I needed to maintain during the re-storying phase. With this in place I was liberated and simply told the stories that aligned to the purpose of this research study. A stylistic choice could have been to create a fictional composite story that represented all four participants however this would have presented challenges for validating the accuracy of the story. Instead, I chose to develop the stories as individual stories of each participant. Presenting four individual stories also helped to amplify the unique and authentic voice of each participant. In doing so I furthered my relational commitment to preserving respect and dignity of the participants, a practice that continued throughout the validation process as well.

4.7.6: Validating stories

Once a first draft of the stories was complete they were provided to the participants. Participants were asked to review, provide comments, and suggest revisions; and through an iterative, back-and-forth process their story was finalized. Jean Clandinin and Jerry Rosiek (2007) note that this is an important practice because it helps to ensure that stories are as accurate as possible in light of more recent experiences (p42). This process may also help to elicit more details from the participant producing a richer elaboration on the themes. Simply by providing some time and space between the interview and creation of the story the researcher might access a deeper, more reflective response from the participant (Dwyer & emerald, 2017, p8).

However, Catherine Riessman (1993) notes concerns about using participant validation processes as a means to determine the 'truthfulness' of a story (p65). She asserts that because the participant may like, or even prefer the way the researcher has interpreted their experience, they may be hesitant to correct even egregious omissions or errors. She argues that if a participation review process is used, the researcher must be prepared to ultimately take responsibility for the interpretation and analysis of the narrative and finalise the story (p65). Dwyer and emerald (2017) also comments on the subject of trustworthiness in the

introduction to their book. They remind the reader that the approach to participant validation is rooted in epistemological and ontological commitments (p8). In this case the stories I created represents 'what someone said about their experience' not necessarily 'the truth' about what actually happened. As a result, the participant validation process for this study served to check the accuracy of 'what someone said about what they said' (p8). In doing so, it also provided the opportunity to confirm the 'trustworthiness' of the story (Riessman, 1993, p65).

4.7.7: Analysing significance

Once the stories were finalised, I analysed each one using a framework that I developed based on the works of Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2006) and Gail Lindsay and Jasna Schwind (2016). Clandinin and Connelly (2006) assert that in order to understand stories they should always be considered in three dimensions:

- Temporality – memories of events and their interpretation changes over time as new experiences are incorporated into the knowledge-base. The participant's view of the past and future differs depending on when the story is told and documented.
- Sociality – narratives are sensitive to both personal and social conditions. The participant's current physical or mental health and well-being influences how they tell their story. Changing political climates and social norms have similar effects on how the story is retold.
- Place – all events take place in some location with clear, defining physical or topographical boundaries. Some events spread beyond topographical boundaries to incorporate several places (pp479-481).

Lindsay and Schwind (2016) acknowledge Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three dimensions and build on their work and argue that stories also need to be examined within a series of concentric and mutually reinforcing circles comprising of personal, professional/practice-based, and societal justification. Using this model, the significance of the story should first be considered from the personal perspective of the antagonist before the practical or professional perspective is

considered. Once both of these perspectives have been examined by the social significance or the story as a whole can be examined.

The Lindsay and Schwind (2016) model contributes an additional layer of complexity to the narrative inquiry puzzle. When taken together with the Clandinin and Connelly (2000) model, it forms a more complete understanding of the participant stories which are shared in Chapter 9. The analytical approach used in this study, which reflects the more relevant aspects of both Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Lindsay and Schwind (2016), may be visually represented as follows:

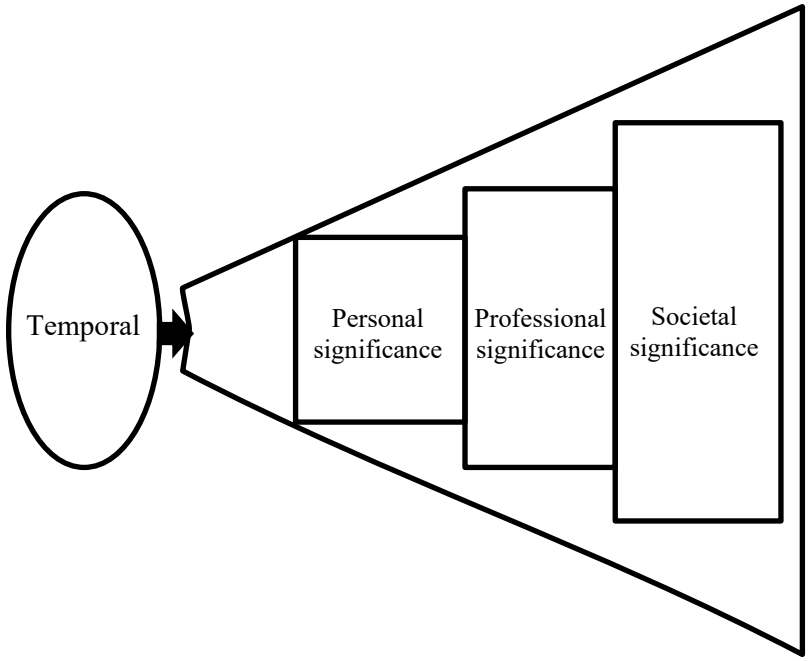


Figure 15: Framework for analysing significance in stories (adapted from Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Lindsay & Schwind, 2016)

This framework allows for the personal, professional, and societal significance to be examined through a temporal lens by asking following three questions about the story:

- At this time,
    - What was personally significant to the participant?
    - What was professionally significant to the participant?
    - What was the significant within society?

The answers to these questions could then be used, along with the outcomes of the thematic analysis to generate meaning from the stories.

4.7.8: Thematic analysis

The method of thematic analysis developed by Victoria Braun and her colleague Virginia Clarke (2006) was selected for this study because it can be 'applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches' (p87). When conducted with fidelity it produces an active and thoughtful engagement between the researcher and the texts found within the data sets (p25). The process initially began by reviewing the data and developing a list of interesting ideas. A second review of the data focused on generating codes. The theoretical literature on change was a useful reference tool to generate initial and secondary codes. The codes were then further analysed to identify the codes that could be combined together to form overarching themes (p87).

A final refinement of the themes was conducted to define the themes by identifying the 'essence' of what the themes were about (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p92). This part of the process involved considering how the themes related to each other as well as how the sub-themes that were identified during the process related to the main themes. At this stage I discovered that it was difficult to distinguish between some themes. In these instance themes were combined so that each theme had its own discreet boundaries.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) themes may be identified at either a 'semantic' or 'latent' level (p84). The semantic level simply looks at what was said or written, whereas the latent level moves beyond this to consider interpreting and explaining what was said or written. This level analysis provides insight into underlying assumptions, conceptualisations, and beliefs that may not have been expressly stated in the stories. The thematic analysis conducted for this study primarily focused identifying latent themes as discussed and illustrated in Chapter 9.

4.8: Assessing narrative research

Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin (1990) suggest that one of the biggest criticisms of narrative inquiry is that it does not rely on the traditional assessment criteria of 'validity, reliability, and generalizability' (p7). While findings from a narrative inquiry cannot be generalised to form broad conclusions, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) believe that they can be successfully transferred to apply to similar contexts (p7).

They further suggest that 'apparency' and 'verisimilitude' are underrated criteria that can be used to assess narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p7). To advance trustworthiness and truthfulness these criterions have been attended to throughout the procedural aspects of the study. For example, encouraging participants to review and provide comments on the stories helped to ensure the stories' truthfulness, and strengthened the trustworthiness of the overall project. However Donald Polkinghorne (2007) suggests that it is ultimately

> the readers who make the judgment about the plausibility of a knowledge claim based on the evidence and argument for the claim reported by the researcher (p484)

Accordingly, the work must stand on its own merit. However I assisted the reader in this regard by providing rich, detailed, and descriptive context within the text of the stories that can be easily verified through external sources such as archival records.

Laurel Richardson (2000) further suggests that 'crystallization' is an alternative to using triangulation to assess the validity of a narrative project (p934). The metaphor of the crystal suggests that there are more than three angles in any given story that can both refract and reflect new insight. Through crystallization the researcher views the story from multiple angles rather than the three fixed points of triangulation to determine validity. Richardson (2000) notes that

> crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know (p934)

This description of crystallization aligns with the complex, iterative, and cyclical nature of narrative inquiry. Consequently, it could be said that each story in this project created a glistening crystal by optimising input from multiple 'angles' that were generated from the walking interviews, field notes and journals, as well as written policy and other artifacts. This glistening is aesthetically satisfying. Yet, at the same time, the allure of storytelling leaves me wanting to know more and to do more.

4.9: 'You need to tell your story' revisited

This chapter began with a consideration of the ontology and epistemology that I committed to use during this research study. These commitments permeate throughout the research study. They dictate a commitment to using relational ethics, and influence the selection of a methodology and methods used to create and analyse the participant stories. The process that I used to create each participant's story is summarised and visually represented in the following figure: figure:

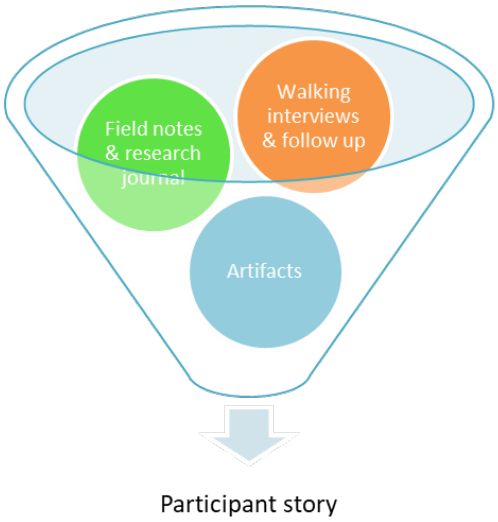


Figure 16: Creating the participant stories

Each story was created using multiple inputs, and integrated information gathered from the interview process, observational records recorded in field notes, reflections in a research journal, as well as documents and other artifacts.

Multiple methods were also used to analyse and generate meaning from the stories. The relationship between these methods is illustrated in the figure below:

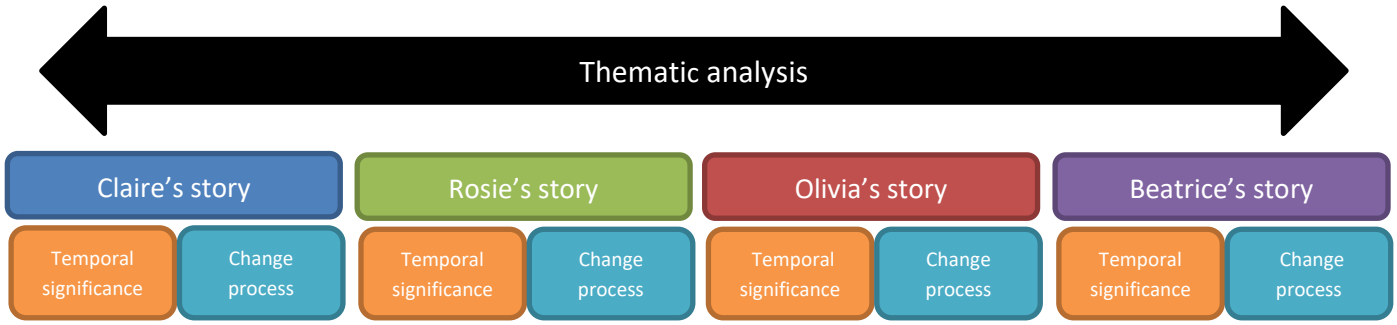


Figure 17: Relationship of analytical methods

Considering temporality through the lens of personal, professional and societal significance as well examining how each participant navigated a change process provides a deeper understanding of each participant's story. Including a thematic analysis across all of the stories further supports the identification of findings that may have significance for practice.

If I could turn back the clocks and recreate the morning that I met Beatrice, I would not necessarily choose my words any differently. There is an allure in sharing stories that extends beyond the challenges of ethical relationships, methodological considerations and methods that require attentive execution. As Jean Clandinin and her colleagues (2018) suggest that 'stories are what keeps each of us alive, able to go on with making a life in ways that are meaningful' (p1). I agree which is why I am excited to share the stories of Claire, Rosie, Olivia, and Beatrice over the course of the next four chapters.

Chapter 5: Permission to Explore

Journal entry: March 5, 2020

I met Claire near her office. It's been a challenging week for her with labour unrest in the schools. She looks tired and smiles wearily. Her eyes remind me of someone who has experienced a lot and has the wisdom to show for it. She speaks in a determined, authoritative voice, so much so that it's a bit intimidating when she first speaks. Initially her statements are short and purposeful but as we continue to talk she appears to relax. A bit of laughter even cracks through as

Change was in the air. The municipality where Claire worked was launching an early years quality improvement initiative. As part of the management team responsible for early years at the municipality, she was invited to be part of the steering committee. As Claire sat around the table listening to the participants introduce themselves she was impressed with commitment to fixing the system and creating real change. They had brought together all the local leaders in the early years sector including programme directors, researchers, and experts in early childhood education so that they could develop a local-made to quality improvement scheme. Unlike quality initiatives developed by other municipalities that focused on completing checklists, they had decided that their scheme that would focus on 'commitment to the profession' rather than simply 'compliance'. They wanted the professionals working in the sector to be intrinsically motivated to implement and sustain change, and not solely focus on achieving extrinsic rewards and recognition. One of the academics from the university shared some current practices from other jurisdictions that focused curriculum programming on children's interests and abilities rather than themes.

Claire was intrigued. She had never really felt the attachment that some early childhood educators had with themes. She recalled a time when she was working as a consultant at a local resource centre that worked with programmes that were struggling operationally. She was given a set period of time to 'fix' the programme or the ministry responsible for early years would shut them down. A big part of the job involved observation. One time she was observing an ECE reading a book to

the children as a part of circle time when a fire truck went by. ‘Of course all these kids get up and go to the window and because they had heard the fire truck, they wanted to watch the fire truck and to talk about the fire truck’ she recalled. ‘Yet the ECE yelled at them “Come and sit down we’re not talking about that now. This is what we’re talking about”’. Claire was saddened by the response. ‘She didn’t see the value in it’ Claire muttered to herself as she remembered the incident ‘Instead, she could have flipped that around to use that as an opportunity to build on that experience and to expand the kids learning’.

Themes put a lot of pressure on parents too. Claire recalled one parent who took particular interest in the weekly themes that another programme was using. She was a low-income single parent, yet when the theme was ‘transportation’ she took her child on a train trip from one neighbouring city to the next because they were talking about it in the programme. She did not want her child to miss out on any of the learning. Claire was not sure how she managed to afford it. It would have required her to sacrifice something else from her already too-tight budget. However this act of over-commitment only served to reinforce the value of themes to staff in the programme.

There were lots of early childhood educators in their community were very attached to themes as well as daily routines like ‘calendar’ and ‘weather’. As far as Claire was concerned every classroom that had a calendar and weather board used them exactly the same way. Every day at the beginning of circle time, the educator would sing a calendar song. Then, she would pick one child to take the correct number and place it in the correct space on the calendar to indicate the date. She would then sing a weather song and pick another child to look out the window and tell everyone what the weather was for the day. Most of the children were fidgety and uninterested in these routines. It would break Claire’s heart watching their little faces drop in disappointment when they were not chosen to be the calendar or weather ‘helper’. Claire hoped that this new quality initiative would begin to change all of that.

Over the next few years as the initiative gained momentum Claire began to see change in the community. Not only were they successful in getting some programmes to move away from themes, but together with the local public health unit they were able to introduce a standardised screening tool for key child development milestones. Early years programmes staff were required to complete the screening tool on each child when they were enrolled in a programme. The completed screen was provided to the parent and they were referred to relevant community support services if potential concerns were identified. The implementation of the new screen was progressing well until the provincial ministry responsible for early years released an early learning framework, Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)[2] (Ontario, 2014b). When Claire first saw the document she was confused. Although well written and attractively presented, she did not understand the purpose of having such a document. How was this document supposed to fit with what they were already doing? She hoped that she would find answers at an upcoming provincial meeting.

The ministry officials started the meeting by reminding the participants that ELECT was designed to be a support for educators and that it was up to communities to determine how to implement it. This statement upset Claire. How were they supposed to implement something that they did not completely understand? 'There's confusion throughout the community' she told the ministry officials 'You haven't explained it well enough'. Her counterparts from other communities nodded in agreement. Claire took some comfort in knowing that the confusion was across the province.

Then one of the experts that developed the framework stood up and spoke. She explained that the framework provided one of many different ways for educators to understand children. She demonstrated how the continuum of development could help educators consistently define the behaviours that they observe so they can discuss a child's emergent learning with their family and other professionals. Claire was pleased to hear about the focus on learning. For many years while she was a supervisor of an early years programme she strived to show parents that the

[2] Ontario (2014b)

programme was more than just a safe place they could leave their children. It was a place where their children would learn. ‘We need to be telling parents what their kids are learning’ she once told her staff ‘It’s not only what did you do, or what did you have to eat today, it’s what did you learn’. At the time the staff had looked at her with complete surprise. Now years later, with the ELECT document the provincial government was promoting the value of learning in early years programmes however they were not requiring its use.

The quality initiative steering committee integrated the new document into their outreach and training work and for the next several years they continued to make significant progress. Many sites abandoned the themes approach while integrating the ELECT document into their programmes. However some of the ECEs had a hard time letting go of using themes. When Claire spoke to some of them she began to realize that themes had become a means to ‘justify their existence in comparison to school teachers and kindergarten teachers’. They believed that society understood what teachers do, but not everyone understood what ECEs do. Furthermore, if their professional practice looked like school teachers ECEs would be respected as professionals just like school teachers. Without themes, what would they point to in order to demonstrate that learning was happening? This sort of practice change threatened their professional identity. Claire understood that their resistance was deep rooted and there was only so much that the quality initiative could do to encourage change. These ECEs would not change their practice until there was a provincial requirement to do so.

Several years went by and then change was in the air again. The ministry introduced another new document. This time it was ‘a pedagogy for the early years’ called How Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a). ‘Here we go again’ Claire said rolling her eyes ‘There’s the same kind of confusion. Now what do we do with these two documents? Does one trump the other?’ Claire shared her concerns with one of the local ministry staff members. She was told that the two documents were meant to be used together. ‘Then these two documents need to be married in each other’ Claire responded ‘because it’s not clear’.

The quality initiative steering table had added a discussion about HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) to the agenda for their next meeting. Claire wanted to try to summarize the purpose of the document in her own mind before engaging in that discussion. As she re-read the document she got the sense that the document was proposing a different way of engaging with children, but she was not sure. When the topic came up on the agenda at the quality initiative steering committee Claire tentative raised her hand to comment. 'I think How Does Learning Happen? is really that framework of "let's engage more with these children"' she said seeking validation 'You know, these are the rights that they have'. The other members of the group nodded in agreement. Someone else in the group noted that the introduction of How Does Learning Happen? stated that it was built off of ELECT and it was meant to illustrate how the principles presented in ELECT worked together[3]. That began to make sense to Claire and she began to see the potential of using the two documents together. 'How Does Learning Happen? is the education that goes with the activities and experiences that ECEs provide' Claire concluded. By linking up the documents ECEs could justify what their programme decisions by saying, 'I'm doing this for a purpose that is going to have an outcome to it. It's just I'm doing this to engage the kids' Claire continued. This approach could raise the work of early childhood educators to the next level.

To Claire's surprise, unlike the implementation of ELECT, early years programmes would be required to use How Does Learning Happen? as a result of a new piece of legislation that the provincial government had introduced. Licensing requirements were changing and programmes would need to be able to demonstrate that they were following the pedagogy in their operations through a programme statement. The government had also put other strategies in place to support the implementation of How Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a). Claire was frustrated with the fact that the licensing requirements did not go beyond a programme statement but she was pleased so see that there was a video series that featured experts talking about brain development, authentic relationships, and learning. The experts were very compelling and Claire thought that they would help ECEs to better understand the rationale for the approach if they could figure

[3] Ontario, 2014a, p10

out how to use the document. No doubt a lot of training would be required. Maybe it would be easier if people could 'see' it in action. What if the early years programmes that the municipality operated became flagship demonstration centres for the rest of the community programmes? Claire had always considered the ECEs in these programmes to have a leadership role in the communities. After all, the provincial government had delegated authority for child care funding and quality administration to the municipalities. As the local service system manager Claire felt that the municipality should take an active role in supporting provincial initiatives.

She asked the local resource centre to take the lead in providing robust training and support to the municipal programme staff. When they first convened the group the facilitators provided an overview of the document and science and theories behind it. Then Claire stood up to speak to the group. She told them that through the document they were receiving permission to explore further. They could feel free to ask 'what more?' and 'what else can we be doing?' could they do in their programmes. Claire wished that she had been given this kind of permission when she was a new ECE.

When Claire first began to practice as an early childhood educator she wanted to share her love of music with the children in her programme. She has always loved music. As a toddler she would she would crawl into the kitchen cupboards and pull out pots and pans. Her mother would give her a wooden spoon so Claire could bang the pots and sing along with the 'music'. It was no surprise then that as an ECE she was excited when she discovered a big plastic container in a storage cupboard in her new classroom that was filled with child-sized tambourines, and cymbals and sticks. She put the instruments out in the classroom and told the children, 'Let's have a band'. Some of the children joined her in grabbing an instrument and they began to sing together. 'Let's follow the beats' Claire said encouraging other children to dance to the music. The sounds of excitement made Claire happy and she laughed along with the children encouraging them to sing louder. She 'absolutely loved it'. It reminded her of making music and singing in the kitchen with her mother. She smiled at the happy memory. The sound caught the attention

of Joan, the senior ECE in the classroom, who looked at her disapprovingly. ‘It’s too loud’ Joan said sharply, ‘Put it away’.

Later when they were out on the playground together Joan informed Claire that the instruments were only for circle time and only when certain songs were being sung. They were not something that should be used in the classroom during playtime. Claire tried to argue ‘I don’t care if they’re screaming at the top of their lungs. The kids were really working to be able to develop rhythm skills’. Joan shook her head. ‘It’s just noise’ she told her flatly. ‘And it’s too loud. People will complain’. Claire remembered how discouraged she felt by these words. She hoped that by expressly giving them permission to ‘explore more’ the ECEs in her community would be encouraged rather discouraged in their efforts.

The second training session with the municipal ECEs focused on applying the concepts of document in practice. A major focus of the session was on documenting children’s learning. Claire observed the ECEs in the room as they heard the facilitator talk about using photographs and short observations every day to create documentation that they could discuss with parents in order to extend each child’s learning experience. Their eyes widened and she could almost hear them question: ‘Every day?’. Claire intervened. ‘Yes, it’s labour intensive but there is purpose and it’s important’ she told them ‘I’m here to support you and we will work through this’. Claire looked around at the expressions in the room again. A few of the ECEs were nodding but there was another group who had furrowed their brows in displeasure and uncertainty. More concerning to Claire was the rest of the group that she could not determine how they were feeling. She wondered what else she could be doing to help them adapt to this new way of practicing.

Claire remembered how she gained a new perspective on making change happen when her mother moved into a supportive living home for seniors. The adjustment was not easy for her mother and as a result it was not easy for Claire. When she ran into problems with the care that her mother was receiving during the night Claire tried to speak to one of the staff. ‘I’m just following the policies’ the staff told her ‘There’s nothing I can do about it’. Claire was infuriated by this response

and decided to speak to the unit manager. When she received a similar response she took her concerns to the facility director. ‘Can’t you change the policy?’ Claire asked the director ‘It’s causing a real problem for my mother’. The director smiled sweetly and shook her head ‘We use the same standard policies that other care homes use’.

In the days following the conversation with the director Claire began to notice a difference in the staff. They would avoid making eye contact with her when she would come in and her mother was complaining that the staff were not coming into her room as frequently to answer her calls. Claire realized that in trying to help her mother she was actually making the situation worse. She had become part of the problem that her mother had to deal with. She wondered how she could fix the situation and ‘flip it around’ ‘You can either be part of the problem or part of the solution’ Claire told herself ‘If you’re part of the solution then you’re looking for a better outcome’. She thought about what a better outcome would look like. It would need to benefit everyone, not just her mother. With her background in writing policies she could offer to help the director to re-write the policies in a way that would make things better for the staff and her mother. Initially the director was resistant to Claire’s offer of help, but with patient, persistent, and continued requests from Claire the director finally allowed Claire to participate in a policy review exercise. Together they were able to resolve the key policy issues without having to escalate Claire’s concerns.

‘The same strategy might work with getting ECEs to complete the required documentation on a daily basis’ she thought. By ensuring that she addressed everyone’s concerns perhaps she could achieve the change that she wanted. First though, she would have to address the challenge of securing additional preparation time for the ECEs. Claire knew if she did not address the issue, ‘it would be easy for individuals whose practices was not be as bright and shiny as the rest to use the excuse “I don’t get any documentation time and so I’m not doing it because I’d have to do it on my own time”’. By ensuring staff had planning time there would be no excuse.

It had not been easy to secure paid preparation time for ECEs in the municipal centres when the ELECT document was introduced because of the cost associated with coverage. The documentation associated with HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) would require significantly more preparation time. There was no way that ECEs would be able to meet this requirement within their regular work schedule without additional coverage to maintain the educator to child ratios required by law. The cost of additional coverage would be impossible for the programme to absorb. The only solution that Claire could identify was to extend the work week. Fortunately the collective bargaining agreement included provisions that allowed the municipality to set work hours any time between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., so there was no legal barrier to imposing additional hours on staff. Based on her experience with her mom's assisted living care, Claire did not think that simply imposing something because she could would work with this group. They would need to engage staff, giving them the opportunity to shape what the final policy looked like.

Claire met with staff to tell them about the change in hours some were happy and welcomed the extra five hours of pay that came with the extra hours of work. 'There were other ones who were highly resistant to that because they didn't want to work any more hours based on their age, their ability, their family circumstances, or who knows why else' Claire recalled. She was not deterred by this reaction and she was determined to fix this and make it work. 'There are exceptional circumstances that aren't the standards of practice' she said 'So we need to develop policies that go around all of those exceptions to meet everybody's needs. It's just going to take more work'. She went back to the drawing board to develop a more flexible approach. 'You can either have a half an hour lunch and finish earlier but still have the documentation time or keep an hour for lunch and work an extra hour a week' she told them 'You get to choose'.

Most staff welcomed the flexibility and the ability to choose their work hours, but there was still some who remained 'grumpy' about the change. The negativity reflected in their documentation and other work too. Claire hoped that the

attitude would pass with time, and for some it did. There were others however for which the negativity had become a constant state of being and Claire was getting frustrated by it. She decided to try to fix it and address it head on. At the next all-staff meeting she stood up and spoke to the group from the heart.

> 'How Does Learning Happen? encourages you to explore more. You have to find the joy in that exploration with kids, because if you don't have any joy in looking at bugs when you're outside and wanting to expand on those things then you're hurting yourself as far as the opportunities for your own development and the kids' development. We don't know everything about everything. You can't be miserable all the time. At some point you have to stop and ask yourself: "do I want to be angry and grumpy for the rest of my life?". If you take this opportunity to do more and explore more you're going to feel better about your job and about yourself'.

A silence fell over the room. Then someone at the back started to clap. Slowly the rest of the room joined in until nearly everyone was applauding. At least some of them had heard her message.

One of the site supervisors approached her after the meeting and thanked her for the encouraging words. A wistful smile formed on Claire's lips as she waved her off. 'It's nothing; it's what I get paid for'. Despite her dismissive words, deep down she hoped that there would be some people that would continue embracing this new way of practicing. However she also knew there would still be some that just wouldn't 'make the switch', even with the words of encouragement. She couldn't risk tainting the other more enthusiastic staff with that type of constant negativity. Negativity did not create a healthy work environment. For those last holdouts their change journey would need to end; either by choice or with some help. It was the part of the job that Claire liked least, but it was all part of being a 'fixer' and making things better for everyone else.

Chapter 6: The Gravy on the Potatoes

Journal entry: February 28, 2020

I met Rosie for her interview at the community centre in a small town in northern Ontario where she is facilitating a workshop for early years programme supervisors. She walks almost as quickly as she speaks and moves from subject to subject without pause. It's difficult at times to keep pace with her. She seems to be enthusiastic about everything. You can hear it in her voice. It's contagious.

'It was the little toilets' Rosie laughed as she recalls what attracted her to be an early years professional. 'I just loved those little toilets and all that fun stuff'. When an administrative error threatened to prevent her from attending the early childhood education programme, her secondary school principal tried to steer her towards hotel management. But Rosie dug in and insisted that he find a way to fix the problem. She still is not completely sure how, but somehow the error was resolved and soon she was moving from her home town in Northern Ontario to the Niagara peninsula to attend the two-year programme. Just a few days into her studies Rosie realized that practicing early childhood education involved more than child sized washroom fixtures and other fun stuff. It was a real profession that required a solid understanding of theory, including child development, observation and curriculum.

Surprisingly, early childhood education was not her first choice. When she was little, Rosie and her best friend would spend countless hours playing 'teacher'. They would line up their dolls and read stories to them. Alternatively they would take turns writing lessons for their students on a pretend chalk board and would then 'mark' their work. It was natural then, that both girls aspired to be elementary school teachers. Unfortunately, by the end of secondary school Rosie had not achieved the credits required to attend a university programme. 'I was in too many clubs' she admitted with a shrug. She needed to consider an alternative career path, and in Rosie's mind being an early childhood educator in a pre-school programme was a close resemblance to being a teacher in an elementary school. With the help of a guidance counsellor she investigated programs and found the

recently launched the diploma programme in early childhood education at Niagara College. In retrospect the change in career direction was for the best.

> 'I was happy at the end that I was an early childhood educator because now as I look at our sector and I look at teachers I think I'm in the right place. This is where I needed to be'

Upon graduation Rosie was hired as an early childhood educator in the new municipally-operated child care programme that had opened up in her home community in northern Ontario. Like most programmes in the province at the time, they were using a theme-based approached to programme planning. Each week ECEs were required to have new activities ready to do with the children that aligned with the theme under consideration. However, all of the preparation needed to effectively deliver a theme-based programme was challenging for Rosie. 'I never did themes because I never had time' she recalls, then adds quickly, 'But I was always well intentioned'. She describes herself as a hummingbird constantly moving between flowers in search of new nectar. 'I need to be always challenged and have a million things on the go' she laughed.

For Rosie the joy of working in a child care programme came from exploring the unknown with the children. Despite having a plan for the day it was easy to get distracted by more interesting things and more often than not the plan would get set aside, often never to be revisited. For example, one late summer afternoon a storm blew in. The classroom had large windows with built-in benches where some children would sit and watch the outside. As dark grey clouds gathered in the sky more and more children started to gravitate towards the windows. One of the children called Rosie over to 'come and see'. She sat on the bench along with the children and watched the dark clouds roll across the sky. The wind started to pick up making the grass ripple across the playground and the leaves on the trees flutter upward. Then everything went calm for a moment until a bolt of lightning flashed across the sky. The boom of thunder a few milliseconds later made everyone jump and cry out in surprise. The commotion drew the attention of more children and soon the whole class was sitting along the bench watching the thunderstorm with Rosie. As the storm grew in intensity, putting on an extravagant

light show they began to guess where the next lightening would strike. When the storm finally subsided the afternoon was over, and parents started to arrive to pick up their children. All the theme related activities that were planned for the afternoon remained untouched much to her team partner's dismay.

Another time the children found a deer mouse. Rosie helped them catch it and put it in a box. They fed it and played with it; they even thought of names for the mouse. 'I loved that mouse. It had the big deer ears' she said smiling at the memory 'We were all so intrigued'. In the coming days the children's interest led to a whole project to learn about the mouse in the box. 'We had so much fun' Rosie recalls 'We learned so much'. Her intention was to keep the mouse and expand on the learning, but Rosie's team partner did not share Rosie's enthusiasm. 'She was so disgusted' Rosie remembers, her smile fading as she speaks. Her partner's protests continued and until they finally released the mouse back outside and they returned to the activities for the planned theme for the week.

Eventually Rosie moved on from the child care program as other career opportunities presented themselves. 'I think I was a lucky baby boomer. There were lots of chances to start new things'. There were many opportunities and many moves. The constant movement suited her hummingbird nature. She led the launch of the community's first early childhood education college programme and demonstration lab school/child care programme; developed community toy lending libraries across northern parts of the province; and then returned to the community college to teach in the local ECE programme. 'The joke was every time my filing cabinet got messy I'd take a new job' Rosie laughed.

Eventually she took on the role of an executive director at a multi-service agency that served children and families; a role that she would hold for more than twenty years until her retirement. Even this time of career stability did not quell her inner hummingbird. She recalls the first time that she brought her senior leadership team together. She talked about her expectations and described her leadership style. She told them unapologetically,

> the only constant you will ever see around me is change. That's the only thing you're going to count on being constant and the same

In the coming weeks though, she came to realise that not everyone saw change in the same positive light. This was a surprise to Rosie. ‘I’ve always loved change. I always embrace change, it’s stimulating to me’.

As she reflected back she realised this attitude towards change was not unique to this organisation. Throughout her career she had always encountered change and along with it she had always encountered people who were not comfortable, or even resistant to it. For some people change evoked fear; for some it evoked anxiety; and for others it represented an ‘ending’ to something. Seeing change as an ending was a new concept for Rosie because she had always been ‘able to embrace a childlike thing and see change as a beginning and not an ending’. Even with the most challenging and disruptive change Rosie has always been able to find a ‘beginning’. She cannot pinpoint when or how this attitude developed. ‘I guess it was just something I had to learn,’ she said. When those rare occasions arise, she may take a pause to complain about the change but she quickly makes peace with it by thinking beyond the details and focusing on the intended outcome of the change. Thinking ‘big and broad’ and focusing on the outcomes enables Rosie to see change differently. She notes,

> Sometimes we get confused and we think that the change is something we don’t want. But really the outcome that we want, and the outcome of whatever the change is not that much different

Once she is able to find a shared outcome change becomes more palatable. Rosie says that once that happens she is then able to tell herself, ‘Put on your big girl pants; let’s go’ and move forward.

The people that she encountered who were consumed by anxiety and fear during times of change used to frustrate Rosie, but now she feels she has developed a better understanding and appreciation for their perspective. ‘I think they haven’t had the benefit of seeing how good change can be, even when you’re not ready for that change’ she commented thoughtfully. She believes that every change, even the disruptive changes, has opportunity. She reminds people who are feeling challenged by change, ‘There’s always going to be something good on the other

side. You just gotta hold on ‘til you get there’. ‘Just holding on’ was something that Rosie did not have to consider employing when How Does Learning Happen? was released.

When How Does Learning Happen? was released, Rosie had recently retired from ‘regular’ work and had started a management consulting business with her husband that provided professional development and facilitation support to the early years sector. Truly a hummingbird, she was also serving as the President of a provincial ECE group, and so was invited to a launch event planned by the Ministry of Education. The agenda was made up of an eclectic group of speakers that included academics and researchers as well as ministry staff. Rosie admits to often wanting to challenge the ‘judgey academics’ who ‘live in a bit of a tower’ with little sense of what happens on the ground. However she also admits that there are ‘good academics who make you think; those who help you understand the depth of knowledge’. Fortunately the academics speaking at this event fell into the latter group and as she heard them explain the neuroscience that underpinned the document, she was intrigued and started to pay close attention.

Later in the presentation she heard a ministry staff say, ‘This is not a roadmap. This is a compass to guide you and your direction, but it’s not going to tell you exactly how to get there’. With that statement, Rosie could suddenly see connections that could bring new and exciting potential for the profession. She realised that scientific evidence was a critical piece that had been missing from practice and if ECEs embraced it they could bring a new level of credibility to the sector. The opportunity would be further enhanced if ECEs also embraced the sophistication of the emergent pedagogy set out in How Does Learning Happen? by using a compass and not a roadmap to make decisions about their practice. If used together, the pervasive public perception would have to shift from viewing ECEs as ‘checklist caregivers’ to ‘real educators’ that use strategies rooted in evidence.

The lead ministry staff, Rob, was a former director of education for a large suburban school board. He had a passion for early years programmes and throughout his career he had found ways to support them with funding and

resources. Rosie described him as ‘an awesome person because he makes everyone feel that they’re important’. He spoke about How Does Learning Happen? with passion and conviction and Rosie could tell that he completely embraced the approach. In Rosie’s mind, Rob’s support further ‘validated’ the document’s worth that would inspire others to join the journey of change:

> When I talk about change we talk about people who have a dream. Those are the people who are the leaders. Those are the people who have a dream. Those are the great leaders of the world that people follow because they have a dream; because they’re inspiring. That’s what Rob was for so many of us and that’s what I think change needs to be. So it was all together for me

Encouraged by Rob’s words, Rosie thought about how the document might have been used in her own professional practice. ‘I always thought I was lazy’ she said reflecting back on her early career challenges with theme-based programming. She remembers the frustrated looks from her team partners as her hummingbird tendencies took her in several different directions at the same time leaving the required paperwork and documentation incomplete. But upon hearing about the pedagogy offered in How Does Learning Happen? she began to think about her early career practice differently. Maybe all of the afternoons spent with thunderstorms and the deer mice were actually authentic learning experiences for children and not just her hummingbird distractions. ‘Now I think maybe I was emergent and play-based and reflective and all of those things without even realizing it’ she said with a smile. Rosie left the launch event feeling fully committed to How Does Learning Happen?. She was excited to see how the sector would begin using the document and the change it would produce.

In the quiet of her own home Rosie read the complete document, highlighting the most relevant details. The four foundations resonated with her and she became more even attracted to it. ‘It’s those two, two, two mints in one[4]’ she noted. ‘It’s practical in its application, it’s easy to grasp, and at the same time, it’s founded solidly on research’. For Rosie, it was perfect. She was mentally revelling in the perfection when she came up with a novel idea. What if they used the Lego®

[4] ‘Two, two, two mints’ in one refers to a popular Certs breath mint commercial from the 1960’s and 1970’s (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Certs, last accessed 02/04/20)

Serious Play[5] process to teach ECEs and others in the sector about the concepts in HDLH (Ontario, 2014a)? She and her husband had recently started training to become Lego® certified facilitators and were looking for opportunities to use the method in their consulting business. She had her husband, Tom, read the document and he agreed that the fit was perfect. 'This is just so serendipitous' she said 'This document and this modality could not fit better together. It's like hand in glove'. Tom embraced HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) so much so that he brought it to the board of directors of the child care programme on which he served. He told them 'You all need to read this. Every board member needs to read this and we all need to understand it'. He strongly believed that not only the ECEs that worked with children and families in the programme needed to begin to understand and use the document, but that the programme governance needed to begin to understand it as well and use it as part of their decision making processes.

Together, Rosie and Tom began to use the four pillars of How Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a) as a part of their training. They came to realize that the four pillars could be applied beyond just children's learning. The pillars also had a universal application for any work with humans. In addition to a number of early years organizations across Northern Ontario, they introduced the document to a number of non-profit child and family serving organization, a public health unit and even the local real estate board. Rosie chuckles when she re-tells the story of using it with the realtors.

> We didn't tell them where we got it from, but I think it was such a paradigm shift for them to think about people in that way. They were intrigued by it

They expected a similar response when they presented it to early childhood educators but were surprised in some sessions when they were met with scoffers and resisters. When Rosie and Tom talked with excitement about the opportunity to think about children and families through a different lens, some ECEs responded that the new pedagogy had taken away their freedom as educators. 'We're not allowed to tell kids what to do. We're not allowed to give any direction. We're not

[5] Lego® Serious Play is a group facilitation process that uses play and storytelling to deepen understanding and build consensus amongst team members through the use of Lego® bricks. It is used for a variety of business activities including team development, strategic planning, group problem solving, and change management. Additional information can be found at https://www.strategicplay.com (last accessed 01/04/20)

allowed to read books' they whined. 'It really made me angry' Rosie said sternly 'It's like a total stupid application of this thing'. She wondered where they got this misinformation. She thought at first that it was isolated to a single early years programme, but she heard it again at another session in another community. Rosie realized that these were 'people who don't want anything to change; for who change seems like too much work'. She tried to persuade them by telling them that

> it's not hard, and in fact it's easier. If you follow this document and you believe in play and you believe in being a co-learner, your life is going to be way more fun. And when your work life is way more fun it's going to be way easier

She told them about the joy that she got from co-learning with children. She told them about the afternoon her grandchildren spent watching ice melt at the outdoor hockey rink; how they lay on the ground and touched the water and tried to lick it. She told them how she lay down on the ground with them to examine a patch of grass growing in the middle of the rink under a thin layer of ice. She told them how together they wondered about temperature, and water, and soil, and why the grass was only growing in that one spot. She told them about the awe she experienced in that moment and the awe she experienced from a thunderstorm and a little deer mouse in a box. She told them to let go of whatever was holding them back and 'experience awe because then you can get to where children are and that's how you help them acquire that knowledge or that skill'. Importantly, she told them to have fun being an ECE again.

Rosie cannot be sure that her passionate intervention made a difference but she hopes that 'when we did Lego with some of those folks that at least they understood better'. Sadly, she knows that for some it did not make a difference; they were locked into an obstinate attitude. 'I would challenge even why they're in our profession if they going to choose not to be professional' she said 'they need to be gone'.

There was another small group of people that Rosie and Tom encountered who were also having problems embracing HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). HDLH (Ontario, 2014a)Unlike the scoffers they previously encountered, they were not resistant to

making change. Rather, they were genuinely challenged by the concept that all children and families 'are competent and capable' that was foundational to the document. It was hard for them to believe that young children were competent when they had not 'acquired all of that knowledge and skill'. It was also hard for them to accept that a parent who required the state's intervention should be considered a 'competent parent'. Rosie approached this group with patience. She wanted to help them overcome their biases and help them 'understand that kids are competent. While they may not have the skills it doesn't mean they aren't competent to get there'. She also drew on some words from Dr. Jean Clinton that had helped to shape her own thinking and told them, 'I don't believe there's anyone in the world who gets up in the morning and says "I think I'll be a bad parent today"'. She hoped her words made a difference and that they would change their perspective. She knows that some will, but that there will be others who will not, despite being 'competent' to do so.

Rosie recognizes that her relationship with change is unique and special. She notes that she has learned 'to appreciate that some people are not as embracing of change'. But that does not deter her from moving forward and pursing change in the early years sector. 'Once you get onto the change you can surround yourself with other people who are on the same journey' she notes. It is these people who help to sustain her enthusiasm for change

> it becomes an upward spiral. People on the change journey get excited, and they feed you more information, and they change more, and you change more

She believes wholeheartedly that How Does Learning Happen? is an important change for the sector and she is committed to continuing her work as long as she and Tom are able. She still takes pleasure in teaching people about document and challenging them to join her on the change journey. 'There's so many people on the journey with me now. That's what makes it so awesome' she breaks into a bright smile as she speaks, 'There's so many awesome people; it's just like gravy on the potatoes'.

Chapter 7: Sticks and Stones and Boxes and Coal

Journal entry: January 14, 2020

As I write this I am sitting in my car after my initial interview with Olivia with tears streaming down my face. I am overwhelmed by the experience. There were shared tears during the interview as Olivia spoke about some of the recent challenges in her personal life and how she leveraged those challenges to begin living more authentically both personally and professionally. I am honoured that Olivia shared her story so willingly. And I am honoured to be able to share it with others. I have no doubt that this deep connection that I feel to this amazing educator after just one interview will endure

For Olivia, early childhood education was a second career. As an unemployed mother who had recently returned to Northern Ontario she would regularly take her toddler daughter to the preschool Kindergym programme so that they could engage and connect with other children and parents in the community. 'Tidy-up time' was always a little bit chaotic and Olivia felt sorry for the staff who did her very best to keep things as orderly as possible. One day Olivia began to sing a tidy-up song as she helped to put toys back in containers. Soon, the children and the other parents began to join in. Another time, she gathered the families who had finished cleaning together on the floor and led them in songs and fingerplays. As the families finished cleaning they joined Olivia until the entire programme was gathered together on the floor. When the songs were finished she encouraged everyone to 'hop like a bunny' out to the cloakroom and get ready to go home. As she was putting on her coat the programme staff approached her. 'So, you work with children, are you still on maternity leave?' she asked. 'No,' Olivia replied somewhat stunned by the question 'I don't work with children'. The staff seemed surprised by her response. 'Oh, you need to work with children, you have a real gift' she told her told emphatically.

Prior to this conversation, Olivia had not been interested in a career change, nor had she ever contemplated working with children, but that conversation 'really left a mark' and she began to re-think her situation. She investigated training options, and ended up completing the two-year diploma programme in early

childhood education. After graduation she began to contemplate where she would start her new career. A serendipitous encounter at a party with a member of the board of directors for an early years programme operated by the local Baptist Church led to Olivia to her first interview. 'I came at 10 o'clock that morning, had an interview, and never left the building until that night' she laughs, 'She hired me. I shadowed that day. I even went picked up my daughter at 3:10 that day at school and came back. It was just amazing'.

As an ECE she was committed to ensuring the children in the programme were gaining the skills they needed to succeed. She made sure that she 'stuffed the duck' so that the children were always busy learning stills and the meeting milestone on a checklist. 'My ducks were friggin' fat because I gave them so much stuff,' she nodded. 'I was good at it. I had the best bulletin boards. They were the size of the wall. I would paint them and stuff'. She recalls going into her 'filing drawer every September and pulling out apples and yellow school busses' just like every other good early learning programme. She thought about all the planning she did in order to provide the best learning experiences for children. She made sure there were always new and exciting activities for the children, yet sometimes she would think longingly about her days the Kindergym with her daughter and recall how much fun they had. While she enjoyed being an ECE in this theme-based programme, in the back of her mind she wondered if 'there needed to be something different and better for kids'.

Over time Olivia moved from being the classroom ECE to the supervisor of the programme, to being the organisation's current executive director, overseeing four programme sites. She was fortunately to have mentors supporting her along the way. They taught her how to be a results-driven director and how to manage staff as well as how to be a powerful woman. Olivia read a lot of books too, learning about how to be a 'one-minute manager'[6] that can solve any problem and achieve results. She gained the reputation in the community of being unwavering in her

[6] 'The One Minute Manager' refers to a book by Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson. It purports that there are three key tools that individuals need in order to be an effective manager: one minute goals, one minute praising and one minute reprimands. When used together mangers can reportedly expect teams that are motivated to produce results. Blanchard, K.H. & Johnson, S. (1982) *The One Minute Manager*, Marrow: New York, USA

persistence to achieve her desired goals. ‘It was my way or the highway’ she recalled. Because her office was located in a church, she would tell anyone who strayed into her crosshairs ‘We’re going to have a come to Jesus chat. You know what that means? The end is near’. It was an effective tactic to evoke change, especially with programme staff. ‘They had to straighten up or you know’ she said. She managed her team with a firm but fair hand. Her staff were well compensated and provided opportunities to engage in professional development. Yet, in the employee surveys staff would consistently indicate that they did not feel valued. They wanted notes and certificates that acknowledged their accomplishments. Olivia thought the idea of certificates was ridiculous. The staff should have known that she appreciated them. Every week they got a paycheque. They certainly did not need a certificate on top of that. She thought about her mother who worked her entire life in a coal mine. ‘Nobody ever patted my mother’s back’ she would tell staff ‘nobody goes to work in the mine and works all day to come and get a certificate to say you did a good job’.

Ensuring high quality programmes for children and families was a big focus for Olivia. By providing professional development opportunities she encouraged staff to seek innovative programming. At the same time the safety of the children was also a big focus for Olivia. She ensured that staff checked all the toys coming into the room with tube that was approximately the size of a child’s esophagus. She would tell staff, ‘If a toy fits through here it’s a choking hazard’. Staff knew better than to have anything in their classrooms that could pose a potential danger, even if they were closely supervising. There was no room for risk.

Olivia was proud of her profession and believed others should be too. Advocacy had always been a big part of her professional life. She was an active member of one of the provincial advocacy groups, serving on the executive committee and taking her turn as the President. Each year, the organisation sponsored the ‘Week of the Child’ to raise awareness of early years issues across the province. She was proud of the work that the committee had done to prepare for the week. They had designed and produced a colouring book on quality child care that they intended to present to each of the elected Members of Provincial Parliament during a news

conference that would be held at the provincial legislative building's media studio. As President, she was required to deliver remarks at the news conference. As they set up for the press conference, Marie, a faculty member from a college early childhood education programme, took Olivia aside. 'A colouring book?' Marie asked Olivia 'You're endorsing a colouring book?'

Olivia was bewildered by the question. 'Yeah, they're giving out colouring books' she replied in a confused tone, 'What is it about colour books?' Marie was visible disturbed by Olivia's response. 'You and I need to talk' Marie replied 'We don't do colouring books'. Olivia was embarrassed. She felt like she was a 'hick northerner' that was completely ignorant to the way things were done now. After all, Marie did teach and write blogs on pedagogy and had studied at the Reggio Emilia municipal centres in Italy. Following the press conference Marie approached Olivia again. 'You need to come and visit my programme' she told her 'You are welcome any time and we would love to have you visit'. Olivia thanked her for the offer. She enjoyed visiting programmes and made a point of visiting at least one every time she travelled to Southern Ontario. So she started to make plans to visit Marie's programme.

It would be several months before Olivia was able to travel south again. In the mean time she started to do some research on Marie's programme. She also read about other Reggio-inspired programming and emergent curriculum. The curriculum was self-guided and children were all engaged in projects that interested them. The programme environments were all so meticulously curated and aesthetically pleasing. Olivia was amazed at what she saw. 'Ah there is something beyond theme based programming' she said to herself and wondered if she could ever do something like that in her programme. No one else in Northern Ontario was doing anything like that.

Eventually Olivia made the trip to visit Marie's programme. She remembers pulling into the driveway. 'It was just this little house!' Olivia exclaimed. She had expected it to be something more substantial. She took a moment to sit with her disappointment and then quickly bounced back. 'So it's a little house' she told

herself as she got out of her car and headed inside to meet the programme director. The director immediately welcomed her and told her about the history of the programme, their values, and their beliefs about children. As she spoke Olivia immediately knew there was something different about this programme. 'That culture, and the inspiration, and the passion that they had drew me in,' Olivia remembers

> before I could even look at the environment and everything that was happening just having that conversation and building that relationship right there and then; it was just, this is what Ontario's children need. This is what children at my programme need

As they got ready to start the tour of the programme, the director encouraged Olivia to ask as many questions and take as many pictures as she wanted. Olivia was surprised by the generosity. Most of the other programmes she visited considered their environments proprietary and did not allow pictures even if the children were not visible. This programme was definitely different from the others she thought as she walked downstairs to see the Kindergarten-aged room.

She stepped into the space and stood in awe. She recalls,

> it was like full across the whole wall with body pictures and they had templates on a light table of the body system and veins and arteries and the children were using magic markers on transparencies. It was so elaborate

The programme director explained that a relative of one of the children had recently had a heart attack and 'so this child was really absorbed in this thinking'. Other children became interested in it too and so it turned into 'an investigation experience on how blood flowed through the body'. Olivia was stunned.

'We're thinking about sunflowers right now' the programme director said as the tour continued into another room. The room was full of 'children's paintings and oil pastels and line work' depicting sunflowers. It looked like a Claude Monet painting[7]. Olivia was astounded. 'They're four, right?' she asked the director 'You said they're four'. The programme director nodded and smiled, 'Yes, these

[7] Monet, C. (1881) SunFlowers, from: https://www.claude-monet.com/sunflowers.jsp. Last accessed 13/04/20

children are four'. Olivia shook her head in disbelief. She could not imagine the children in her programmes creating art with that degree of complex detail.

On the trip home to Northern Ontario Olivia reflected on the experience. How could four-year-old children understand the human circulatory system? How could they produce complex art like that? What was different about those children? Olivia thought about the glass and clay materials that were available for the children to use. Those kinds of materials would never be allowed in her programmes as under her rules they posed a safety hazard. So why did they allow them in Marie's programme? Were the children in Marie's programme more developmentally advanced?

Olivia sat with these questions for a while. Eventually she concluded that it was not the children, but rather the relationship between the ECEs and the children was different in Marie's programme. The ECEs believed that these children were 'competent and capable'. Their learning was so visible and complex 'that you didn't need a yellow bus and a red apple'. That was what Olivia wanted for the children in her programmes. She was overcome with emotion as she thought about it,

> That was kind of like the kick that I needed and that's when I said, 'Ok there needs to be some change. It doesn't matter what I was taught not that many years ago'

Olivia gathered her programme supervisors together to share her experiences at Marie's programme. They flipped through the pictures on her phone and listened intently to the stories of sunflowers and arteries. Olivia's experience had piqued their interest in emergent curriculum. Over the course of the next few years they began the process of examining their own programme pedagogy. Marie provided her with ongoing mentoring as well as some workshops for her staff. Eventually they took a first step and introduced 'learning stories' at some of the programme sites. They were not as complex as learning stories Olivia saw at Marie's programme but it was a start. Aside from her programme supervisors, Olivia felt that she had no one to talk with about implementing other elements of an emergent programme. She was not aware of any of the other executive directors in

the community doing this kind of work in their programmes. The relationship between executive directors felt very competitive and it did not feel 'safe' to share the knowledge she had gained from her travels. So Olivia kept the information to herself while feeling alone and isolated. Without the support of colleagues she wondered if she would ever be able to advance her programmes further.

The opportunity to further implement an emergent curriculum came a few years later when another programme in the community suddenly closed. The municipality was concerned about losing the early learning spaces for the families that depended on them so they approached Olivia's organisation and asked them to open a programme in that space. Opening up this new site provided the perfect opportunity to go 'head on emergent'. This new site would become the organisation's flagship; a demonstration centre of emergent curriculum for the other programme site to learn from.

Planning for the opening was as collective activity. 'We had a leadership team of the four program supervisors' Olivia recalled, 'We sat down together and said "What do we want in this program? What do we want this to look like?"'. Together they looked through the pictures that Olivia had taken on all of her visits to other programmes and picked out the ones that interested them the most. They selected paint colours, equipment and furnishings that reflected a calming, natural environment. Rather than large purchases of commercial plastic toys, they acquired loose parts and items from nature. After the programme opened they welcomed visits from other early years professionals so they could see firsthand what an emergent programme could look like. Oliva also began to deliver workshops to share their thinking and approach to curriculum and pedagogy in communities across Northern Ontario. Even with these efforts collaboration with other programmes in the community remained limited.

Several years later Olivia was invited to an event hosted by the municipality and the Ministry of Education to introduce early learning programme professionals to the new provincial pedagogy, How Does Learning Happen?. Olivia found herself

nodding along in agreement when she heard them describe the four foundations. 'It was like magic' Olivia remembers as a smile toys with the corners of her lips 'It said everything that was in my head'. She looked forward to sharing the document with her programme staff and her Board of Directors. She knew that the organisation was well positioned to embrace the document because they already believed in the foundations although 'it may have looked a little different'.

To introduce the document to her programme staff Olivia facilitated a community of practice with the programme supervisors over the course of four weeks. Each week they focused on one of the foundational concepts in How Does Learning Happen?. They spent time reflecting together on the provocation questions posed in the document and shared their perspectives on the relevance of each foundations within the context of the organization as well as their respective programme site. Olivia encouraged each programme supervisor to share the findings of their community of practice and to replicate the discussions with their programme staff.

Over the next few months Olivia observed the programmes closely as they progressed in using the document and she was pleased with the progress they were making to shift to utilize a more child-centred emergent approach. She wondered how she could move her programmes further along. She thought about the articles she had read about emergent curriculum as well as what she had seen during her visit to Marie's programme. Then she decided to remove all of the commercially produced toys from the programmes. 'We went cold turkey' she recalls 'One day I just went in and took all of the toys out of there'. She replaced them with loose parts, cardboard boxes and natural items like driftwood and birch logs as well as small sticks and rocks. The staff were concerned about how the children would respond to such a drastic change. 'Think about Christmas' Olivia told them 'They get all these toys and presents and what do they play with? The box'. Olivia encouraged the staff to shift their thinking. 'Bring it back to "This is not a stick"; "This is not a box"[8]. These stories are so true' she told them. Olivia was right.

[8] Referring to children's books by Antoinette Portis in which the main character, a non-gendered rabbit, uses their imagination to turn an everyday object to adventure.
Portis, A. (2006) Not a box; New York, USA: Harper Collin

The children were fine once the toys were removed. A few days later, one of the programme supervisors bravely approached her. ‘Let’s be realistic’ she said ‘We need to have riding trucks in the blocks. We have a lot of boys and girls who really like trucks’. Olivia had seen programmes that strictly adhered to the ‘no commercial toys’ without issue. She believed that was best for the children and she aspired for all of her programmes to achieve that state. However she had also heard that for some children their ‘play would escalate more with trucks’ and other materials. Olivia considered the request carefully. Perhaps she was moving too fast. ‘Maybe it might be something in five, ten years, but right now the kids need a blend of these materials’. Eventually she decided to allow for some riding trucks and few carefully chosen toys, like plastic dinosaurs, to be added amongst the blocks and rocks. However, she remained firm on her direction about having no electronic games or books that go ‘beep, beep, beep’ in the programmes.

The introduction of How Does Learning Happen? also required early learning programmes to develop a programme statement that aligned with How Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a). It was a lot of work for Olivia but it was made easier by the fact that her organisation’s Board of Directors had already embraced the core values of play, lifelong learning, leadership, and inclusion. Developing the concept for the programme statement was a collaborative activity. ‘I sat down with each of the four teams and we talked about what children and families and staff deserve’ Olivia recalls. Everyone recorded their answers to reflective questions on sticky notes that were put up on the wall. At the end of the sessions she collected the sticky notes and collated them. Olivia was surprised to discover that ‘they were all the same answers’ across the four sites. Although worded differently, everyone agreed on what children, families and staff deserve. It was easy then to present this information to the Board of Directors and draft the new programme statement. ‘When HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) came out we welcomed it. We really embraced it’ Olivia said proudly. ‘We were really fortunate. We didn’t wait for it to be legislated. We believed in those four foundations from the beginning’.

Portis, A. (2008) Not a stick; New York, USA: Harper Collin

For the next several years Olivia continued to support the development of her programmes in using How Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a). As she read something interesting or found an interesting practice while visiting another programme she would introduce it to all of her programme sites. She kept in touch with Marie, who offered support and mentoring along the way. She assumed that all of the programmes were moving along at the same pace; that they were all integrating the new ideas and changes as she presented it to them. If she had to assess it she would say that things were generally going well in her professional life. Her personal life however was a different story.

It was a crisis in Olivia's personal life that brought new insight into the use of the How Does Learning Happen? document and her relationship with staff. When things hit rock bottom she joined a recovery programme designed to support the family members of addicts. She quickly learned that 'you wear these shields so you can be a strong powerful woman'. Because of these shields you learn the ways that 'you can adapt to change' and 'you can bounce back'. But this type of armour is heavy and wearing it for a long time comes at a cost. Through a structured sequential process Olivia began to discover her 'authentic self' and in doing so, she learned how to lower her own shield a bit to become more vulnerable. It was scary, liberating, and very emotional all at the same time.

Initially Olivia thought that this new insight was limited to her personal life, but then she was invited to speak to a cohort of the local leadership development programme that two lead educators from Olivia's programme sites were attending. Olivia had been a participant in a previous cohort of the programme and was surprised by insights she gained.

> I thought I was going to find all the human resources answers to my life. Nope. It was about my life and how our leadership is impacted by the bruises and the bumps that we hit along the way

She started to tell her story to the group with a strong, confident voice but as she progressed her voice caught and emotions began to bubble to the surface. Olivia had learned from her recovery programme that showing her vulnerable side to others was not a sign of weakness. She did not need to be a powerful woman. She

did not need to wear a shield with this group. So, she let go. For the first time Olivia was not embarrassed by the hot, salty tears that ran down her face as she told her story. She could not stop the tears. It was cleansing. It was healing. When she was finished Olivia felt like a huge weight had been lifted off her shoulders. One of the lead educators from her organisation approached her. She had known this woman for more than ten years but had not spoken to her beyond a 'hello'. 'We've seen your growth,' the educator told her 'but we didn't *feel* it until today when we saw you letting yourself just be so vulnerable'.

That night when she was at home Olivia began to think about the day's experience. She thought about the lead educator's words. She knew her leadership had changed over the years thanks to the leadership programme. It was most evident in the way she now talked about the organisation. It was 'no longer about my program. It was about our people'. The Gillian Rodd workshops she attended several years ago had further shifted her relationships with staff. She had invested in thank you cards for staff with the organisation's logo printed on them. 'I often send a personal little note in the mail now' she said 'I would have never done that before'. It was such a different approach to engaging with staff than her mother had experienced in the coal mine. Furthermore, she could not remember the last time she had a 'come to Jesus' conversation with anyone.

> Now I'll be like 'yeah, let's have a come to Jesus chat. A new beginning can happen. Let's look at what that is and what we need to do to change and think differently and value, and live into our own values'

As she thought about her relationships with staff and the vulnerability she had just experienced with them she began to think about the foundations of How Does Learning Happen? through a different lens. 'How Does Learning Happen? is not just about relationships with children' Olivia concluded 'It's about relationships with the team, with families and with everyone'. To embrace the foundations of How Does Learning Happen? with this new perspective Olivia would need to begin to view her staff as capable and competent just as she had learned to view children that way.

This realisation provided Olivia with a new focus. She is ‘letting go’ of the power and control over the programme sites in favour of a more distributed approach to leadership. She is trusting programme supervisors to lead their sites and solve their own problems because they are capable and competent in their own right. This approach does not mean she had abandoned them. Her new found ‘authentic self’ is providing a new opportunity to engage with staff on a deeper level through mutual trust and respect.

She is investing in staff development in new ways by support staff in ‘letting go of the past’ so that they can be more vulnerable and authentic. Olivia hopes that in doing so the educators can deepen their relationships with the children and families in their programs. She also hopes that she is building capacity for her future as she begins to think about retirement and who on her team might step into her role next. ‘I’m sure some of them are thinking about it’ she notes ‘Or, I hope they are’. Whoever takes on the role will inherit a legacy of progress and change as well as the responsibility for nurturing both the organisation and the rich, authentic relationships that Olivia is working so hard to create.

Chapter 8: Sweeter than Honey

Journal entry: December 3, 2019

Beatrice did not disappoint! She was every bit as engaging and intriguing as the day I was introduced to her a year ago. Talking with her is easy and comfortable. I am moved by her story. There is shared laughter and there are shared tears. Through it all, she knows what she believes and who she is an educator. She also knows who she has been and can speak freely about things that challenge her and things from which she derives joy and pride. I am in awe of her poise and determination. There is no doubt that I am 'falling in love' with my participant (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p81).

For Beatrice, there was never a doubt that she was destined to work with children. She was first introduced to early learning and care when she was 7 years old and her family went to California for her cousin's wedding. Her aunt and uncle were building a child care centre on an adjacent suburban lot. Her aunt and uncle's home was overflowing with wedding guests so Beatrice and some other family members stayed in the child care centre. As she lay on her cot on the floor she would stare at her purple frilled dress hanging in the miniature kitchen and think 'this is the greatest thing ever'. Every year thereafter she would travel to California for the summer to stay with her aunt and uncle. Her days were spent playing with the children at their centre. When she was old enough she began to work in the programme. Although they called it work, it was more like play and more play for Beatrice. It was fun and she loved it.

Beatrice characterises herself as a very determined person. As she juggled multiple part-time jobs to afford tuition for her early childhood education qualifications she would tell herself, 'I'm going to be someone'. When she was hired by the local municipal government (municipality) to work in one of their directly operated child care programmes she could not believe her luck. Positions with the municipal early learning programmes were well compensated compared to others in the commercial or non-profit sectors and she knew that if she was not successful that there would be 'forty more people lined up behind [her] for that job'. So she worked hard to be the best early childhood educator she could be.

When she first started the position, the municipality was using a developmental-sequential approach to early years curriculum and programming. As part of this approach early childhood educators were required to set out activities so that children could learn or practice specific developmental skills. The ECE in the room documented when each child successfully achieved the skill so they could report on it. To keep things interesting, each week there was a different theme to focus the programming. In the absence of a common early learning framework most programmes across the province, including the municipality, were using themes. Beatrice was proud of the fact that she could keep 16 children in a circle for 20 or 30 minutes while her partner was taking a break. Circle was the most anxious time of the day and always a relief to get through one, but Beatrice always managed to do it well. She would become 'a clown', finding new ways to entertain the children and keep them interested in whatever theme they were focused on.

She would prepare for 'creative' every night at home, so that every child could complete a creative art or craft activity each day in the classroom that related to the weekly theme. Her daughter would help her cut out the shapes because 16 uniform 'creatives' made for a beautiful bulletin board. It was an important activity, because children in her classroom had to learn to cut. They had to learn to glue. They had to learn to print. They had to learn. 'I always felt that if I had a successful class then I was a successful teacher' Beatrice noted. However, more than 20 years of adult-directed teaching was beginning to take a toll on her. 'I was stuffing the duck'[9], and stuffing, and stuffing, and getting nowhere. It was just overwhelming to me' she remembers.

One specific incident stands out in her mind as particularly illustrative of how overwhelmed she had become using a developmental approach to teaching. A new child, Sam started in the programme. Sam had autism and did not communicate verbally. Each day he would walk around the room and just stare, never touching anything, never engaging with the environment or anyone in it. 'Honestly I'd been

[9] 'Stuff the duck' is an expression commonly used by child psychiatrist Dr. Jean Clinton in the video series *Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from research about young children,* (available from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/positive.html last accessed 02/10/20) to refer to the over-scheduling of young children with adult-directed curriculum activities.

trying. I couldn't capture [his interest], there was no hook…Everything was just a struggle with him' she recalls. One day it happened. She said words she never thought she would say. 'Anne,' she said to her team partner 'he's unteachable'. Anne's reaction was swift. 'How could you say that about a child? I never want to hear those words come out of your mouth' she snapped.

Anne's words stung. 'How could I make a statement like that?' she lamented. The memory was painful. 'I give these kids my all. How could I say something like that?' Worse, she felt that she had disappointed her team partner. The tears in her eyes as she describes the incident confirm how deeply it affected her. She was truly at a dark point of her career. This event became a pivotal moment that she would refer back to as her professional practice evolved. In retrospect she knew at this point that change was needed, she just did not yet know when or how it would happen.

Around the same time as this incident with Sam, the Ontario Ministry of Education (the ministry) was releasing How Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a) throughout the province. The municipality brought all of their staff together to introduce the new document. As Beatrice listened to the workshop presenter she was filled with skepticism. How could those 'big wigs who sit behind a desk' at the ministry offices in Toronto understand what it was like to be in a classroom with children? They had never worked in a classroom and now they want the children to take the lead. Did they understand what a free for all it would be? The municipal director seemed to sense the apprehension and assured all of the staff that the change would be gradual and that each ECE could follow their own change journey. She promised that everyone would find their 'ah-ha' moment when they were ready. Beatrice was doubtful that she would ever have an 'ah-ha' moment. 'I didn't want to change' she admitted.

Following the workshop Beatrice read HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) for the first time and she almost snorted in amusement. The document talked about the environment being a third teacher. The next day she took the opportunity to share her amusement with her supervisor, Penny while her colleagues looked on. 'I see

they're finally getting us another teacher'. Penny looked confused and Beatrice continued, 'The environment is going to be our third teacher. We're finally getting another teacher'. Her colleagues joined in her laughter. However underneath her facetiousness was worry about the future.

The change began with the classroom materials and furnishings. Pre-cut shapes for creative art, plastic toys, and plastic play furniture were removed and replaced with natural elements that included wooden fixtures, loose parts, paint and manipulative clay. Beatrice was alarmed by the amount of wood that was coming into the classroom. She was convinced it signalled a beginning of the end for her job and decided that she should try to get onboard with the change. She raised her concerns to Penny. 'I can do this for you' she told Penny, 'but give me some job security'. Penny assured her that replacing ECEs was not part of the plan. In fact, ECEs were an integral part of making the pedagogy work.

Changes in the daily schedule and the environment started to be slowly implemented. Lunches, which had previously been plated by the teachers and served to the children, became buffet style where the children could choose and serve their own lunches. Beatrice was convinced that it would turn into a public health violation, but reluctantly went along with management's decision to implement this new approach to lunch. To her surprise, the children embraced using tongs to serve themselves and they liked using separate plates for return trips to the buffet prevented cross-contamination. Children were choosing food that they liked, and eating it. In a very short period of time lunch time went from chaos to calm.

Another part of the schedule that was affected was circle time, which was eliminated in favour of provocations that were set on the floor to draw the interest the children. Beatrice was unsure. How would they learn with no circle time? But to her surprise several children gather in a group of their own volition when she placed a 'he/she' board provocation on the floor. The activity was a huge success, as were all of the subsequent provocations that replaced circle time; yet Beatrice

remained unconvinced. 'Just wait' she thought 'Just wait until all of the DPS's[10] are done. Then we'll have the documentation and we'll see then that your way of doing things aren't going work'. But the screening tools told a different story. The children were all thriving; even the children with disabilities. Experiencing these small successes were having an impact on Beatrice's thinking about learning; however working alongside a captivated leader like Penny would make the biggest impact.

Penny was on her own journey of change. She had just returned from an extended visit to another programme in a neighbouring municipality and was full of ideas. Beatrice was in awe of Penny's enthusiasm about the pedagogy. It exuded from every part of her. She seemed to speak, sleep, and breathe every little bit of it. 'It was contagious to me' Beatrice noted 'If you have a leader that can do something like that then I'm following along'. So Beatrice tried to mimic Penny's actions, although she did not really believe that what she was doing would make a difference with the children. While she had read HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) as part of the introductory workshop, Beatrice knew that she did not really understand the document on that deeper level the way that Penny did. During a workplace learning session Penny asked her to read HDLH again, but this time she asked that Beatrice 'Read the words. Feel the words. Understand what it's asking'. Beatrice read the document again and again, but it was still just pretty words on paper that she could recite whenever asked. 'Just give it time' Penny would tell her 'It will come'.

But then something remarkable happened with Sam, the child in her programme with autism. It was autumn and her team partner Anne brought in small pie pumpkins to add to a provocation. The child who never engaged with the environment made eye contact with Beatrice and Anne and stuck out his tongue. Then he walked over to the pumpkin and licked it. Anne began to sing a pumpkin

[10] DPS is an acronym for DISC Preschool Screen. DISC is an acronym for Diagnostic Inventory for Screening Children (DISC). This developmental screening tool is regularly administered, with parental consent, as a part of the Health Babies Healthy Children public health programme to determine if a child would benefit from additional specialised community supports. From: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/pub/child/hbabies/pdf/earlyidappendix-english.pdf (last accessed 02/28/20)

song and Sam leaned in again to lick the pumpkin and to breathe in the musky fragrance. Beatrice will never forget how excited Sam's mother was when they told her about the development. She went out that evening and bought five pumpkins so that she could have them around the house. The next day Anne and Beatrice added orange paper and markers to the table with the pumpkin. Sam took an orange marker and began to colour the pumpkin. The child, who never engaged with the environment or anyone in it, was sitting with his peers and using classroom materials.

Beatrice went home that night and reflected on the significance of that incident. Reflection and journaling had always been an important part of her practice. She further explained that 'self-reflecting always puts it in perspective for me because in the heat of the moment or in the joy of the moment the emotion takes over. Your brain isn't really thinking you're just going by the feeling that your body is having. But when you go home at night and let it resonate and think about it, and as you're journaling and writing, it comes to you'. When she had finished journaling she read HDLH again. This time she was able to look beyond the words and start to understand it on a different level. 'I read it with different coloured eyes' she said. This time she read it with Penny-like passion. She finally felt what the document was calling her to do. She began to see Sam as a competent and capable learner and who was learning in a natural way. Armed with this new perspective she was determined to make real change to her professional practice. She would have a fresh start.

The next day she walked into her classroom and said, 'this is what we're doing from now on'. She walked to the back of the classroom and opened the lock on the double doors of the storage cupboard. She stared at all the resources she had accumulated during her 20 plus year career in early learning. She exhaled deeply and then began to empty the contents of the cupboard into black garbage bags. By the time six garbage bags lay filled on the floor, there was nothing left in the cupboard except for loose parts and manipulatives. Nothing remained that had a structured or regulated outcome.

The student teacher in the room at the time was watching the whole incident with wide eyes. She walked over to the garbage bags and peered inside. Tentatively she asked Beatrice if she could have some of the resources. Beatrice simply shook her head. 'They won't benefit you' she said sadly. 'If it's not going to benefit me, why would I share it with you? If I do I'm only setting you up to fail'. She reminded the student that these resources represented the best of developmental sequential learning. But it was time to put them away and put a new set of eyes on learning and development. She felt that everyone working in the early learning and care sector needed to start considering everything that they do with children and their families first through the lens of HDLH. Beatrice calls the process of letting go of those long-held and much-loved resources 'rejuvenation for an old dog'; a sort of 'rebirth'. It was her 'ah-ha' moment.

In the coming days and weeks she began to integrate more and more of the pedagogy into her daily practice. She began to shift from simply mimicking Penny's words and behaviours to applying HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) on her own. It was easier to do than she initially thought. It seemed so natural. She noticed that as she began to behave differently with her approach to programming that the children began behaving differently too. It seemed calmer in the classroom. The children were wandering around the room less often and focusing more on the provocations that were set out on the tables and floor. Beatrice believes that was because the provocations were aligned so well with their learning needs and interests.

Work was fun again, like those summers in California. It reminded her of when she first started practicing; before she became consumed with 'stuffing the ducks' so that every parent could have a great score for their child on the DPS. 'We were more focused on their development than we were on to their learning' she recalled. 'I was doing the job I was asked to do but there was no great learning happening. Yes, I was exposing them to everything that we wanted them to do but they weren't genuinely learning because we controlled all the learning'. But not anymore; it was all different now.

Her relationships were different now too. She had always prided herself on her good relationships with children and families. Now, using this new pedagogy she began to feel like these relationships were becoming deeper, stronger, and more genuine. Her conversations with parents changed. They became more about learning that was happening in the classroom and how they could extend it at home. In turn, parents shared more about what was happening at home so that Beatrice better understood the children's current interests and could develop provocations that would naturally attract them to engage and learn. To the parents she was no longer just 'the person who looks after their child during the day'. She was 'Beatrice, the educator' who was helping their child learn.

Beatrice began to see her role differently too. She no longer saw herself as the clown that entertained children during circle time. She saw herself as a partner in children's learning, coaching and empowering them as they grow. She equates the relationship to being like honey bees. The children are like 'these little tiny sweet little honey bees. They bring these great things to the hive, and then I add to it and send it back for them to learn'. The end result is honey. 'But it's better than honey. It's loved honey'. Beatrice smiles sweetly as she describes it. 'They call our time with children teachable moments, but I call them magical moments. Because when they're coming from a child that age is magical'.

As her relationships with others deepened and her classroom integrated more and more natural elements, Beatrice began to examine the centre's outdoor playground in a different light. She remembered some of the pictures of naturalized playgrounds that Penny brought back from her visits to other programmes. Beatrice wanted the children in their programme to have that experience as well. She wanted the changes to the playground to be a team effort so she placed an array of about 80 pictures displaying different options on the staffroom table. She encouraged her colleagues to select the options that most appealed to them. To Beatrice's surprise, after several days not one picture was picked up from the table. She was disappointed by her colleague's lack of interest, but she remained undeterred. She developed a proposal for the transformation on her own that included a visual plan of what their naturalized playground could look

like. She was thrilled when the centre was awarded a small grant from the municipality to enhance the playground. She invested a lot of her personal time to build garden materials. There was a lot of work to do so she recruited her husband to help. Over the course of several months the playground was transformed from completely concrete to a lush green, inviting environment where open-ended learning could occur. It was worth the extra effort. The children loved their new outdoor learning environment and Beatrice was recognized for her contributions with a prestigious regional leadership award.

Some of her colleagues were less than supportive of Beatrice's efforts. They questioned her intentions and called her a range of demeaning and obsequious names behind her back. It hurt Beatrice when she heard about the murmurings and she tried not to let it affect her. She tried to explain their attitude of her colleagues, noting that they had yet to experience their 'ah-ha moment' in the same way that Beatrice had. They had not yet accepted the new pedagogy. Their continued reluctance to embrace change was frustrating. 'Is this not job performance now?' she asked Penny one day. Penny simply smiled and reminded Beatrice of her own initial hesitation and suggested that it would all work out in time. Beatrice wondered how long they were going to wait for other staff to accept the change. A year? More?

However over time the chasm between Beatrice's progress and her colleagues continued to grow. 'They saw me climbing, climbing, climbing; but they didn't realize that I put the ladder there. I put the rungs on so I get to step up' Beatrice said. She tried to encourage them, 'You can do the same. Get your ladder up. I'll help you climb'. But change was something that her colleagues had to embrace for themselves. Unfortunately some of her colleagues, like her team partner Anne, would never have an 'ah-ha moment' and would end up leaving the profession. 'If you don't believe it you can't change' Beatrice said sadly.

It has been almost six years since Beatrice's 'ah-ha moment' and the change continues. Not only has Anne left the programme, but Penny has moved on to a teaching position at the local community college. Beatrice misses both of them.

She misses her open and honest relationship with Anne and her ability to keep Beatrice honest. But she misses Penny's daily encouragement the most. Sometimes she can still hear her voice challenging her to think about things a little differently. In Penny's absence Beatrice has tried to take on the role of challenging people's thinking. 'I will make my voice heard' she says confidently. For example, this past Christmas, management made the decision that they would set up a table at the annual open house where the children could make tree ornaments. Beatrice was surprised by this decision because all of the ECEs had worked hard to eliminate all structured craft activities from the programme. This decision felt like a step backwards. She raised her concerns to management but it fell on deaf ears. The ornament activity remained so that the parents would have a gift 'to remember the year gone by'. Beatrice found this outcome frustrating, but she went along with it. She has also been frustrated by new policies and procedures that have imposed changes to the daily schedule. 'It's much more of a clocked schedule now' she describes 'It was a lot easier on a free flow schedule'. The day feels more rushed and less natural. She hopes that they will be able to revert back, but she doubts that will happen.

Whatever frustrations currently exist, Beatrice is determined to sustain the change and continue moving forward. While from time to time she still questions whether or not HDLH really is the best thing for children, she knows that it is the right decision for right now. 'I look at each day as a brand new fresh start adventure'. In Beatrice's opinion there are many ECEs who should have retired a year earlier than they did. The last year of work was miserable for everyone, especially the children. 'I don't want to be here with those children and be crotchety' she scowls 'But sometimes when you're in it you don't see it'. For Beatrice, retirement is a mere three years away. She is confident that if she continues to use HDLH the burn out and negativity that others have developed is not likely to happen to her. When asked what would have happened if they had continued using a developmental approach Beatrice replied, 'I'm not sure I would have been able to do it. But now, it really is special. It's so unbelievably satisfying'. It is also sweet; like the sweetest honey Beatrice has ever tasted.

Chapter 9: Finding Meaning in Stories

9.1: Understanding the context of stories

Jerome Bruner (2002), cautions his readers to not to be fooled by the familiar of the stories they tell as a society. He (2002) argues that stories are so ubiquitously and intricately engrained in our existence that they 'are almost as natural as language itself' (p3). As a result, we erroneously believe that we intuitively know what to do with them. Bruner (2002) further urges us to look beyond the words to understand the context of stories so that we can fully appreciate their meaning and the untold story of how things truly are (p12). The same warning applies to the individual stories that we tell and re-tell about ourselves, our work, and the world around us.

Once written, stories become fixed and concrete object on a piece of paper. Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (1998) suggest that:

> the promise of storytelling emerges when we move beyond regarding a story as a fixed entity and engage in conversations with our stories (p251)

Engaging in conversations with the stories of this study involves uncovering the layers of complexity contained within them as informed by the literature on change. This chapter engages in conversation about the context that surrounds each of the participant stories by comparing and contrasting their temporal features and significance within the change process. The additional context serves to enhance the understanding of the stories and enables a more robust examination of the themes that the stories reveal.

9.2: Situating the stories

To consider the participants' stories collectively it is important to first understand how they relate to each other. The figure below plots the significant events of each participant's story along the same timeline used in Chapter 1:

	Government	Claire	Rosie	Olivia	Beatrice	Cynthia
2020						COVID-19 pandemic
2019				Started training sessions with staff	Awarded regional leadership award	Began interviews
2018	Provincial election			Personal discovery	Naturalised playground	Attended awards evening & programme tour
2015		Launched demonstration sites		Developed programme statement	Incident with Sam Introduced to HDLH (Ontario, 2014a)	
2014		Adopted HDLH (Ontario, 2014a)	Attended ministry HDLH launch			
2013	How Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a) Think Feel Act (Ontario, 2013b)		Retired, began consulting	Removed toys from all site		
2010	Launched Full-day Kindergarten			Opened new programme site		
2009	Announced Full-Day Kindergarten (Ontario, 2009)			Visited Maria's centre Press conference		
2007	Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007	Began using ELECT (Ontario, 2014b)				
2004	Best Start Plan (Ontario, 2004)	Launched quality initiative				
1999	Early Years Study (McCain & Mustard, 1999)					

Figure 18: Timeline of significant events

For ease of viewing, each participant has been assigned a coloured swimlane: Beatrice in blue, Olivia in green, Rosie in purple, and Claire in red. The timing of provincial government initiatives that have been catalysts for change have also been included along the bottom of the figure in black. To provide additional context for the timing of the study, I have identified how my timeline intersects with the participants in an orange swimlane at the top of the figure. The addition of my personal swinlane is particularly important as a story told by the same individual could differ significantly depending on when it is documented. Stories evolve and take new shapes as our memory of events and how we interpret those events change over time as a result of incorporating new experiences into our knowledge-base. Likewise, new experiences may also affect how we view and talk about the future (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p479).

9.3: Temporal significance of stories

The temporal dimension of the participant stories was first considered by examining their significance using an organizing framework that was inspired by the work of Gail Lindsay and Jasna Schwind (2016), and Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000). Lindsay and Schwind (2016) suggest that when conducting a narrative inquiry, the researcher's examination progresses through a series of three circles that broaden in scope to encompass the personal, professional and societal significance. These circles of significance complement the dimensions in the narrative inquiry approach popularised by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) work recognises that stories are rarely simplistic and linear in form because of their multi-dimensional nature. The dimensions of time, space, and society contribute to the complexity in such a way that as we read and experience stories they encompass us until we are 'walking in the midst' of them (p63).

Of the three dimensions identified by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) the temporal dimension was deemed to be the most relevant to consider for this study. Just as a single experience is temporal, the collective experiences contained within stories are also temporal (p19). With multiple temporal dimensions at play, a single story may simultaneously tell a story of an individual, a place, or even a society

depending on where it exists along a temporal continuum. This presents a rich opportunity to reveal the individual and collective complexities within the participant stories. Conversely, consideration of the place dimension of participants' stories would not generate the same type of insight because these stories involve multiple settings. Unlike the narrative inquiries conducted by Connelly and Clandinin (1990) and Clandinin and Connelly (1996, 2000), which focused on the educational teams within one setting, the participant stories in this study are focused on an individual educators and are not constructed in a way that they can 'tell' multiple stories of a single place. For this study the personal, professional and societal significance of participant stories were considered collectively through a temporal lens. These three types of significance will be examined in the sections that follow using examples from the participants' stories.

9.3.1: Personal significance

Examining the personal significance of the participants' stories through a temporal lens involves delving deeper into the context of the story and asking how the story being told and heard at this time may have been influenced by personal events. Two examples of this can be easily identified in the stories of Olivia and Beatrice. In the case of Olivia, the importance of temporality is revealed when she talks about having recently discovered 'her authentic self' (p134). The process of self-discovery and forgiveness that discovering authenticity involves would have had a profound effect on Olivia's perception of the change process. Without that type of deep self-examination would Olivia have developed the understanding that staff acknowledgement and appreciation are essential components of relationships? Perhaps she would have still come to that realisation, however if she did, it would have been precipitated by a different series of events. It is also possible that had she told her story at an earlier point in time, it may have focused on other aspects of implementing How Does Learning Happen? (HDLH) (Ontario, 2014a) rather than relationships.

As revealed in my research journal, Beatrice was anxiously awaiting news of the birth of her third grandchild at the time of the interviews. In her case the effect of temporality is more subtle than Olivia's, but still evident in her story. The

sentiment of birth and new beginnings echoes through Beatrice's story as she purges her traditional teaching materials and commits to adopting a new outlook towards using the new approach with young children (p142). Beatrice was emotional as she described these events as they held significant meaning for her; perhaps representing an opportunity for a fresh start or a rebirth of her career. Told at a different point in time these events may not have played as prominent a role in her story, if they were included at all. It is fortunate that both Beatrice and Oliva chose to reveal these details while telling their story of change as they add a rich poignancy to the narratives. Additional significance can similarly be revealed by examining the professional spheres of the stories.

9.3.2: Professional significance

A similar approach was used to examine the professional significance of the participants' stories through a temporal lens. The text from the stories as well as my research journal entries were examined to identify what was significant about their professional life at the time this story was told. Notably, all participants are similar in age and stages of the professional life. Rosie has retired from her full time employment leading a community-based organisation and is now engaged in training and management consulting services. Claire, Olivia and Beatrice are looking ahead to their retirement in the next few years. All are looking back on the experiences of the career with the wisdom gained from a road well-traveled. Educator Lilian Katz's (1972) seminal work on the developmental stages of preschool teachers suggests that reflection upon deep rooted beliefs is common amongst educators when they reach the mature stage of their professional life (p53). While their story may have been somewhat similar if told at an earlier stage of their career, undoubtedly some elements would have been missing. Their beliefs have been shaped and moulded by the insight and perspective that only time and experience can bring and our experience with their stories is richer for it.

Just as past experiences influence the stories, situations that are currently occurring can also shape what is shared and retold. At the time her story is told Claire is facing the uncertainty of her programs' financial viability. Olivia is similarly uncertain, as she is in the midst of a debate with her program's landlord

about the future of their rental agreement. By contrast Rosie is preparing for a training session on communication and change with a group of ECE program supervisors. The present-ness of these experiences may have a more sharp influence on the details shared in the stories as the memory of the associated emotion has not had the opportunity to dull with time.

9.3.3: Societal significance

The timing of the participant interviews was set against a backdrop of labour unrest in the broader educator sector (People for Education, 2020). All of the major labour federations were engaged in contract negotiations with the provincial government. This included elementary and secondary school teachers, educational support workers, and custodial staff. When contract talks between the parties broke down, the respective federation organised rotating local days of actions and directed their members to withdraw service. While none of the participants were directly involved in these labour activities, they were all affected by the pervasiveness of these actions and the uncertainness they created within the education sector and the public at large (Lilley, 2020). In the case of Olivia and Claire, some of their programmes were operating in schools and they were concerned about staff and families having to cross picket lines to gain access to the programme site.

The labour unrest in the broader educator sector coincided with a campaign led by the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO), the advocacy association for profession, designed to give ECEs voice in the discourse about transforming the early learning and care system in Ontario (Sharpe, 2020). This work highlighted a number of workforce challenges including professional recognition; professional compensation; access to professional learning opportunities, and stable, quality work environments (Association of Early Childhood Educators, n.d.).

While all of the interviews were completed prior to the declaration of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, the re-storying and validation processes occurred

during the pandemic. In Ontario, a full provincial lockdown was imposed and all programs and businesses were closed. These closures affected the participants in different ways. Beatrice was immediately suspended with pay, and told that she may be re-deployed to work in a personal support worker role with senior citizens in long-term care homes. With all of her program sites closed, Olivia attempted to keep programme staff on the payroll with the help of emergency wage subsidies made available by the federal government. Rosie, whose consulting business primarily involves in-person training sessions, found her business suddenly dried up as financial uncertainty led to fiscal restraint amongst her clientele. In stark contrast Claire, in her role as a system leader in a local municipal government, was busier than ever. Not only did she have to oversee the safe closure of all programme sites and redeployment of staff, but as directed by the provincial Ministry of Education, she was required to develop a new emergency child care programme to support essential workers during the closure.

9.4: From instruction to inquiry

As described in Chapter 1, HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) promotes the use of inquiry which is carried out through a collaborative relationship between educators, children and their families (p13). For some educators, who had primarily relied on educator-led instruction, this pedagogical approach would have required a significant shift in their professional practice. However other educators, like Claire and Olivia, had already started this journey from instruction to inquiry long before the document was introduced. For example, Olivia had already removed commercial toys from her classrooms by the time the document was introduced (p132). Similarly, Claire, through her work with the quality initiative, was already working with community programmes to eliminate the use of themes and educator-led routines such as ‘calendar’ and ‘weather’ (p107). These examples lead me to conclude that for these educators the introduction of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) represented a step in a larger change process that had already started rather than the catalyst for change. This does not appear to be the case for Rosie and Beatrice, as there is no evidence from their stories that would indicate that they

had already taken steps towards using more of an inquiry-based approach in their work with young children until the launch of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a).

In Chapter 2, I introduced a model to represent the change process that all individuals within organisations go through when a new practice is introduced. I have presented the model again below and have indicated in the figure below where there introduction of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) fits into each participant's change journey from instruction to inquiry.

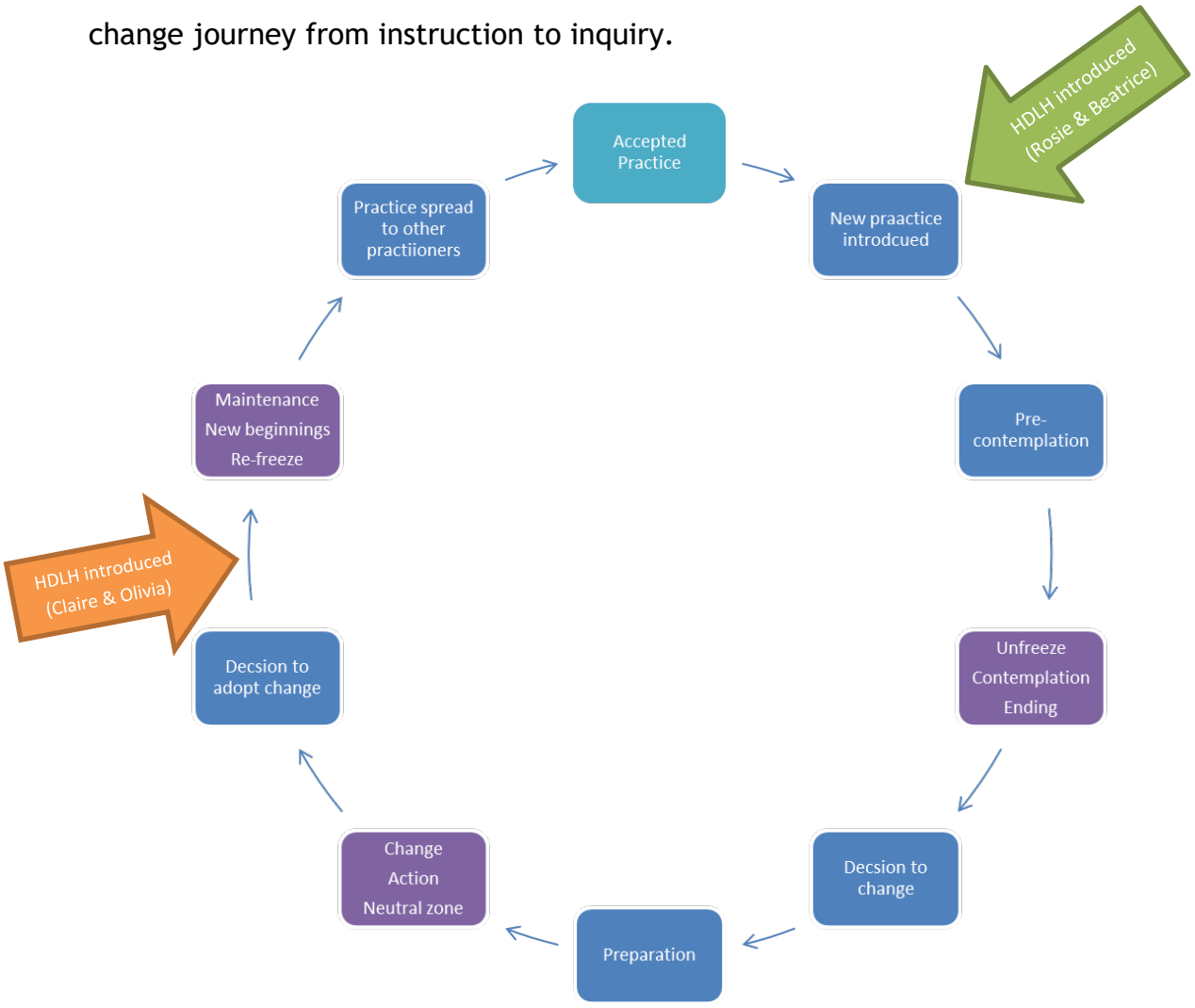


Figure 19: Introduction of How Does Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014) in the change process

Because of the individual differences in the timing of the initiation of change, I decided to focus on further examining the participant's experience of change using steps from Kurt Lewin's (1947) three step model of change rather than using the

whole model for the analysis. These steps and represented by purple boxes in Figure 22 and illustrated in their original form the figure below:

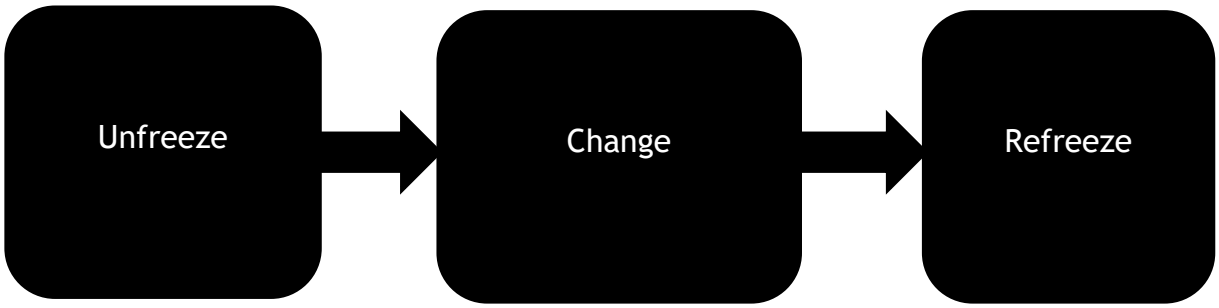


Figure 20: Lewin's three step model of change (1947)

Using Figure 22 as a template, a graphic for each participant was developed to illustrate the significant actions in each of the 'unfreeze', 'change', and 'refreeze' steps of the model. Arranging the events in this manner creates a common framework for comparison purposes. It is important to note that each participant story took place over different time periods in their lives. The details provided about the change process also vary between participants. This does not mean that the changes process was more complex for some participants that others, rather it represents how the participants conveyed the change process to me and how it was subsequently detailed in their story.

The figure below, illustrates Claire's three step change process. The unfreeze step for Claire was initiated by the university researcher who presented information about emergent curriculum models at the quality steering committee meeting (p106). This new information disrupts Claire's thinking about early years programmes and she begins to reflect on past experiences as she moves into the change step (p106). Finally in the refreeze step, as she accepts the information presented by the researcher and supports community training to assist programmes in moving away from using themes in curriculum planning (p108). The entire process, as told in the story, happened over the course of the same day, likely in the space of a morning or afternoon.

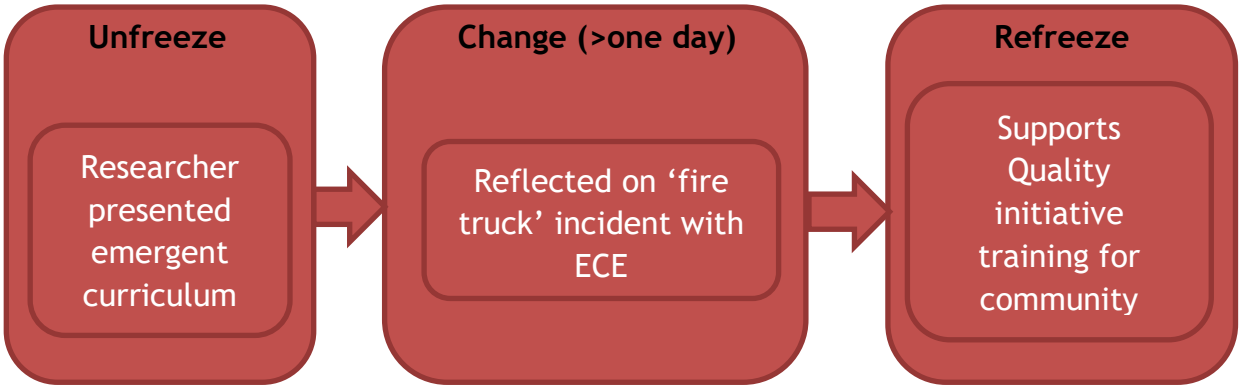


Figure 21: Claire's change process

Similar to Claire, Rosie's unfreeze step was initiated when she was presented with new information at a meeting (p120). In this case it was the ministry introducing the HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) document. As illustrated in the figure below, during the change step Rosie integrates the new information into her existing schema by relating it to past experiences as a practicing ECE (p121). Finally, as part of the refreeze step Rosie actively embeds the new information into her training materials so that she can share it with others (p122). Like Claire, Rosie progressed through the three steps of change in less than a day.

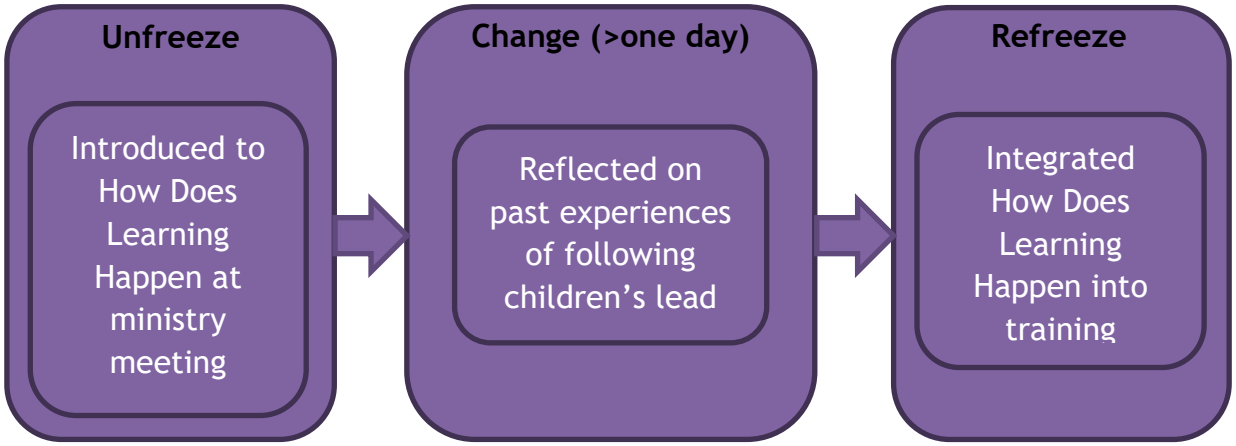


Figure 22: Rosie's change process

In contrast, Olivia's change process, as detailed in her story, took place over a significantly longer period of time and included more significant events. As Figure 25 below illustrates, the unfreeze step was initiated at the press conference when Maria questioned her use of colour books (p127). This was a disruptive event that initiated a prolonged change process that lasted approximately ten years. During

this time Olivia slowly moved towards a new equilibrium. She took steps towards fully adopting an emergent curriculum approach by visiting Maria's programme (p128), participating in mentoring (p130), and attending workshops (p130). More tangible steps were taken when she opened a new programme site and developed a new programme statement (p133) that reflected the principles of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). She also engaged in reflection on comments shared by staff regarding her change in leadership (p135). This incident led to the refreezing step in which Olivia launched the "Letting Go" workshop series for staff (p136).

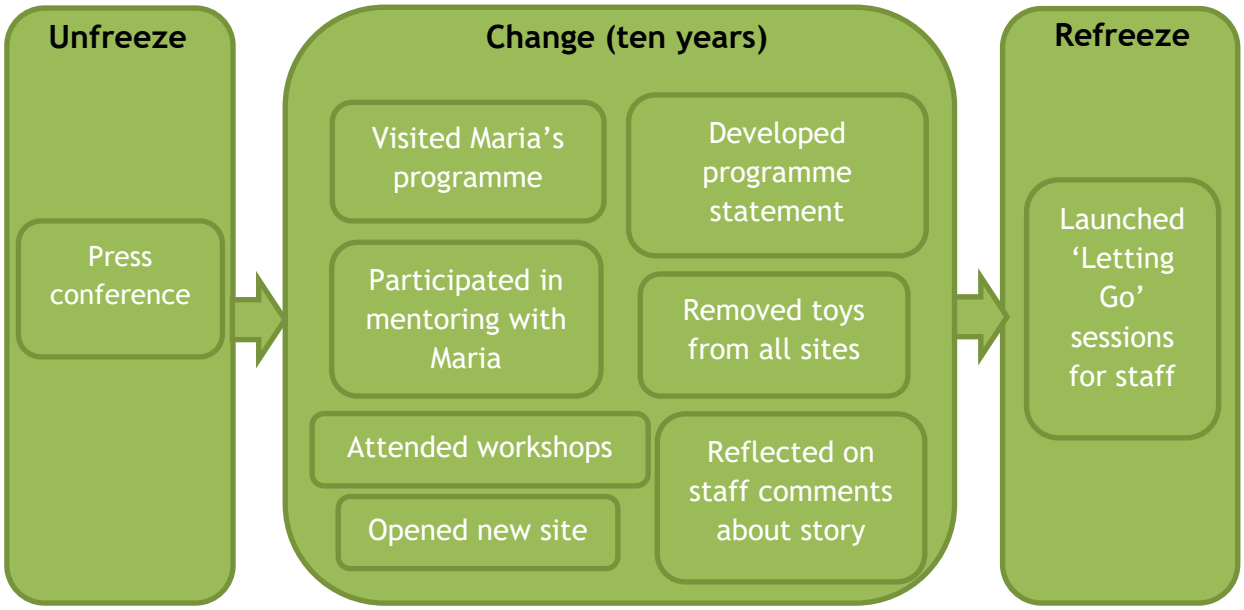


Figure 23: Olivia's change process

Beatrice's change process resembles Olivia's with the disruptive unfreezing step. For Beatrice this step occurs during a workshop sponsored by her employer that announces the launch of a significant change in practice (p139). During the next year a number of incidents contribute to the change step including the introduction of buffet lunches for the children, the elimination of circle time, and the replacement of commercial plastic toys with wooden furniture and loose parts (p140). Beatrice's careless words during the heartbreaking incident with Sam cause her to engage in deep reflection (p141). This reflection causes her to purge her

storage cupboard of all of her old practice materials in order to refreeze her commitment to change (p142).

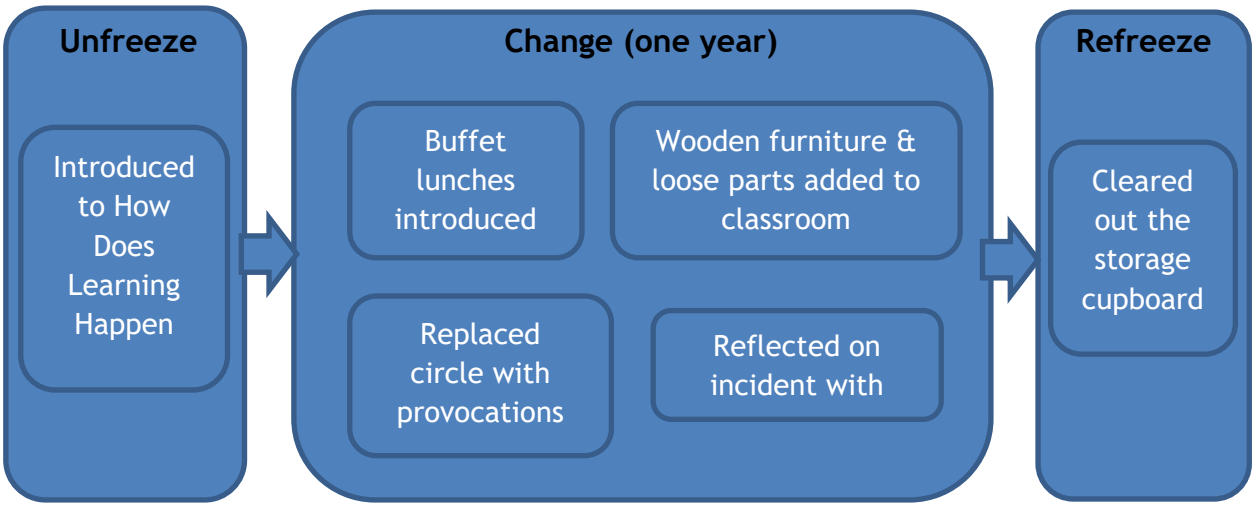


Figure 24: Beatrice's change process

9.4.1: Unfreezing participants

William Bridges (2004) said of the personal change process that 'genuine beginnings begin within us, even when they are brought to our attention by external opportunities' (p197). Arguably, several events within the stories could have been considered an unfreezing incident. For the purposes of this analysis a single external event was identified as the initiating catalyst that moved the participant into the change step. As notes earlier, the unfreezing event was not necessarily related to HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). Rather the unfreezing stage correspond to the introduction of emergent curriculum concepts or principles that align with HDLH (Ontario, 2014a).

For both Claire and Olivia this step occurs well before the release of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). The introduction of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) is therefore largely inconsequential to the change journey for both of these educators. Conversely, the introduction of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) is the catalyst that initiates the unfreezing step for Rosie and Beatrice. Prior to its release both of these educators were in a general state of unawareness whereas for Claire and Olivia already had a

familiarity with many of the concepts and principles presented in the document and had accepted them and integrated them into their practice.

For Claire the unfreezing response is subtle however for the other three participants unfreezing is much more dramatic and jarring as it metaphorically 'break[s] the shell[s] of complacency' (Lewin, 1947, p75). Olivia responds to Maria's questioning about her decision to use colouring books as promotional materials with shock and embarrassment (p126). For Beatrice and Rosie the introduction of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) evokes an almost immediate emotional response. Beatrice expresses a defensive contempt which leads to resistance, a theme that is discussed in a subsequent section; while Rosie responds enthusiastically the people who are introducing the document and as a result the document itself.

9.4.1: Changing participants

Consideration of the change step across participants reveals differences and similarities. For Claire and Rosie, the change step lasts less than a day, whereas for Olivia and Beatrice this step is significantly longer lasting a year or longer. The simplicity of the change step in the case of Claire and Rosie may be attributed to the fact that they are both working in administrative roles at a system level and are more removed from working directly with young children than are either Olivia or Beatrice. It appears to be easier for Rosie and Claire to accept what was being presented to them at a conceptual level. This may be because they did not need to answer the myriad questions related to implementation that those working directly with children may have. Education change expert, Michael Fullan (2011), notes that it is not sufficient to simply present conceptual models since individuals change their behaviour long before they change their beliefs (p68). Presenting a conceptual model does little to convince those who are reluctant to try a new way of doing things. They need to personally experience the new practices associated with change in order to accept it (p68).

As Beatrice is working closer to the ground than Olivia, adapting to new ways of doing things affects her more profoundly and she responds with resistance (p138). Rather than the overt resistance and doubt demonstrated by Beatrice, Olivia is interested in the concepts presented to her by Maria but is hesitant to immediately make changes in her programme (p127). Olivia needed to see the pedagogy in practice to truly appreciate it; hence the visit to Maria's programme (p128). Beatrice was not afforded such an opportunity. She experienced the pedagogy vicariously through her supervisor Penny's visit to a neighbouring community and the photographs that she brought back with her (p144). Furthermore Olivia had the luxury of trying new practices on her own schedule, whereas Beatrice was directed to implement changes, such as buffet lunches and provocations. In this way Olivia had more control over the pace and sequencing of her change process.

Before moving into the refreezing step, all of the stories indicate that participants engage in a period of reflection. I suggest that this is an important part of the change step which enables the process of refreezing to begin. Donald Schön's (2008) seminal work describes how professionals use the process of reflection to understand and solve problems (p63). In the case of Claire, thinking back to the incident of the early childhood educator (ECE) with the firetruck helped her to relate to and better understand the emergent approach that the researcher was presenting. This enabled her to accept and endorse the model. Rosie, on the other hand, thought back on her own practice. The new information about practice presented to her in HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) was liberating. It absolved her of her guilt of being what she described as a 'lazy teacher' (p121). Guilt was also a factor that led Beatrice to reflection. Her sharp exchange with Anne over her comments about Sam, led her to reflect on her approach to change. Like Beatrice, it was the comments of a colleague about her behaviour that led Olivia to engage in further reflection and ultimately accept the concepts in the pedagogy regarding other professionals. The role of others in the change process was also identified in the thematic analysis and will be further discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

9.4.3: Refreezing participants

The refreezing step represents the return to equilibrium and the establishment of a new normal. In the case of three of the four participants this is an active step. For Beatrice, this process involved purging artifacts from her 'old life' so that she could fully embrace the new pedagogy. William Bridges's (2004) model of personal change describes the last step in the change process as a new beginning (p4). To fully embrace the opportunities of a new beginning we must first go through a transition process of fully 'letting go' of the old so that we can make way for the new. Beatrice was not able to start anew until she removed resources and props that reminded her of the old ways of being an early childhood educator (p142).

Conversely, for Rosie this process was much more emotional as she 'let go' of the perception that she was a 'lazy educator' (p120). She actively began her refreezing step by integrating this new learning into her workshop materials and encouraging others to embrace the change in approach by engaging others with these materials in her training. Olivia likewise began to involve others in expanding their understanding of connections and relationships within the pedagogy by launching staff workshops (p136). As part of these workshops she encouraged staff to 'let go' of what was holding them back from truly connecting with others just as she had through the process of finding her 'authentic self'.

Claire remains the outlier of the group. Her refreezing step is internally focused and difficult for external observers to identify. Her rapid acceptance of the emergent approach is a result of the reflective process that she undertook during the course of the meeting.

9.5: Thematic analysis

A thematic analysis of the stories was conducted using the process set out by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006). This flexible method of analysis allowed for the inductive identification of themes whereby the stories of ECEs experience with change revealed themes using both semantic and latent approaches. A full description of the method is provided in Chapter 4.

Twelve prominent codes were initially identified that were then clustered into five themes. A further examination of how these themes related to each other resulted in a further clustering into two overarching groups: participant response to change, and internal and external factors that influence the participants' response to change.

Appendix 1 provides examples of how initial prominent codes found in the transcripts formed sub-themes. The following chart illustrates the relationships between the multiple reviews of the transcripts and the clustering of sub-themes into themes, and themes into overarching themes:

Overarching Theme (3rd review)	Theme (2nd review)	Sub-theme (1st review)
Influences	Professional identity	Competence
		Comparison
	Validation	Own need
		Other's need
	Role of others	Leaders
		Colleagues
		Experts
		Government
Response to change	Resistance	Self
		Others
	Compliance	Self
		Others

Table 7: Relationship between sub-themes, themes and overarching themes

The relationship between these concepts within the context of the experience of change is illustrated in Figure 27 below:

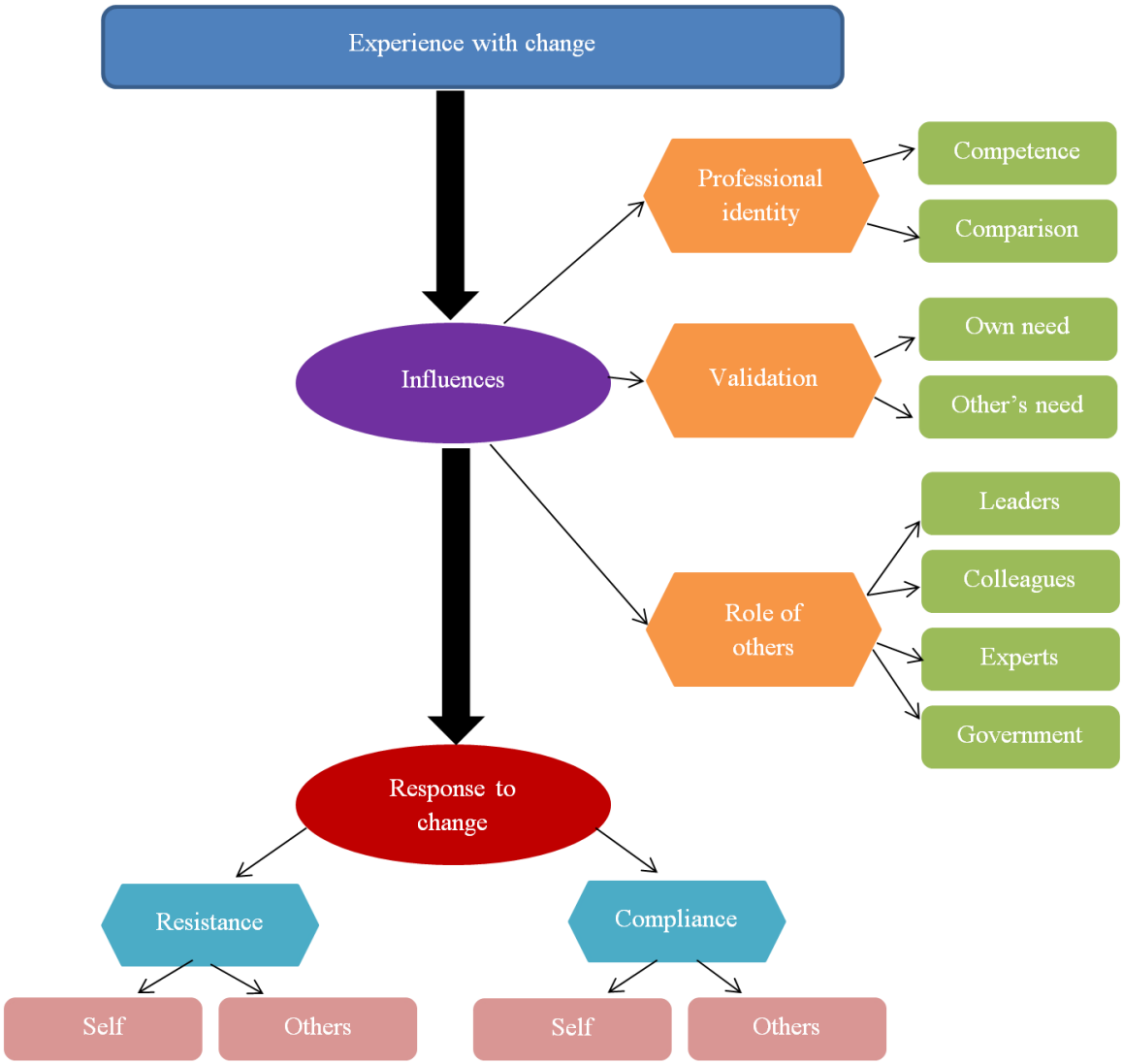


Figure 25: Thematic analysis from participants' stories

The themes identified in the thematic analysis can also be considered using the framework of Kurt Lewin's (1947) change model. The themes are not isolated to residing in any one step, rather they are found across the 'unfreeze', 'change' and

'refreeze' steps of the change process. The following table provides examples from the participants' stories:

Themes	Example from stories		
	Unfreeze →	Change →	Refreeze
Professional identity	• Rosie sees herself as a lazy educator	• Claire believes ECEs no longer have to compare themselves to school teachers	• Beatrice describes herself as a 'champion' of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a)
Validation	• Olivia feels staff recognition is not necessary	• Beatrice seeks reassurance of job security from Penny	• Olivia recognises educators with hand-written notes
Roles of others	• Penny encourages Beatrice to attempt change	• Maria provides mentoring to Olivia	• Beatrice feels her colleagues failure to change is a performance issue
Resistance	• Beatrice believes implementing HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) is not possible	• Beatrice is not supportive of buffet lunches	• Rosie and Claire suggest that some educators need to leave the profession
Compliance	• Rosie immediately accepts HDLH (Ontario, 2014a)	• Olivia compares her programme's focus on compliance with safety with Maria's programme engaging in risky play	• Claire suggests licensing requirements need to align to HDLH (Ontario, 2014a)

Table 8: Themes across Lewin's (1947) step model of change

The sections that follow will further explore each of the identified themes in order to generate a deeper understanding and identify further meaning and significance from the four participant stories.

9.5.1: Influences

Jack Brehm (1966) suggests that an individual's response and behaviour towards change is dependent on their current wants and needs (p377). Furthermore, wants

and needs may change over time depending on each unique circumstance and context. The participants' stories reveal three dominant themes that can be considered a contribution to or an influence on the response to change.

9.5.1.1: Professional identity

The concept of professional identity is a strong theme throughout all of the participant stories. The following table provides examples from Beatrice, Olivia and Rosie's stories:

Participant	Self-assessment of professional performance	Rationale
Beatrice	Good	Kept children's attention during circle time
Olivia	Good	Created large bulletin boards
Rosie	Lazy	Challenged to complete paperwork

Table 9: Participant's self-assessment of performance

Beatrice and Olivia described themselves as being 'good' at their jobs as ECEs using a theme-based curriculum approach. Beatrice recalls being able to keep the children's attention for long periods of time during circle time; while Olivia recounts her ability to create large wall-sized bulletin boards. Rosie on the other hand, describes herself as a lazy ECE because she found it difficult to focus on and complete the required paperwork.

Claire approaches the topic differently by providing possible reasons for the reliance on instruction-based practices. She suggests that ECEs originally adopted tactics that were commonly used by Kindergarten teachers in public schools such as themes and daily routines such as 'calendar' and 'weather' because of a need to 'justify their existence' in a society that had become overly focused on 'schoolification'. She further suggests that HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) offers a path

back to the way it was before ‘themes’, so that ECEs can help to make in children’s learning visible to others through documentation (p108).

These examples reveal ‘comparison’ and ‘competence’ aspects of professional identity. Claire’s example suggests that she believes that prior to the introduction of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a), ECEs did not have a distinct identity from teachers of older children. ECE could only describe who they were and what they did by means of comparison to a well-established profession. Rosie, Beatrice and Olivia’s use of evaluative terms such as ‘good’ and ‘lazy’, suggest that they liked their identities to their competency in using school-based practices. The development of professional identity is a complex and dynamic process that evolves over time. It is the result of the ‘intersection[s] of personal history, self-perception, professional knowledge, and practices, beliefs, and values’ (Scherr & Johnson, 2019, p.405).

9.5.1.2: Recognition/validation

Business literature has long recognized the need for recognition or validation. The seminal work of James Kouzes and Barry Posner (1999) describes this practice as ‘encouraging the heart’ (pxii) and acknowledges that there is a basic human need to be appreciated. Their research found that providing personalised recognition has a profound effect on employee performance and can result in increased productivity and initiative, as well as decreased interpersonal co-worker conflict and absenteeism (p5). Arguably, this need is heightened during times of change and uncertainty.

Beatrice is motivated to continue her journey of change by Penny’s gentle encouragement ‘to think about things a little differently’. She is further encouraged to continue her professional growth by a regional leadership award that she receives in recognition for her work on creating a naturalised playground at her programme site. Olivia, as a leader of an organization, experiences a significant shift in her understanding about the importance of genuine recognition and relationship building. Her original belief, based on her mother’s experience

working in a coal mine, is that recognition is an unnecessary frivolity. As she goes through the process of facing her own authenticity and embracing vulnerability she becomes aware of the need for staff to feel appreciated and begins sending personalised thank you notes and other small tokens. Recognition becomes a key tool that she utilises to develop authentic relationships with colleagues. As Kouzes and Posner (1999) suggest, the recognition efforts in both Beatrice and Olivia's examples proved to be effective at motivating and sustaining change behaviour because it was relevant, specific, and personalised (p105).

Claire's story provides an example of the perceived lack of system level professional recognition for ECEs. In her story she shares insight into her belief that in the absence of societal recognition of their value and worth, ECEs found it necessary to mimic the practices of teachers of older children. A number of authors including Debra Harwood and her colleagues (2013), Peter Moss (2006), and Jayne Osborn (2010) have cited the need for society to recognise the unique contributions of the early years professionals. However the profession still has much work to do to support and strengthen these efforts. Janet Moyles (2001) observes that professionals working with young children have a tendency to devalue their professional identity, due in part to a lack of self-esteem or confidence with their own practice (p89). This professional self-sabotaging behaviour is in part why Osborn (2010) asserts that recognition must first come 'from within' the profession.

9.5.1.3: Role of others

Professionals do not practice in a vacuum. They are influenced by the individuals, institutions and systems surrounding them. It is not surprising then that all of the participant stories acknowledged that external factors influenced their experience with and response to change. Four distinct groups were identified; three of which involved other people, while the fourth involved an institution or system.

Leaders play a significant role during times of change. Rosie refers to Rob as an 'awesome person' because in his charismatic way he made people feel that they

are important (p120). His ability to 'dream' and to communicate that 'dream' to others was infectious and drew people into the change process. In Rosie's view, his endorsement of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) was validating and confirmed that this change was the path forward for the sector. Michael Fullan (2011) argues that 'people want and need confidence from their leader when times are dangerous and in a very real sense unpredictable' (p121). Change leaders simultaneously calm and excite those around them. Their ability to motivate those around them into action is rooted in part by the fact that 'they don't find complexity complex' (p112). Rather, they are comfortable, and perhaps excited by the unknown and uncertainty. Many of these sentiments are reflected in Beatrice's description of Penny (p140). Her admiration of Penny's steadfast presence and encouragement through the change process served to motivate and encourage the introduction of new tactics in her practice.

Olivia recognises the need for a succession plan and consequently the development of the next generation of leaders for her organisation. She utilises a stratified approach by building relationships both individually and collectively with site supervisors as well as with the program teams (p136). In this way her change message has reached the entire organisation, thus creating an interconnected community with shared vision. Anne Douglass (2017) defines leadership 'as a relational process of influencing change' (p85). She suggests that given the nature of relationships leadership cannot be sustained or expanded in isolation. She advocates for the creation of a leadership ecosystem, such as the one that Olivia creates, where leaders and emergent leaders can learn from each other both in the workplace and the broader community.

Within a leadership ecosystem, colleagues are another source of influence on the response to change. Olivia's story is characterised by her perceived absence of colleagues and the frustration that this causes. Her frustration is two-fold. Not only does she feel isolated from the action and perceived advancements happening in southern Ontario, but she also feels isolated from those who hold similar positions in other organisations within her community (p131). She feels that the competitiveness between local organisations prevents collaboration from occurring

as well as any support that could be offered during disruption and change (p131). Rosie concludes that surrounding yourself with others who view change in a similar way is like the 'gravy on the potatoes'. Change expert John Kotter (1996) calls groups of individuals with share vision and purpose a 'guiding coalition' (p52). According to Kotter the coalition is critical to the change process as they bring both credibility and expertise to the initiative (p57). They also form the core of the critical mass that will drive the implementation of change to the tipping point of widespread adoption.

However, Beatrice has a different kind of experience with her colleagues. Many of them, including her team partner are slower than her to embrace the new way to doing things. She expresses her disappointment with her colleagues' failure to engage with naturalising the outdoor playground (p145). This disappointment festers into frustration when she suggests that their refusal to change is a job performance issues (p145).

Experts form the third group of person-based influences. All four participants reference either directly or indirectly the work of child psychiatrist Dr. Jean Clinton and how her analogy of 'stuffing the duck' helped them to understand the dangers and ineffectiveness of focusing practice on 'school preparedness' for young children. Rosie is particularly excited by having the neuroscience evidence presented by Dr. Clinton that affirms the importance of the early years of development. For some, like Rosie, neuroscience has provided a new line of argument that firmly establishes learning in the early years as a unique entity in its own right, not just a preparation grounds for the 'real learning' that will only occur once a child formally enters school (p119). It is also evidence that ultimately convinces Claire to support a new direction for the quality initiative to support programmes (p105).

In the context of these stories experts are not necessarily limited to individuals who present scientific evidence. Olivia suggests that her respect for Maria as a professor of early childhood education who has trained in Reggio Emilia influenced and guided the changes that she introduced to her practice as well and the

organisation's strategic direction (p130). The mentorship that Maria provided following Olivia's visit to her programme further served to inspire Oliva and propelled her change journey forward (p130). Mentorship appears to be an effective tool for Oliva as she credits the mentorship she received from other executive directors as helping to inform her management style in the early days of officially taking on the leadership role in her organisation. Their teachings become an enduring touchpoint for Olivia, which is why in part that it is difficult for Olivia to abandon them when she is challenged to consider that they may no longer be serving her well in the current context of her leadership practice.

The fourth and final aspect of the theme involving the role of others, considers government. This theme is most predominantly found in Beatrice and Claire's stories. Beatrice initially expresses a distrust of the provincial government's ability to understand the realities of practice and scoffs at the guidance provided in HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). She suggest that those 'big wigs sit behind their desks' in an office tower are out of touch of what happens on the ground and as a result she believes that HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) will never work (p139). Later, once Beatrice fully embraces the approach, she is able to appreciate the document on a 'different level' (p142).

Claire also expresses frustration with government also her frustration is focused on the two government guidance documents that are in circulation (p109). She is confused about the relationship between the two documents, and critical that the ministry did not do a better job communicating their intent. Both of these examples illustrate the importance of communication during times of change. Michael Fullan (2011) describes communication as one of the key qualities of 'motion leadership'. He notes that 'consistent communication during implementation is essential to getting the collective clarity and energy necessary for success' (p75). In a communications vacuum people may feel the need to make up their own narrative of change and draw conclusions based on perception rather than fact. These examples illustrate the importance of clear, consistent, government communication that conveys credibility and builds confidence for those working 'on the ground' to achieve change.

9.5.2: Response to change

The participant stories revealed two main themes related to both their personal response and the response of others to the introduction of How Does Learning Happen (Ontario, 2014a). These themes represent two opposing responses to change: resistance and compliance. Sub-themes emerge from both of these themes related to the response of the participant and the response of others.

9.5.2.1: Resistance

Goodwin Watson's (1967) early work on organisational development and change suggests that resistance is in part a function of firmly established homeostasis and habit (pp365-66). Humans are generally creatures of habit seeking paths that offer the least form of perceived discomfort. For individuals who perceive change as an interference with their norm, resistance may manifest itself in emotions that range from ambivalence to anger (Jick, 1990, p410).

The theme of 'resistance to change' is revealed in all four of the participants' stories in various forms. In Beatrice's story it presents as her personal resistance to change and manifests as critical doubt throughout the text. Prominent examples from her story include: her doubt of ministry staff and their understanding of the reality of working in current early learning programmes (p139); and her skepticism over introducing buffet lunches to the children (p140), and removing commercial toys from the classroom (p140). The Bridges (2004) transition model suggests that responses to change may evolve over time as the individual works their way through a 'neutral zone' to embrace a new beginning (p80). As Beatrice moves through her personal 'neutral zone' of transition her perception changes and her criticism is aimed at others who have not yet a new way to doing things. At one point she even suggests to her supervisor that her colleagues' resistance to embrace change had become a performance management issue (p145).

Rosie and Claire demonstrate similar frustration with others that resist change. Rosie's frustration comes to the point of completely dismissing those who resist and shutting down any further engagement (p123). Some of this response may be

attributed to Rosie's natural disposition and self-professed love of change. Their response is so opposite to her own that it may be difficult to relate to. Jick (1990) suggests dealing with those who resist change takes active energy to 'give first aid' and create the capacity for change (p414). He further suggests that accept that resistance is a normal and expected response to change creates productive spaces to work with individuals as they move through change (p413).

Throughout her story Claire remain committed to working with those who resist change by finding common ground and alternate approaches that are perceived to be more palatable. A prime example of this is when she developed options for the hours of the work week that simultaneously meet the needs of diverse parties with diverse interests (p114). At the same time, she fully recognizes that not everyone will ultimately accept the change and they will need to move on from their roles 'by choice or with some help' in order to respect the effort of the other educators and to ensure the health organisation as a whole (p115). As Bridges (2004) suggests, 'when we are ready to make a new beginning we will shortly find an opportunity' (p159). Even for those individuals who cling to resistance right to the end, there remains opportunity for them to see a new beginning in the future.

Olivia senses that there is resistance amongst some of her staff and that something is 'holding them back' from displaying the vulnerability that is required to develop authentic relationships with children, families and colleagues (p136). Bridges (2004) posits that 'letting go' can be a frightening prospect because it can lead us to question our own choices and competencies (p11). Olivia seems to recognize this in her staff and responds with compassion and in a similar manner to Claire introduces a new way to support them in the form of the 'Letting Go' workshop series (p136). This version of Olivia's story ends before the conclusion of these workshops so we left wondering what may come of these individual educators as they move through their transition zone.

9.5.2.2: Compliance

Compliance is the second response to change theme that was identified in two of the participants' stories. In Claire's story she expresses frustration with the government when the HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) is first introduced because it has not clearly been differentiated from the existing ELECT document (p109). She is concerned about this discrepancy creating confusion in the sector with programmes not knowing which document they were required to follow. In another instance she questions why HDHL has not formed part of the government early learning programme licensing protocols beyond the requirement for a programme statement (p110). She believes that compliance is important but without clearly defined requirements adherence to the document could never be enforced.

Olivia's focus on compliance relates to her previous practice of carefully monitoring all of the toys in the classrooms with a 'choke checker' tool in accordance with the programme's policies (p127). While the policies were designed to keep children safe and avoid the introduction of potentially hazardous materials, the practice of putting safety bubbles around children instills fear and ultimately undermines the professional judgment of ECEs. Claire suggests that using the authentic play-based approach promoted in HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) sets ECEs free and gives them permission to explore without fear of repercussion (p111).

9.6: Moving forward with narrative thinking

Jean Clandinin and her colleagues (2015) assert that to fully appreciate the complex and multi-dimensional landscapes in which stories reside, researchers must commit to thinking narratively when examining them (pp29-30). This way of thinking involves suspending judgement and the need to seek outcomes beyond deeper understanding, while at the same time remaining attentive to the experience of the story. By thinking narratively, it becomes possible to 'imagine ways of moving forward' (Clandinin et. al, 2015 p30). Exploring the context surrounding the stories with the openness of narrative thinking provides a richer understanding of the participants' individual change processes. Likewise, documenting and further expanding on the themes revealed in the stories further

expounds their collective experience with system wide change. Taken together, this approach provides a basis to develop findings that might contribute toward a new theory of change for the continued implementation of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) which will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 10: Looking Back, Being Present, and Looking Further Afield

10.1: Endings and beginnings

In this concluding chapter of the dissertation, I look back and reflect on the experience of the research process during the development of this study. Consideration of the research design as well as the consequences of the choices that I made are also identified and discussed. In the second part of this chapter I expand on four of the findings identified in Chapter 10 and discuss their implications for current practice in Ontario using How Does Learning Happen? (HDLH) (Ontario, 2014a) as an organising frame. Limitations associated with this study and opportunities for possible future research are also identified and discussed. Finally, I offer some concluding reflections in light of the current context of a global pandemic.

10.2: Looking back on the dissertation

The early years workforce has experienced increasing levels of change since the beginning of the new millennium as a result of shifts in the provincial government policy orientation towards early years programs. The timing of government change initiatives has meant that early childhood educators (ECEs) who are now nearing retirement have arguably seen some of the most significant swings of the policy pendulum. Each change has required the workforce to adjust their professional practice to reflect and meet the policy objective at hand. I believe there is much that can be learned from the stories of these ECEs before their voices fade into retirement.

Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin (1990) describe their approach to narrative inquiry as ‘a process of collaboration involving mutual storytelling and re-storying’ (p4). This telling of stories led shaped my research project where I sought to examine how four ECEs who are in the autumn of their professional career experienced change during the implementation of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). In Chapter 1 of this dissertation, I describe what I believe are the most significant early years policy initiatives, up to and including the introduction of HDLH

(Ontario, 2014a) as the new pedagogy for the early years. I view this as the grand narrative of change against which stories of Claire, Rosie, Olivia and Beatrice are set and nested within.

Establishing the theoretical context for the study involved considering the fundamental question: 'what is change?' The answer took me back to the works of ancient Greek philosophers, Heraclitus and Parmenides who considered change from two opposing stances. Their enduring perspectives on change were also prominently revealed in the stories of Rosie and Beatrice. Rosie's story embodies the Heraclitus notion that the world is in a constant state of flux and therefore change is a natural, evolutionary process (Haxton, 2003, p29). Beatrice on the other hand, aligns more to Parmenides view that change is a transformative obstacle that must be overcome in order to return to a state of stasis (Král, 2011, p3).

Building on the foundational perspectives of change a further review of the literature in Chapter 3 considered how change happens at the individual, organisational and systems levels. System and organisational change literature tends to focus on changing processes within a 'machine system' (Senge, 2000, p54) with well-defined and simple inputs and outputs. However, a more recent perspective that views complex human systems such as the education system as a 'living system' (Senge, 2000, p54), suggests that change is a complex, dynamic, and multi-dimensional process. As such, I concluded that the implementation of a government policy position requires simultaneous change at individual practitioner, organizational and system level.

At the individual level Folke Ölander & John Thøgersen (1995) suggest that ability, motivation, and opportunity are all necessary preconditions for change to occur, however the presences of these conditions does not guarantee that change will occur. Individuals are active participants in deciding whether to accept or resist change. Furthermore, the path between that decision and the outcome is not always straight, as exemplified by Beatrice who initially resisted and doubted the change in pedagogical approach, but later not only accepted it but championed it.

Seminal research by Kurt Lewin (1947) suggests that individuals and organisations achieve change by moving from one static state to another. Later work by James Prochaska (1979) suggests that there are internal processes within the individual that guide the decision to engage in the change process and ultimately adopt the change. Such processes may be accompanied by transitional stages in which the individual moves through a 'neutral zone' until they are ultimately able to accept and embrace change (Bridges, 1986, p8). By combining the features of these models I was able to create a framework that provides a more fulsome view of the participants' individual change processes in Figure 12 (p77). This model was used to situate the implementation of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) within each participant's individual change process.

10.2.1: Methods adopted

A foundational component of Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) model of narrative inquiry which must be considered at the beginning of a research study is the relationship between the researcher and the participant (p3). In earlier works Clandinin and Connelly (1988) describe the relationship between researcher and participant as being akin to friendship because the shared experiences and 'narrative unities' connects the researcher and participant in a deeper, more meaningful way than they would be by simply making contact through an isolated one-dimensional interview (p281). The walking interview method proved to be an effective method in positioning me as a 'participant-observer' (Glense, 2011 p64) so that I was able to develop a collegial relationship with the participants throughout the process. Over the course of several months a series of walking interviews were conducted. Once these interviews were transcribed I used Coralie McCormick's (2004) method to create a story for each participant. Participants had the opportunity to read, comment on and provide feedback on their story. The stories were finalised through a back and forth collaborative process that not only engaged the participants but provided additional validation and trustworthiness to the research process. Yvonne Lincoln and Egon Guba (1985) describe this iterative process as 'the most critical technique for establishing credibility' (p314).

In keeping with the stylistic choice to respect the individual nature of each story, the analysis was structured the analysis to examine each story individually before considering them together. Corrine Glesne (2011) argues that the words gathered through the research process 'are not inherently meaningful in themselves. Rather, you make them meaningful through your analysis and interpretations' (p247). As part of this meaning making process, I plotted key events from all of the stories onto the same timeline to understand how their timing relates to each other. I also plotted these events onto Lewin's (1947) three step change model to create a visual representation of the change process. Following this, I used the works of Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2006) and Gail Lindsay and Jasna Schwind (2016) to develop an analytical framework to consider the personal, professional and societal significance of each story through a temporal lens. Individual stories are created change and evolve as they are retold and reconstructed. Edward Bruner (1984) suggests that

> a life lived is what actually happened….a life as told, a life history, is a narrative, influenced by the cultural conventions of telling, by the social context (p7).

Examining the participant stories using the temporal framework provided further insight into the current social and societal environment context that could then be used to generate meaning from each story.

A second form of analysis used the model of thematic analysis developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006). The thematic analysis was conducted across all four stories and revealed 12 prominent codes that were clustered into five themes related to either the participant's response to change or the influences on their responses to change. Taken together, these three forms of analysis were used to generate the findings discussed in the next section.

10.3: Significant findings and implications for practice

When considering the findings of a narrative inquiry, it is important to first contextualise them within the limitations of the research approach. Garold Murray (2009) suggests that one of the biggest criticisms of narrative inquiry is that the

findings do not 'reveal a commonality of experience' (p58) and therefore the results of the research cannot be generalised. Generalisability, however, is not the only value of research findings and the unique strengths of narrative inquiry cannot be overlooked. For example, rather than stating prescriptive recommendations that can be universally applied, Walter Doyle (1997) suggests that findings of a narrative inquiry 'provide provisional models' (p97) which can be applied and refined through practice. Feema Elbaz-Luwisch (1997) further suggests that the findings of a narrative inquiry centre on revealing 'knowledge which empowers' rather developing 'predictions' of possible future behaviour (p78). It is within this context that the significant findings of this study and their implications for practice are presented.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2019) recommends that jurisdictions continue to focus efforts on professionalising the early years sector as a means of improving programme quality and child outcomes. Accordingly, the significant findings and their implications for practice that follow are based on the assumption that professionalisation of the sector in Ontario continue. Professionalisation is particularly pertinent to change. W. Richard Scott (2008) observes that professionals 'have assumed leading roles in the creation and tending of institutions' (p219). Building on this concept, Daniel Muzio and his colleagues (2013) argue that as a result of this leading role professionals may be key mechanisms that facilitate change (p700). It is therefore important to briefly consider the degree to which ECEs in Ontario have achieved a professional status that may be leveraged to achieve change.

Elizabeth Gorman and Rebecca Sandefur (2011) identify four central attributes of professionalism: expert knowledge; technical autonomy; altruism; and an elevated status within society that is typically associated with a higher income and/or other rewards (p278). Similarly, Young-Chul Jeong and Huseyin Leblebici (2019) define professionalisation 'as the degree of success in the claim to an exclusive jurisdiction for a particular occupational domain, which varies across occupations' (pp299-300). Mary Wingrave and Margery McMahon (2016) suggest that legislation, regulatory bodies, and requirements for qualifications can facilitate

professionalisation, as evidenced through recent changes in the early years sector in Scotland.

Considering these definitions together, it can be argued that despite sustained efforts, ECEs in Ontario have not yet fully achieved full professionalization. This is evidenced by the absence of at least two attributes of professionalism. First, Sangchan Park and his colleagues (2011) argues that professionalisation results in standard job promotion ladders that are commensurate with increasing levels of qualifications (p341). This does not exist in Ontario as the current regulatory design does not differentiate between practitioners. All ECEs are registered in a general class of practice regardless of any advanced education or training. Second, the profession has not yet established exclusivity over their practice area. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, the profession is often perceived as engaging in 'work that "anyone" can do' (Mooney & McCafferty, 2005, p226). Furthermore, existing provisions in the General Regulation O.Reg 137/15 under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* allows individuals without qualifications to hold ECE positions in early years programmes. The use of this provision in early years programmes may further entrench this belief.

However, the limitations to the current professional status of ECEs may not necessarily be permanent. While ECEs have had legislative recognition through the *Early Childhood Educators Act* since 2007 (College of Early Childhood Educators, n.d.) it remains a relatively 'young' profession when compared to others in the province that demonstrate all of the central attributes of professionalism. For example, the regulatory body for lawyers was established in 1797 (Law Society of Ontario, n.d.), and similar governing bodies for physicians and accountants were established in 1866 (College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, n.d.) and 1879 (Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario, n.d.) accordingly. It is possible that as the regulatory body for ECEs continues to develop and establish itself, so too will the profession and these issues associated with professionalisation will ultimately be addressed. Until such time ECEs will need to rely on other attributes, such as their personal leadership, to support and facilitate change initiatives.

Several authors including Michael Fullan (2011) and Jillian Rodd (2015) argue that personal leadership is essential to successful change. In the Whole Leadership framework for the early years sector, Mike Abel and his colleagues (2017) suggests that personal leadership includes foundational competencies and qualities such as self-efficacy, adaptability, persistence, and learning. These competencies and qualities may also be useful resources for ECEs during times of change as they persistently learn to adapt their practices in response to new policies and requirements. For this reason, the significant findings and implications for practice that follow are intended to support the further development of both the essential leadership capacity and the professional status of the sector.

HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) is built on four foundations that when taken together become a vision for growing, flourishing, and 'ways of being' (p7). Although these foundations are shared in reference to developing programmes for children, the wisdom in these foundations can also be applied to educators. To illustrate this concept, I have used the four foundations as an organising framework to present the significant findings and their implications for practice in the sections that follow.

10.3.1: Building belonging

> Belonging refers to a sense of connectedness to others, an individual's experiences of being valued, of forming relationships with others and making contributions as part of a group, a community, the natural world (Ontario, 2014a, p7)

Each of the stories revealed a strong connection between change and the participants' relationships with others. This suggests that there is merit in 'building belonging' by leveraging the power of relationships to guide and support practitioners as they move through change. Olivia's relationship with Maria and Beatrice's relationship with Penny illustrate the value of informal mentoring relationships. Doranna Wong and Manjula Waniganayake (2013) describe mentoring as a 'dynamic interpersonal relationship …where a more experienced practitioner

provides professional guidance to one or more novice practitioners' (p164). Although Olivia and Beatrice would typically not be described as 'novice practitioners' their inexperience with some of the principles within HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) makes the relationship between the professionals comparable. Mentoring has been identified by several authors including Melody Hobbs and Rachel Stovall (1997); Elizabeth Jones (2002); Jillian Rodd (2006); Laura Doan (2013); Andrea Nolan and her colleagues (2013); Doranna Wong and Manjula Waniganayake (2013); and Päivi Kupila and Kirsti Karila (2019); as an effective strategy to support a variety practice transitions in the early childhood education profession. Such a programme could be useful to support early years practitioners through change.

In her story Olivia shared her feelings of isolation that arose from living in a small municipality in Northern Ontario with a competitive early years community. She felt that without having someone to talk to it was difficult to advance changes in her programme. Her relationship with Maria was an important resource to overcome those feelings of isolation. This is consistent with research by Andrea Nolan and her colleagues (2013) who found that mentoring relationships can provide relief from feelings of isolation (p165). They (2013) also found that mentors were effective at instilling confidence and acting as a source for new ideas for practice for ECEs (p166). Likewise Laura Doan (2013) argues that mentoring relationships can ameliorate stress and feelings of being overwhelmed and isolation within the mentee (p21). Doan (2013) further suggests that that the close reciprocal relationship that develops within the mentoring pair can create a culture of learning (p21) within a programme or community, a point with which Elizabeth Jones (2002) agrees (p122).

Jillian Rodd (2006) argues that those acting in a mentoring role must have considerable experience and expertise with the early years in order to provide support and guidance to others (p172). Beyond that, she also suggests that mentors should be empathetic and understanding; have 'an interest in lifelong learning and professional development' (p172). As is the case for Oliva and Beatrice, their relationships with others were not formally defined as mentoring relationships and they involved informal mentoring activities to support practice. However Melody

Hobbs and Rachel Stovall (1997) argue that mentoring relationships should be more formalised as there is a strong need for mentors to undergo specific training in order for their relationships to be effective (p93).

Ann Pelo and Margie Carter (2018) extend the concept of mentoring and present an alternative model to support practice change of ECEs (p73). They (2018) suggest that traditional mentoring models may focus too narrowly on teaching educators strategies and techniques (p73) whereas a 'pedagogical companion', who has advanced training in early childhood education, is designed to 'walk alongside' the ECE to observe their practice and prompt and support their reflection (p78). Pedagogical companions focus on their efforts on prompting the educator's critical thinking and inquiry into their practice (p72) rather than 'teaching them what they ought to do or directing their journey' (p75). However, for many programmes in Ontario's early years sector a dedicated position such as this would be considered a luxury as there is no requirement to have additional staffing above what is legally required to meet the adult-child ratios identified in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*. Likewise, while mentoring relationships exist within the sector, as illustrated in the stories of Olivia and Beatrice, there is no government support provided for formalised mentoring and pedagogical leadership building programmes.

The lack of support is in stark contrast to what the Ontario government provides to teachers in the school system. For example, publicly funded school boards are provided annual funding to provide the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) (Ontario, 2019) for elementary and secondary school teachers. A key component of NTIP involves a mentoring relationship between a novice teacher and a more experienced teacher (Ontario, 2019, p10). Funding to support the mentoring component include joint release days for mentoring pairs to meet and collaborate as well as a program staff to oversee the programme across the school board (p22). A longitudinal review of the programme found that it was effective at increasing new teacher's confidence, efficacy, instructional practice, and commitment to continuous learning (Ontario, 2016, p28). These outcomes would also be desirable

for ECEs as they shift pedagogical practices, yet the government has not established a comparable initiative for the early years sector in Ontario.

The absence of any kind of formal government support for practice change in the profession during the implementation of HDLH (Ontario 2014a) was a lost opportunity to leverage the power of relationships. Future changes to pedagogical policy should include dedicated practice support as a part of the implementation plan. Specific consideration for mentorship programmes would be particularly feasible since there is an existing model for the teaching profession that could be leveraged and applied to the early years sector. The effectiveness and desirable outcomes associated with NTIP further supports the appropriateness of mentoring to support educators during pedagogical change initiatives. Päivi Kupila and Kirsti Karila (2019) suggest that mentoring can also contribute to creating or developing professional identity, a concept that is further explored in the next section.

10.3.2: Welcoming well-being

> Well-being addresses the importance of physical and mental health and wellness. It incorporates capacities such as selfcare, sense of self, and self-regulation skills (Ontario, 2014a, p7)

Marla Scherr and Tricia Johnson (2019) argue that professional identity is the 'intersection of personal history, self-perception, professional knowledge, and practices, beliefs, and values' (p405). Identity is built internally by the professional's own sense of self and their work however it is influenced by external factors such as their work environment and conditions as well as the system and public perception of the collective professional identity (p406).

Professional identity is important for educators because the self-knowledge associated with sense of self is a key component of 'presence', defined by Carol Rodgers and Miriam Raider-Roth (2006) as

> as a state of alert awareness, receptivity, and connectedness to the mental, emotional, and physical workings of both the individual and the group in the

> context of their learning environment, and the ability to respond with a considered and compassionate best next step (p 265)

Rodgers and Raider-Roth further argue that educators who demonstrate presence in the classroom often engage in more authentic relations and interactions with others (p265). This may assist educators in using the pedagogy of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) since the document encourages educators to form authentic relationships children, families and colleagues (p7). Developing the self-knowledge needed to form identity is not limited to a professional context. When educators' professional and personal identities align, they practice from a place that Parker Palmer (2007) calls an 'undivided self':

> In the undivided self every major thread of one's life experience is honored to create a weave of…coherence and strength…Such a self, inwardly integrated is able to make the outward connections on which good teaching depends (p16)

Without the alignment of the personal and professional, educators risk practicing within the 'artificially constructed notion' of what they believe an ideal educator should be (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p272) and the gap created between these identities creates problematic tension within the educator.

While educators need to engage in the self-work of developing their individual professional identity, their growth is significantly shaped by others including their 'managers, colleagues and families' (Molla and Nolan, 2018, p558) as well as by the public and government's perception of the collective identity of the profession (Hargreaves & Hopper, 2006 p184). For example, Tebeje Molla & Andrea Nolan (2019) argue that when ECEs feel respected by those in their organisation they experience improved morale, motivation and confidence (p558). Furthermore, when governments invest in the early years workforce it reinforces the importance and professional nature of their work. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2006) concurs and further argues that in order to reap the economic benefits of a high-quality early learning and care system, nations should focus on developing and retaining qualified workforce (p168).

Recent efforts in Scotland to professionalise the early years workforce through the introduction of a requirement for practitioners to achieve the Childhood Practice Award appear to have had a positive impact in this area. Mary Wingrave and Margery McMahon (2016) found that early years staff who achieved the Award by completing an undergraduate degree noted that they felt 'more confident and motivated' in their professional practice (p720). In contrast Gillian Doherty and her colleagues (2006) note that some Canadian provinces have engaged in efforts to improve the public perception of the professional work in the early years sector however professionalization efforts have been limited by regional priorities (p62). This leads me to suggest that pedagogical policy cannot be successfully implemented without consideration of and support for engaging the workforce in ways that help them to feel like 'capable and competent' (Ontario, 2014a) partners in children's learning experiences.

One way that the government of Scotland has supported early years practitioners in viewing themselves as capable and competent professionals has been to institute the Standard for Childhood Practice (Scottish Social Service Council, 2015) (the Standard) through the regulatory body, the Scottish Social Service Council. Not only does the Standard (Scottish Social Service Council, 2015) set out expectations for early years practitioners but it also provides a mirror for practitioners to examine their own practice. Similarly, Ontario has the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2017a), which was developed by Ontario's regulatory body for the profession, the College of Early Childhood Educators (the College). However, unlike its' Scottish counterpart, Ontario's document outlines only general standards and does not differentiate between professional roles in the sector. This is because the Registration Regulation O.Reg 221/08 under the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, which is the governing legislation of the College, only includes provisions for a general level or classification of ECEs. This means that all ECEs are recognised by the government in the same way regardless of years of service, the role they may hold, or additional credentials and qualifications they may have earned.

This issue has been identified by the Association of Early Childhood Educators (AECEO) as a contributor to the current workforce supply and retention challenges through their Decent Work campaign (AECEO, 2017, p8). Specifically they argue that

> there are limited options for roles in the early years and child care sector that represent commensurate opportunities and pathways for career growth—leading many with credentials to use them as stepping stones into other fields (AECEO, 2017, p8)

The creation of differentiated standards of practice that reflect a range of qualifications and credentials can serve as a career ladder so that lifelong opportunities within the profession are clearly identified. While regulatory changes would be required to facilitate this change, it would be consistent with policy approaches also under consideration in other jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom (Nutbrown, 2012), the United States (Allen & Kelly, 2015), and Australia (Jackson, 2021).

10.3.3: Enhance engagement

'Engagement suggests a state of being involved and focused' (Ontario, 2014a, p7). Every change initiative produces various levels of engagement and evokes responses amongst people ranging from enthusiasm to resistance as illustrated in the seminal study by Everett Rogers (1962). Rogers (1962) identifies the four main groups that emerge when a change or innovation initiative is introduced as:

- Early adopters, who are enthusiastic about change and are the first to embrace change when it is introduced;
- Early majority, who are somewhat wary and contemplative but embrace change early on in the change process;
- Late majority, who are more sceptical and cautious about change; and
- Laggards, who resist change and seek to retain the old way of doing things (p150).

Based on this description it is relatively easy to identify Rosie as being part of the early adopter group with her immediate enthusiasm for the new pedagogy when it

was first introduced. Beatrice, Olivia, and Claire are likely a part of the early majority group. All embraced change early in the process, albeit at different rates and with some challenges. The inclusion of the late majority and laggards groups complicates the resistance landscape. It is difficult to assess whether or not an individual is truly opposed to the change and therefore will never change, whether they cannot change because they do not have the necessary skills or capability, or whether they simply are lagging behind their colleagues on their change journey.

Understanding the underlying cause of perceived resistance can help to determine what strategy is most appropriate given the specific circumstance. Change experts John Kotter and Leonard Schlesinger (2008) suggest that there are a range of tailored strategies that can be used. For example, resistance due to misinformation may be address through education and communication (Kotter and Schlesinger, 2008, p134), while negotiation and agreement may be more appropriate in cases where participants are at risk of losing position or power (p135). In many cases participation and involvement in the change process can assist individuals in 'buying into' change and overcoming their initial resistance (p134). When participants become engaged, they develop a vested interest in the success of the change and work towards achieving its goals (p134).

However the strategies provided by Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) do not adequately address cases of practitioner capability that were identified in Chapter 3, where an educator is unable to change their practice even with additional support and training. Termination of employment may be contemplated, however there are complexities related to employee legal rights[11] and labour representation agreements that may make this approach difficult, if not impossible. Rather I suggest that it is incumbent upon those responsible for developing the plans for change to consider the needs of various employees within

[11] The *Ontario Human Rights Code* provides equal rights and opportunities without discrimination for everyone in Ontario. Specific provisions related to employment rights are summarised on the Ontario Human Rights Commission website here: http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/social_areas/employment (07/05/21). Building on these provisions, the additional rights of employees and the legal obligations of employers are outlined in the *Employment Standards Act* and the *Labour Relations Act,* and are summarised on the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skill Development website here: https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/atwork/workplacerights_fs.php (07/05/21).

the early years system and the role that each can play within a changed system during the planning stages prior to implementation. Differentiation of roles and responsibilities can be considered within a unifying framework of core competencies, values, and commitment to the guiding foundations of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). Once new expectations are implemented, only those practitioners who meet these expectations would be considered for new positions, thus establishing a new norm going forward. Such an approach would allow for legacy expectations to be phased out through natural attrition over time.

10.3.4: Encourage expression

> Expression or communication (to be heard, as well as to listen) may take many different forms (Ontario 2014a, p7)

Reflection is one form of expression available to ECEs. The experience of the participants as told through their stories suggests that strategies to support change should provide opportunities for educators to engage in reflection about their practice in relation to key aspects of good practice. William Ayers (2004) suggests that reflection involves thinking about problems, assessing situations and strategies, and preparing to act (p110). Joseph Raelin (2002) argues that reflection is preferred over trial-and-error experimentation because it tends to delve deeper into fundamental assumptions that influence decisions and behaviour (p66). Isauro Escamilla and Daniel Meier (2018) also argue that reflection, as type of inquiry, can lead to 'meaningful and effective professional change' especially when it forms part of a facilitated practice group (p18).

Similarly, the College of Early Childhood Educators (2018) also promotes the creation of 'communities of practice' for ECEs in Ontario to come together to 'discuss, learn, and strategize' ways to advance professional practices both as individuals or as a group (p2). Escamilla and Meier (2018) note that providing long term professional support for educators in the form of reflection and inquiry groups helps to rightfully position ECEs as 'highly capable theory-makers, problem-solvers, and change' (p4). Thus individual reflection as well as group reflection can be used as support strategies for educators as they move through change.

However the creation of such groups and their ongoing sustainability and effectiveness cannot solely be left to the responsibility of educators. Organisations and system leaders have a key role in creating space that allows for reflection to occur. A workforce survey conducted by the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (2016) reports that unlike their school counterparts, staff working in community-based early years programmes are rarely provided with release time away from the classroom to engage in planning activities, let alone time to participate in inquiry and reflective practice self-guided activities or groups (p8). If ECEs are able to engage in reflective activities, they typically participate during workday lunch breaks instead of taking nutrition or wellness breaks, or they participate outside of work hours at and at their own expense (p8). Such organisational practices do necessarily support full participation of educators in the change process. Raelin (2002) reminds leaders that during times of change leaders need to create cultures within organisations where practitioners feel safe to express and challenge assumptions about practice without fear of retribution or retaliation (p68). Chapter 2 highlighted the complexity of practice change. Therefore, if organisational leaders expect educators to change their practices to support a new pedagogical direction, it is reasonable to expect that the educators in question need to have opportunities to plan for and experiment with their practice change. The Association of Early Childhood Educators's (n.d.) Decent Work Charter provides practical recommendations for employers in supporting educators (p3). These recommendations include ensuring that staff rooms contain professional resources to support professional development and programme planning; and providing educators with protected time during the day to engage in programme planning activities (p3). For their part, government can ensure these supports are provided to educators by requiring employers to implement them, not unlike the way they required organisations to develop programmes statements to support the implementation of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a).

10.3.5: Walking the walk

Ann Pelo and Margie Carter (2018) suggest that leaders should 'engage educators in ways that parallel how we hope they will engage with children' (p84). It is

important consideration for every day interaction with educators and its' importance may be more heightened during time of change. For the implementation of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a), a pedagogy that this grounded in the formation of respectful, supportive, authentic relationships, this appears to be fitting wise advice. If leaders want educators to create programmes where children have a sense of belonging; where their well-being is supported; where they can be an active and engaged learner; and where they are encouraged to express themselves in their hundreds of languages; leaders need to consider how they are mirroring these kinds of supports for educators. The experiences of the participants suggest that change initiatives require the concurrent implementation of a workforce support strategy. Such a strategy would be inclusive of all segments of the workforce. It would thoughtfully and compassionately consider how to address those educators who are unable to change. For those educators who choose to engage in change, it would provide them opportunities to engage in individual and group reflection so that they can explore and develop their professional identities as they consider changes to their professional practices. It would also leverage the role of others so that educators could benefit from mentoring and pedagogical companionship and simultaneously provide opportunities for other educators to expand their practice by mentoring others.

Through workshops focused on supporting staff to 'let go' and embrace their authentic self, and allowing different programmes to forge ahead with changes at their own pace, Olivia's story provides an excellent example of a leader who is committed to supporting staff through change. By attending to needs of the workforce during change, change leaders like Olivia are not only supporting the personal and professional growth of staff, they are positioning their whole organisations for successful change. Applying this example at a system level would mean that government, as the change leader, should be involved in supporting the workforce through change directly and by enabling organisations to do so as well. Other jurisdictions including Scotland and more recently the state of Victoria, Australia have already taken action towards developing their early years workforce. For example, Scotland is supporting their workforce by investing in skill development and providing support to new educators through mentorship (Scottish

Government, 2021). Similarly in Victoria, Australia, the state government is providing access to professional practice coaching and supporting the creation and sustainability of communities of practice (Victoria, Australia State Government, 2021).

To their credit, the Ontario government has supported some workforce development initiatives in the past however a province-wide plan currently does not exist. Notwithstanding the experimentation with the Centres of Excellence, described in Chapter 1 (p32), the government has tended to favour one-off Parmendean style training. Yet, the key findings discussed in this section suggest that original goals of the Centres of Excellence that focus on ongoing capacity building and support are still relevant and worth considering. These findings were based on the experiences of the study's participants and were limited by the nature of narrative inquiry and choices made in the design of this specific study. In the next section I turn my attention to further examining the limitations of this study.

10.4: Limitations of this study

The previous section provided an overview of the limitations of the narrative inquiry approach within the context of presenting key findings. The limitations discussed apply to all studies using a narrative inquiry approach. This section narrows that discussion to address the limitations that specifically apply to this research study. These limitations focus on my role as the researcher as well as aspects of the participant selection and study design.

10.4.1: The secret stories of a former public servant

Having spent much of my career as a public servant in the early years policy area, I found throughout the development of Chapter 1 that I was bumping up against my 'secret stories' (Clandin & Connelly, 1995, p15) regarding the development of and intentions behind the policy initiatives that I was describing. My stories are my perception of what I believe 'really' happened, and what I believe to be are the

intentions behind those actions. They are shaped by my thoughts, feeling about my past experiences. Like all stories, my stories are my reality. However, as I researched the policy initiatives for Chapter 1, I found that my stories are often in contrast to the 'sacred' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p8), unquestionable stories that the institution of government propagates to the public through published documents. As a former public servant, I remain bound by my Oath of Office (Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006) to share only publicly disclosed information, and to keep the secrets of my stories to myself. As such, Chapter 1 only includes the sacred public stories of early years policies that are universally available.

Throughout the research process I endeavoured to practice reflexivity by both being aware of myself within the current situation and identifying my role in creating the current situation (Glesne, 2011, p150). While I am constrained by my ability to only talk about the details my 'secret' stories with those colleagues with whom I shared the original experiences, I would argue that this reflexive act of identifying and stating this limitation has added to the validity and trustworthiness of the text. Knowing my professional background, if left unsaid it could have been questioned whether I was using insider information to shape a narrative in a way that may have differed from what the participants and the reader would have seen as the reality of the early years policy environment.

10.4.2: The trouble with time

Due to the length of time that had passed since HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) was introduced many of the documents such as workshop notes, resources, and tip sheets that were used by the participants during the implementation were no longer available for review and inclusion as artefacts for this study. With the exception of Olivia, who had filing cabinets full of documentation that we reviewed together as a part of our first walking interview, the participants had to rely on their memories of events to tell their stories. Time provides an opportunity look back on experiences through a softer more reflective lens. However Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note memories can be limiting as they tend to smooth over or erase small details (p83). Neither the participants nor I know what, if any, details

were overlooked. There is no way of knowing for certain if any forgotten details would have materially changed the stories or my subsequent analysis. As time progresses, memories may further fade meaning these details may become beyond reach. Time stops for no one.

The progression of time not only complicates the details within stories but the stories itself. Several authors, including Donald Polkinghorne, (1988), Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (1990), Charlotte Linde (1993), and Jerome Bruner (1996) contend that one of the challenges of working with the stories of humans is that they are not static, rather they continually evolve over time. As soon as the participants shared their stories with me the stories were no longer the same. Stories are temporal and time-bound. Understanding is gained and further moulded by what John Dewey (1938) calls the 'experiential continuum' (p36). Applying this concept suggest that looking back, past experiences shape the perception and understanding of the current situation. At the same time, past experiences are viewed through the lens of the current situation which may lead to changes in the understanding of the past experience. Similar challenges exist when looking forward as the current experience shapes the direction of future situations, as the view of the future changes as the current situation changes. The experiential continuum is particularly relevant to a narrative inquiry because as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) observe participants of a narrative inquiry are

> in the midst of living their stories. Their lives do not begin the day we arrive nor do they end as we leave. Their lives continue (pp. 63-64)

I entered the 'midst' of my participants' experiential continuum and so the stories that I have presented in this study represent their perception and understanding of their past experience at the point of time of the interviews. Their stories would likely be different if they were told now.

As noted in the previous chapter, the walking interviews were conducted between December 2019 and March 2020. My interview with Claire happened a mere few days before the global COVID-19 pandemic prompted a full provincial lockdown. It is not known how the experience of the pandemic lockdown would have influenced the participants' view of their experience with HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). Perhaps

what they had once seen as overwhelming obstacles of implementation have been dwarfed by the challenges of the pandemic. Perhaps the pandemic has changed their perception of the world and their experiences as it has for me. Temporality raises unanswerable questions. It also creates incongruence of view. The participants shared their stories in a world where a global pandemic did not exist, while the analysis of the stories took place in the midst of the pandemic lockdown. I recognise that even under normal circumstances my continuum of experience would have had some influence on the way I considered the stories through the analysis process. However the influence of an unprecedented global pandemic cannot be underestimated. Experience will change perspective and arguably a profound experience will profoundly change perspective. The influence of global events extends beyond the analysis of the stories, as I turn to reflect on the limitations of the selection of the participants through that lens.

10.4.3: Attending to participants

I selected the participants for this study because I was interested in understanding the experiences of change of ECEs who were nearing retirement. As noted Chapter 1, this age group has practiced the profession amidst a significant shift in the government's early years policy agenda and I wanted to ensure that I captured their voices before they faded into retirement and distanced themselves from the sector. I also wanted to focus on ECEs who had embraced HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). However, this narrowly focused selection criteria combined with small participant size associated with the narrative inquiry approach means that there are voices missing from this study.

In its annual membership data report, the regulating body for ECEs in Ontario, College of Early Childhood Educators (2020b), reports that as of June 30, 2020 the average age of a practising ECEs was 39 years old (p13). The report (2020a) also reports that age group that this study's participants belong to represents only 11% of the more than 57,000 ECEs that are practising in the province. This indicates that the participants of this study are not representative of the broader professional population. However it should be noted that this study is not designed to explore how age and years of practice influence the change experience. John

Dewey's (1938) work demonstrates the connection between experience and perception of experience (p36). The passage of time creates opportunities for more experience and more touchpoints for reflection. This suggests that the experiences of ECEs who are early in their professional life would be different than those of the participants who are nearing the transition point to retirement.

This study also does not consider the experiences of ECEs who did not embraced the concepts of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). Beatrice's story illustrates a path of overcoming resistance to successfully embrace and eventually integrate the concepts into her professional practice. Her story provides some, albeit limited, insight into how a group that did not adopt the concepts of How Did Learning Happen? (Ontario, 2014a) may have experienced the implementation of the document. However the experiences of this group of non-adopters have not been directly explored. Even if this study had expressly sought to include this group, it may not have been possible. Notwithstanding assurances of protected confidentiality and anonymity through the research process, there are challenges with accessing a group of practicing professionals who identify as being in non-compliance with government direction. The fear of retribution may present a professional risk.

Perhaps the most significant limitation of the participant selection is an absence of racial diversity. When the world stopped in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, it shone a light on the injustices experienced by racialized populations. The social awakening that followed profoundly affected me and my view of the world. I am noticing things that had not previously surfaced in my consciousness and am learning to view things through a different lens. The College of Early Childhood Educators (2020c) has committed to an anti-racism stance in regulating the profession and so this learning will continue for everyone involved in the profession. Part of that commitment involves using position to elevate and amplify the voices of ECEs who identify as Black, Indigenous or People of Colour (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2020c). In an unaware state, a racially homogeneous participant group was selected for this study, and an opportunity for elevating and amplifying diverse voices was lost. However the limiting choices made in the

design of this study are not necessarily limitations that apply to the opportunities for future studies that are explored in the next section.

10.5: Looking further afield

Through the course of reviewing the literature for this study I discovered that within the available education literature there is a dearth of literature that examines the early years and the early years workforce. The availability is even more limited when seeking literature that addresses the uniqueness of Ontario's system. This dissertation seeks to fill some of that gap; however there is still opportunity for more.

Corrine Glesne (2011) argues, 'research does not end. Instead, it points the way for yet another search' (p275). In Chapter 1, I identified that the provincial government (2020) has committed to reviewing and updating HDLH (Ontario, 2014a). Building off the design and findings of this study, there could be an opportunity to follow up with the participants to compare and contrast their experiences with the implementation of an updated pedagogical policy document to their experiences with the original implementation. This would allow the study to examine the experience of implementation as it is occurring, rather than relying on the memories of participants as was the case for this study. However, plans for the review have not yet been publicly shared and it is possible that the participants may not be available to participate. That said, it would be possible to conduct a similar study with a new group of participants with varied experiential and racial backgrounds once the government releases plans for the document review.

A second opportunity has recently presented itself with the release of the federal government's budget (2021). As part of their commitment to invest in a post-pandemic recovery plan for Canada, the federal government (2021) has committed to developing a national child care system (p103). In developing and implementing the new system the government

> will work to ensure that early childhood educators are at the heart of the system, by valuing their work and providing them with the training and

> development opportunities needed to support their growth (Canada, 2021, p103)

This plan for a national early years system, that will focus on and invest in the workforce, is an exciting promise. It is in stark contrast to the provincial early years policy initiatives presented in Chapter 1, which for the most part failed to reference the workforce and their contributions. This plan presents another opportunity to explore the experiences of the workforce as the plan unfolds and programmes shift to a place within the new system. As change continues for the early years workforce at the provincial and federal levels, there is rich opportunity to study experience and raise the voices of the workforce.

10.6: Final thoughts

As this research study concludes I find myself writing about a pedagogical policy document that is fundamentally about 'learning through relationships' (Ontario, 2014a, p5) while in the isolation of a third provincial pandemic lock down. This irony fills me with a sense of poignancy and wistfulness as I find myself yearning for even the most basic form of human connection. Never before have I appreciated the power of relationships and I know that the solitude associated with this pandemic is not the only reason for these feelings and perspective. Corrine Glesne (2011) suggests that that sometimes at the end of a research study 'you may feel differently about yourself [because] long-time immersion in someone else's life enhances your general self-awareness' (p97). She (2011) further notes that 'inquiry is a search that leads into others' lives, your discipline, your practice and yourself' (p274). This has been true of my experience with this study.

Kim Jeong-Hee (2016) argues that the aim of narrative inquiry 'is to understand and explore what it means to be human' (p245). To truly understand and explore, the researcher must consistently engage the skills and attributes that Margaret McAllister and Jennifer Row (2003) identify as

> compassion, passion, integrity, tolerance of ambiguity, willingness to play with ideas, knowledge and inquiry, commitment to viewing the social world from the viewpoints of the people being studied, valuing of detail and

> willingness to inject something of themselves into the research process and its outcomes (pp. 296-297)

It is then not surprising, and perhaps poetically appropriate in a literary sense, that by engaging in a study designed to better understand the experiences that other ECEs had with change, that I too experienced change. As discussed in an earlier section, through the course of the research study I came to see the world differently. This was due in part as a result of global events, but largely it was because I began to see events through the lens of my participants' experiences. I spent more time with HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) exploring the content and the nuances of the wording than I ever had before. Because of that time I now 'see' that document differently too. Now, when I look at HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) I see Beatrice's natural playground dotted with tree stumps; Olivia's classroom with loose parts and boxes; Rosie's little patch of grass growing under the ice; and Claire's documentation making the learning visible. I also see educators who on their journey from instruction to inquiry have struggled with letting go; had the courage to be vulnerable; challenged others to rise to the opportunity of change; and gave themselves and others permission to take risks. I see the stories of HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) coming to life in vivid colour.

HDLH (Ontario, 2014a) asserts that

> Every educator should feel he or she belongs, is a valuable contributor, and deserves the opportunity to engage in meaningful work (p7)

However this principle has not always been the experience of ECEs as they navigate through government mandated change. As the early years system in Ontario continues to evolve, it is my hope that future government initiatives includes plans for supporting the multiple needs of the workforce as they continue down their individual paths from instruction to inquiry.

Epilogue

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland
Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Finance
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

April 19, 2021

Dear Ms. Freeland,

Congratulations on delivering a bold plan for Canada's pandemic recovery in today's Budget announcement! I was excited to hear of your government's plans to create a high quality, accessible national early learning and care system for Canadian children. As an early childhood educator from the province of Ontario I was also heartened to read about your commitment to ensuring

> that early childhood educators are at the heart of the system, by valuing their work and providing them with the training and development opportunities needed to support their growth (Canada, 2021, p103)

As I know you are aware, building a national early learning and care system is a mammoth and complex undertaking that will further complicated by the patchwork of the existing fragmented provincial and territorial 'systems'. Ensuring that change happens on the ground at the individual programme and practitioner level will also be challenging. However, with the appropriate supports in place early childhood educators can be leveraged to advance the change agenda. They are capable and competent professionals who have much to contribute to a change agenda.

For the past two years I have been engaged in a narrative inquiry involving four experienced early childhood educators as a part of my doctoral studies at the University of Glasgow. This study aimed to better understand how these early childhood educators experienced the implementation of How Does Learning

Happen?[12] Ontario's pedagogy for the early years. The stories of these extraordinary professionals revealed that the path from instruction to inquiry was fraught with challenges; however it also sprinkled with hope for a new and better future. Their experiences have led me to believe in the need for an inclusive and multi-facetted workforce support initiative that would accompany pedagogical changes. Such an initiative would promote opportunities for practitioners to engage in individual and group reflection. It would also leverage the experiences of other professionals in form of mentoring or pedagogical companionship. Importantly, it would recognise the range of qualifications and role within the system to strengthen the identity of early childhood educators as professionals and support the retention of talented, qualified staff. Like you, other jurisdictions such as Scotland, United Kingdom and Victoria, Australia have acknowledged the potential of the early years profession and have taken steps towards actualising it.

If this study can be of service to you in your efforts moving forward I would be honoured to make myself available in an advisory capacity as you embark on this landmark initiative for our collective future.

With gratitude,

Cynthia Abel, RECE

c. The Honourable Ahmed Hussan, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Ontario Minister of Education

[12] Available on the Ontario Ministry of Education website at https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf

Appendix: Identifying Themes

Professional identity	
Sub-theme	Examples of prominent codes from transcripts
Competence	Claire walking interview 1: • There were times I think that you could look back and think I probably wasn't the best ECE (lines 193-4) • where does your own sense of professionalism um your own sense of any of this stuff come from (lines 219-20) Rosie walking interview 2: • competency is, people take that literal translation and think they're not competent they can't do a, b, c or d (lines 2-3) • if you say oh, I'm competent you have to be you have to have acquired all of that knowledge, skill, whatever, which is so not true (lines 23-4) • I liked about HDLH too is that it begins to elevate us from a checklist caregiver to a real educator and you really have to know. Now you have the science behind you. They didn't before (line 26-8) Rosie walking interview 3: • we have scientific solid evidence that I believe elevates our profession. And not only elevates our practice but elevates us to a professional status we have to embrace (lines 14-16) • I use my own experience of being a lazy educator in the early days of theme-based stuff. I never did themes because I never had time (lines 169-70)
Comparison	Claire walking interview 1: • ECEs have over the course of years have been trying to justify their existence in comparison to school teachers and kindergarten teachers as an example (lines 44-6) • where you have a percentage of them who are like Beatrice who are just like boom ran with it, and others who couldn't get their heads around switching from that theme based to this because I think they were questioning whether they were they weren't providing the best practice because they didn't have a theme (lines 224-8) • I think that's still the struggle to come is seeing the value of an ECE versus an OCT in the kindergarten programme and everyone finding that equitable value instead of it being a two tiered system (lines 486-8) Claire phone interview 2: • Child care is not just custodial care, it is educational care (line 50)

Professional identity	
	• We wanted them to think of themselves as professionals in their own right, not just copying kindergarten teachers (lines 113-4) Olivia walking interview 1: • I wasn't, I wasn't willing to share it because I didn't feel like there was a safe place to do it. I was the only one up north, I wasn't seeing it anywhere else (line 495-7) • Our learning stories look different, our documentation looked different before and it's evolved and that's okay (lines 500-1)

Table 10: Sub-themes and excerpts supporting the 'professional identity' theme

Validation	
Sub-theme	Examples of prominent codes from transcripts
Own need	Beatrice walking interview 1: • I don't like a lot of recognition (line 721) • People who haven't really lived it don't really believe and understand where the passion comes from. It's not for recognition. It's not for reward. It's for the children and it's for your own personal self (lines 734-35) • I want to do the best job I can for you so I want to do this. But having Penny lead me and direct me and telling me it was going to be okay. (lines 355-56) • I can do this for you, but give me some job security (line 29) Claire walking interview 1: • I wish somebody would have of given me permission or would have pushed me a little bit more to do more (lines 188-9) Rosie walking interview 3: • so that small gesture that you've done has made me feel this way which is going to make me do this and now look at the ripple effect that you've had, you had, just by coming up here and giving me that. So I think we don't celebrate people who, we don't celebrate people period and that's the problem (lines 367-70)
Other's need	Claire walking interview 1: • Sometimes people just need to be reminded of the fact that you know you came in here with a passion (lines 175-6)

Validation	
	Olivia walking interview 1: • I would say, 'nobody goes to work in the mine and works all day to come and get a certificate to say you did a good job' Our teams, we hear over and over again in our surveys that they don't feel valued. That they want a certificate. That acknowledgement is something that they need (line 461-4) • but I never took time to do this. Because I didn't think, not because I didn't think they deserved it, but I didn't think they needed it; because a miner didn't need it. Nobody ever patted my mother's back. She worked in a coal mine (lines 503-5) Rosie walking interview 1: • for me part of it was giving credibility to what we do and recognizing that what we do is so important and so valid (lines 27-9)

Table 11: Sub-themes and excerpts supporting the 'validation' theme

Role of others	
Sub-theme	Examples of prominent codes from transcripts
Leaders	Beatrice walking interview 1: • when you have a really strong supervisor to really firmly believes it herself and could take the time (lines 333-34) • having Penny lead me and direct me and telling me it was going to be okay (lines 335-6) • I really believe that it would have been Penny who had given me that you can do this girl. You know she was the wind behind my sail that kept me moving forward (lines 365-66) Beatrice walking interview 2: • Shed the old, on with the new and it was because I was watching Penny (line 396) • Your leaders can do a lot for you. Your supervisors can do a lot for you if their passion is that contagious (lines 506-7) Rosie walking interview 3: • when I talk about leadership when I talk about change we talk about people who have a dream those are the people who are the leaders. Those are the people who I have a dream, those are the great leaders of the world that people follow because they have a dream because they're inspiring. That's what Rob was for so many of us and that's

Role of others	
	what I think change needs to be. so that's what, so it was all together for me (lines 51-5) • we're saying everyone is a leader, every RECE is a leader, but there's different types of leaders. There's going to be the leader that's way out in front and then there's going to be the followers. That's not saying that they don't have an important role (lines 338-41) Claire walking interview 1: • I think oftentimes ECE have the can lose their way if they don't have that kind of leadership from within their organization to be asking that 'what more' 'what else can we be doing' (lines 31-3) • it was lack of leadership on all sides that caused the problem (lines 99-100) • the staff trusted me enough, it's about relationships. They trusted me enough to know that I for lack of better word, rat them out individually about what came forward (lines 113-4) • make sure that they (staff) were leaders in that document and understanding it (line 171) Olivia walking interview 1: • everybody's a leader and what can you bring to the table (line 337)
Colleagues	Beatrice walking interview 1: • I wanted our whole team to be a part of it. And nobody moved. Nobody even picked one of my Pintrest pictures up off that table (lines 702-03) Beatrice walking interview 2: • I was receptive to it and some people weren't (line 509) Rosie walking interview 2: • because they're lazy. I don't know. Some educators need to be gone. Or they need to be. If you want to be a caregiver, and change diapers and wipe noses then you do that. That's not an educator (lines 32-4) Rosie walking interview 3: • Once you get onto the change, once you get onto the change you can surround yourself with other people who are on the same journey, for me it's just like gravy on the potatoes. It's just like awesome. It becomes an upward spiral. People on the change and they get excited and they feed you more information and they change more and they

Role of others	
	change more. Those people are really important (lines 316-21) • You know you can be the lone nut but if you don't have that first follower and that is a position that is really important and is sometimes, people have to be brave to do that (lines 331-3) Claire walking interview 1: • you can have individuals who start influencing other individuals in a centre about oh, don't do this, or don't do that or don't spend any more time, where you wouldn't have given that a thought except were it for the external pressures that were coming from individuals (lines 196-9) Olivia walking interview 2: • we looked at all of that and had lots of opportunities to collaborate with our teams about what that was and what was our state of readiness to move and shift like this. Because, nobody else was shifting (lines 33-5) • I don't know if they were scared to share, or like like they too were working on change, but wouldn't walk together. I'm so past this it doesn't matter I'm not in competition with anyone. So I think even our communities have moved from collaboration to isolation to little bits you know now there's something new again so we gotta kind of talk together again. Now we're in isolation again. I feel like it's there's a little bit of a survival mode going on. There's so many changes and unknowing, and you know (lines 81-7)
Experts	Rosie walking interview 1: • I was intrigued because there were academics there; there were practitioners there; everyone there; and they were all embracing this document which I thought this is so awesome (lines 8-10) • for me it was a bringing together of the academic, the research all of that with the very practical because it something that is so normal, it's so every day that anyone can understand this (lines 19-21) Rosie walking interview 2: • stuff the duck helps. Look at how much she's influenced us eh? It's amazing (lines 24-5) • true academics are not the people that I'm crabbing about. But the people who can spew the, all the language and all the words, and all the theories and quote the people, and everything it's like yeah, yeah, good, but what does that mean to me in that playroom here with this kid when I've

Role of others	
	got 23 others running around (lines 40-3) Rosie walking interview 3: • so while I am while sometimes I want to challenge academia, academics who I think live in a bit of a tower, at the same time this change helped me embrace the importance of that research and understand that, that's what's been missing. What's been missing for us and that's the critical piece in my mind and that brings us to professionalism (lines 18-21) • The real academics challenge you but in a positive way but values you. Those academics that make me insane are those who are I feel are judging the rest of us because we don't live in their world. And so then I think you know what, you all are of little value to me or anyone (lines 27-31) • we had people that are other experts if you will who were feeding bits into this that sort of validated that and expanded that and helped you to sort of figure things out (lines 145-7) Olivia • that's when the Gillian Rodd really came to our community and that thinking and that change in leadership. That's when that leadership series kinda started and we said, ok, what does change look like and how do we invest in this differently with people. It's no longer about my program. It was about our people (lines 508-11)
Government	Beatrice walking interview 1: • What do they know, they're not on the floor, they've never seen a classroom. These big wigs who sit behind a desk and tell me this. No, you can't tell me that (lines 101-3) Rosie walking interview 3: • he's a bureaucrat at one of the highest levels and he's so real and so it's easy to say, hey look, look at Rob. Like, look at the way Rob's embracing this. Look at what he's telling us. Here's a man who reads 300 people in a conference room a storybook. And so it's easy for me to use him to inspire others. Right? also, it's just like, wow, sort of validates I guess where I'm thinking I am and all of the things that I'm thinking are important are right there in him. So, I guess it's validating, it's inspiring and it's helping others I think (lines 61-7) • I do have even though I do have a love-hate relationship with persons of authority, positions of authority, I do have a

Role of others	
	healthy respect and I think that, I believe that to the extent that he (Rob) could, he was going to use this document for positive change (lines 67-70) Claire walking interview 1: • The Region used to have a very bad reputation of being the big bad Region (lines 123-4) • I remember going to a provincial meeting and saying, there's confusion throughout the community for us because the ministry didn't explain it well enough (lines 156-7)
Others	Rosie walking interview 1: • you all need to read this. Every board member needs to read this and we all need to understand it. So, bringing it to people, and bringing it to educators, I felt was not a hard sell. It was an easy sell because, partly because of the reality, partly because we are now professionals we are now regulated. And partly because it's just common sense (lines 70-4) Claire walking interview 1: • Where it would be easy for individuals whose practices may not be as bright and shiny as the rest could say I don't get any documentation time I'm not doing it because I'd have to do it on my own time. So now there is no excuse (lines 295-7) • But everybody has their own approaches to quality assurance… It's not a consistent application… Now we have requirements around Quality Child Care Niagara and they must participate in the training… They're more tick boxes than outcomes. You haven't done it, to what end (lines 362-70) Olivia walking interview 1: • definitely everyone has a different pace. On so much. I made way too many assumptions that people were at a speed, you know when they're nodding I'm thinking (lines 250-1)

Table 12: Sub-themes and excerpts supporting the 'role of others' theme

Resistance	
Sub-theme	Examples of prominent codes from transcripts
Self	Beatrice walking interview 1: • let's go for a buffet lunch with the children now. like, are you kidding me? (lines 121-22) • If the robot walks in going whoa-whoa-whoa-whoa-whoa I know I'm out (line 29) Rosie walking interview 3: • if there's a change I'm not really crazy about I will sort of take a pause to complain about it or and then okay how do I find peace with this to move it on. I might not totally embrace the whole thing but I may still find a way to move it forward (lines 232-5) • sometimes we get confused and we think that it's something we don't want but really the outcome that we want and the outcome that's expected of whatever of change is not that much different (lines 238-40)
Others	Beatrice walking interview 1: • Don't expect everyone else to jump on your learning train because you know they need their ah-ha moment too. So give them their time. And after a year I'm going, so how long are we going to wait for ah-ah moments now? So is that like not job performance now? Like? How long can we wait? (lines 337-40) Rosie walking interview 1: • I mean one of the things I learned somewhere in my learning, was that adults see change as an ending. children see change as a beginning (lines 82-83) Rosie walking interview 2: • the science is there and it makes us, you have to pay attention to that. But some people don't and that pisses me off (lines 28-30) Rosie walking interview 3 • I think they didn't get the right message maybe at the start or that these are the 20 percent of lazy people who don't want to have to change anything, who change seems like too much work, or who I would, would challenge even why they're in our profession who choose not to be professional (lines 163-6) Claire walking interview 1: • I think, there was as slight resistance if they (parents) were even that engaged (line 267)

Resistance	
	Claire phone interview 2: • there were staff who didn't want change, but we just kept hounding at them (line 98) • resistance to change was from fear. They saw themselves in a diminished role instead of an enhance role. Once they got more comfortable in that role resistance lessened (lines 101-2) • People who resisted and had problems with change were already having problems with their practice (line 110) • They thought we were taking away their foundation, but what we were really trying to do was give them their sense of professionalism (lines 120-2)

Table 13: Sub-themes and excerpts supporting the 'resistance' theme

Compliance	
Sub-theme	Examples of prominent codes from transcripts
Self	Beatrice walking interview 1: • I can do this for you, but give me some job security (line 29) Rosie walking interview 3: • though I didn't agree with it at one level, I had to un, cognitively understood it and understood it was in the best interest of the organisation and so sometimes that's what I have to do too (lines 252-4) Olivia walking interview 1: • I need to bounce with it. some people say, just walk the journey. Oh no, you bounce. Because it's like it hits you, and you gotta bounce back. Like where you gonna go (lines 189-91) • we were fortunate. When it came out we embraced it. We didn't wait for it to be legislated. We believed in those four foundations. It may have looked a little bit different, you on some of the things (lines 201-3) • we were really intentional to invest our communication with those documents. Plus the legislation, and the CCEYA, and the program statement came up it was easy. It wasn't that easy. It was time consuming (lines 231-2)

Compliance	
Others	Rosie walking interview 1: • you all need to read this. Every board member needs to read this and we all need to understand it. So, bringing it to people, and bringing it to educators, I felt was not a hard sell. It was an easy sell because, partly because of the reality, partly because we are now professionals we are now regulated. And partly because it's just common sense (lines 70-4) Claire walking interview 1: • Where it would be easy for individuals whose practices may not be as bright and shiny as the rest could say I don't get any documentation time I'm not doing it because I'd have to do it on my own time. So now there is no excuse (lines 295-7) • But everybody has their own approaches to quality assurance… It's not a consistent application… Now we have requirements around Quality Child Care Niagara and they must participate in the training… They're more tick boxes than outcomes. You haven't done it, to what end (lines 362-70) Olivia walking interview 1: • definitely everyone has a different pace. On so much. I made way too many assumptions that people were at a speed, you know when they're nodding I'm thinking (lines 250-1)

Table 14: Sub-themes and excerpts supporting the 'compliance' theme

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