

Research Problem

An Intriguing Situation

Developing a personal theory

Reviewing the existing theory

What is it with primary teachers?

*Why do they engage with some
associations and not others?*

*What do they want with their
professional learning?*

Literature Review

Who are Queensland primary teachers?

- Knowledge economy
- Implementing Change
- Learners as individuals within organisations
- Adult learners
- Lifelong learning
- Transforming practice
- Lifestages and gender

Primary teachers as adult learners

(Knowles, 1998. Merriam & Caffarella, 1999.)

- Adults need to know why they need to learn something before learning it. *Teachers need to know why they are engaging in change before they engage in transformational learning. This requires the organisation to engage them in the reasoning behind change implementation.*
- The self-concept of adults is heavily dependent upon a move toward self direction. *The self concept and identity of teachers is formed through self direction of learning. Even though organisations may justify change, developing teacher identity and commitment to change is heavily dependent on self directed learning.*
- Prior experiences of the learner provide a rich resource for learning. *Teachers provide a rich resources for their own and others' professional learning. Those wishing to engage primary teachers in professional learning should provide opportunities for them to interact and learn form other learners' experiences.*
- Adults typically become ready to learn when they experience a need to cope with a life situation or perform a task. *Teachers engage when they identify problems with their practice or are in a period of social change.*
- Adults' orientation to learning is life-centred, and they see education as a process of developing increased competency levels to achieve their full potential. *Teachers see learning as a process to increase their competency to achieve their full potential as teachers.*
- The motivation for adult learners is internal rather than external.

Literature Review

Professional associations

- Are they of value?
- Who do they represent?
- Legitimate and shadow systems – self organised groups (Delahaye, 2005)

Communities of practice

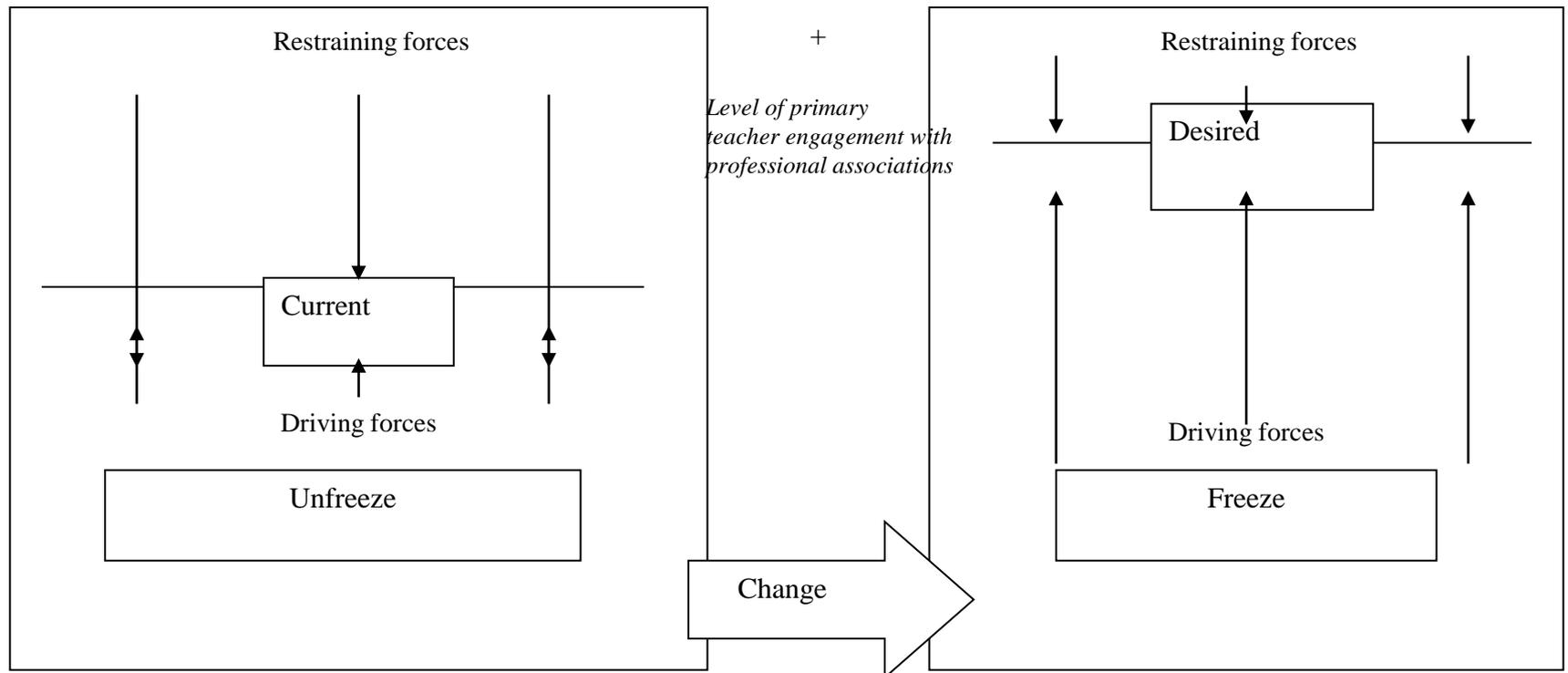
- What are communities of practice? (Wenger, 2002)
- Relevance to professional associations
- Professional learning communities

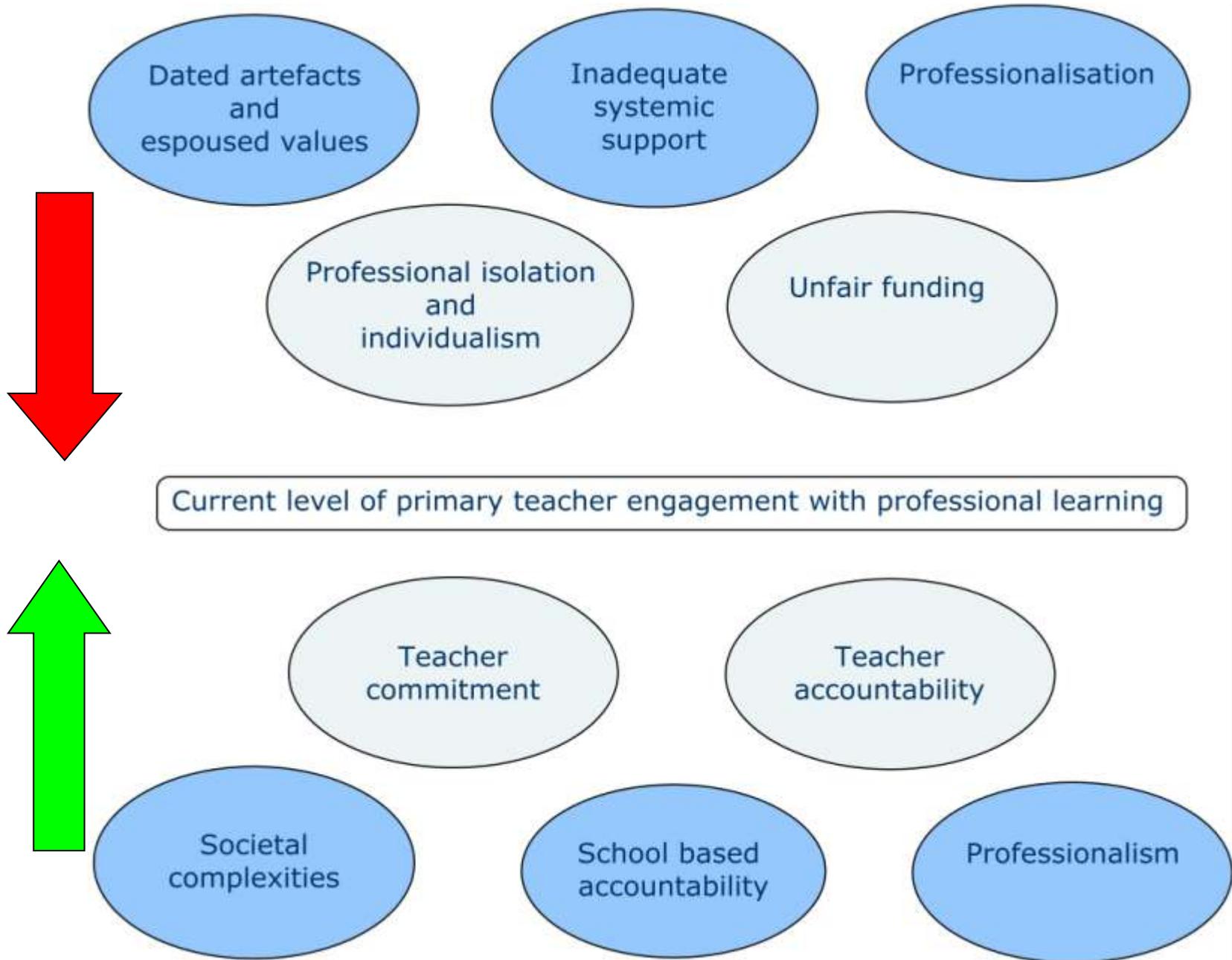
Examining forces

- The Force

Applying the force...

Kurt Lewin's force field analysis





Research Questions

What are the driving and restraining forces that affect primary teacher engagement in professional learning through communities of practice?

What do primary teachers seek from professional learning communities?

How can professional associations and networks engage primary teacher involvement in their communities of practice?

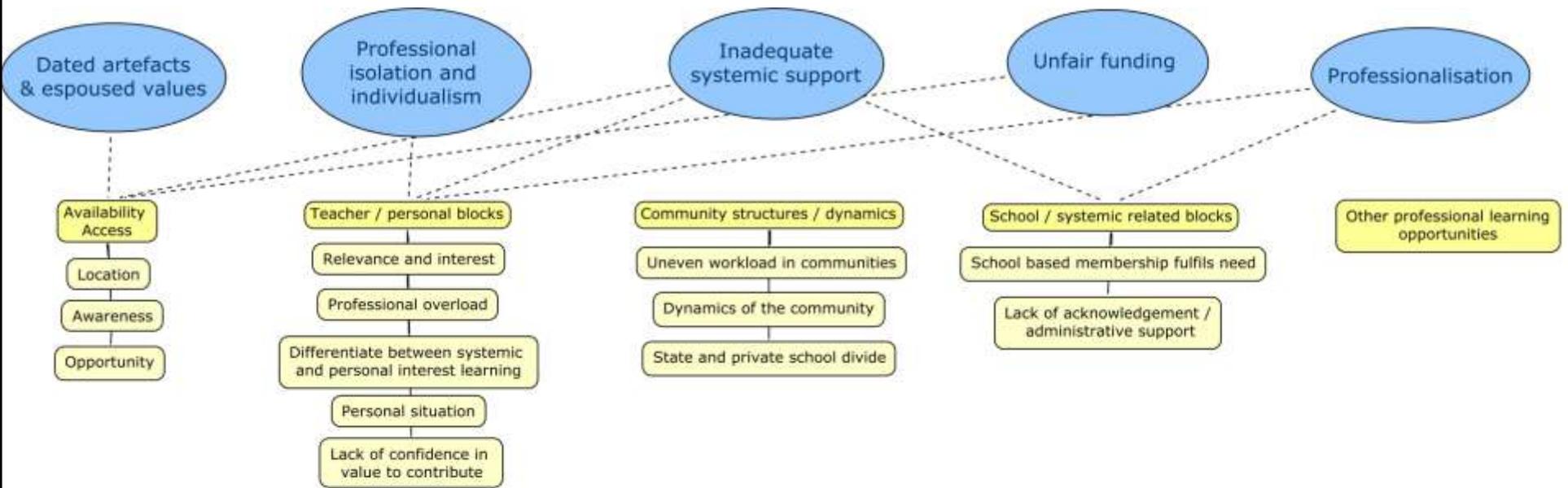
Research Design

Qualitative

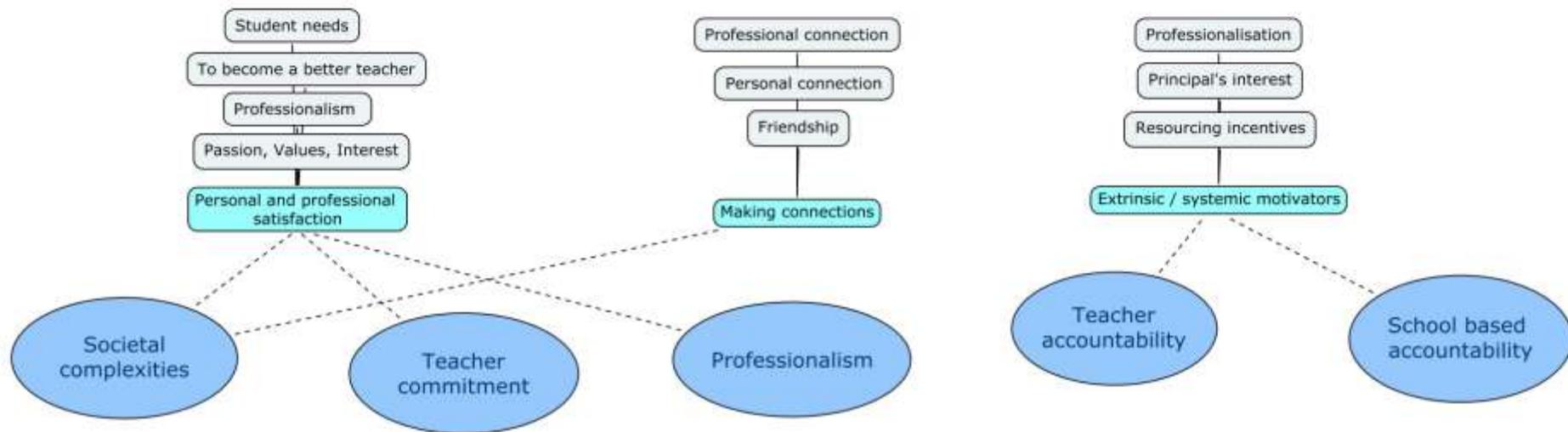
Stage One - Interviews

Stage Two – Focus Groups

Stage Three – Focus Groups



Current level of primary teacher engagement with professional learning through communities of practice as according to the interviews and literature review





Restraining Forces

Availability and Access

Location
Opportunity
Awareness

Teacher / personal blocks

Relevance and interest
Professional overload
Differentiate between systemic and personal interest learning
Personal situation
Lack of confidence
Work/life balance

Community structure and dynamics

Uneven workloads
Dynamics
State and private divide
Constitutional blocks

School / systemic blocks

School membership
Lack of acknowledgement / admin support

Other professional learning opportunities

Current level of primary teacher engagement with professional learning communities including professional associations and communities of practice.

Personal and professional satisfaction

Passion and interest
Professionalism
To become a better teacher
Student needs
Personal rewards
Professional responsibility
Professional learning

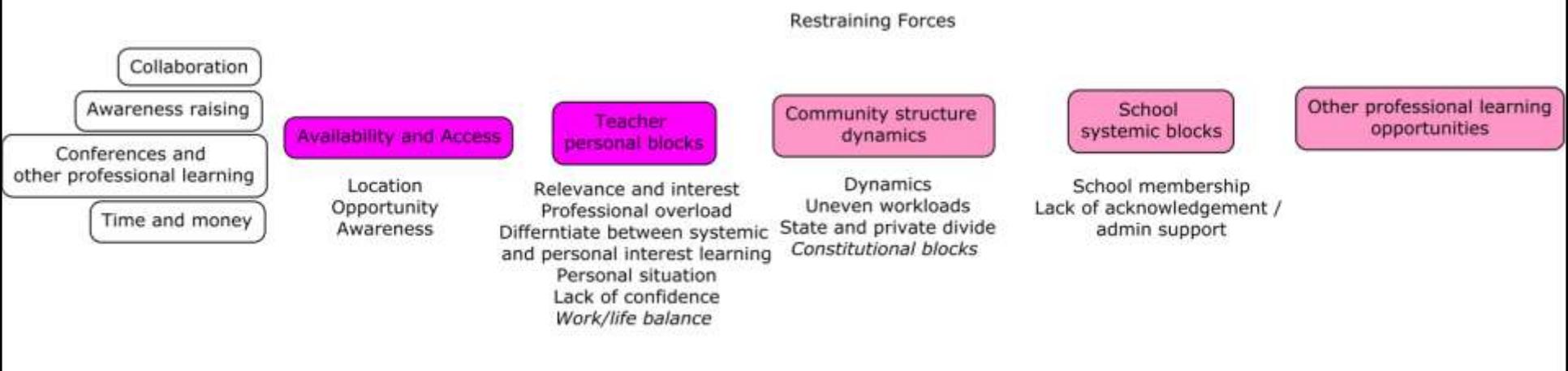
Making connections

Professional connection
Personal connection
Friendship
Social networking
Personal invitation

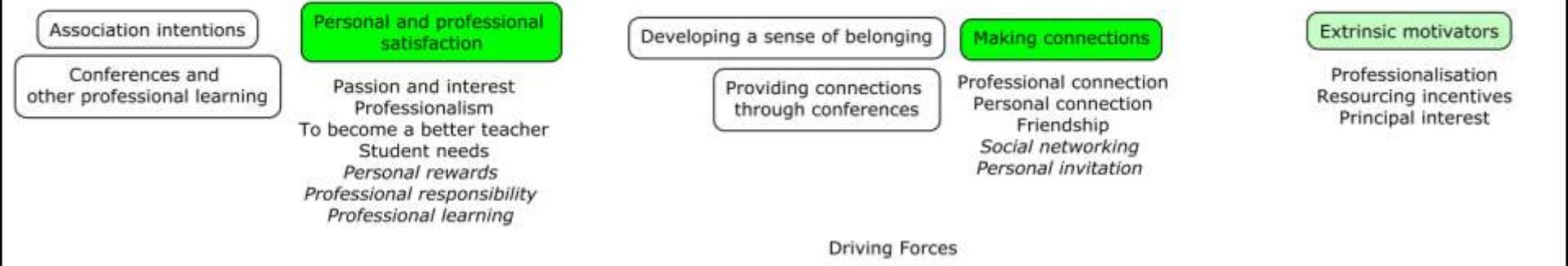
Extrinsic motivators

Professionalisation
Resourcing incentives
Principal interest

Driving Forces



Current level of primary teacher engagement with professional learning communities including professional associations and communities of practice



Unfreeze – Change

Raising more questions than answers

•INTENT

Do we want to attract primary teachers?

Do we want to engage primary teachers within the community?

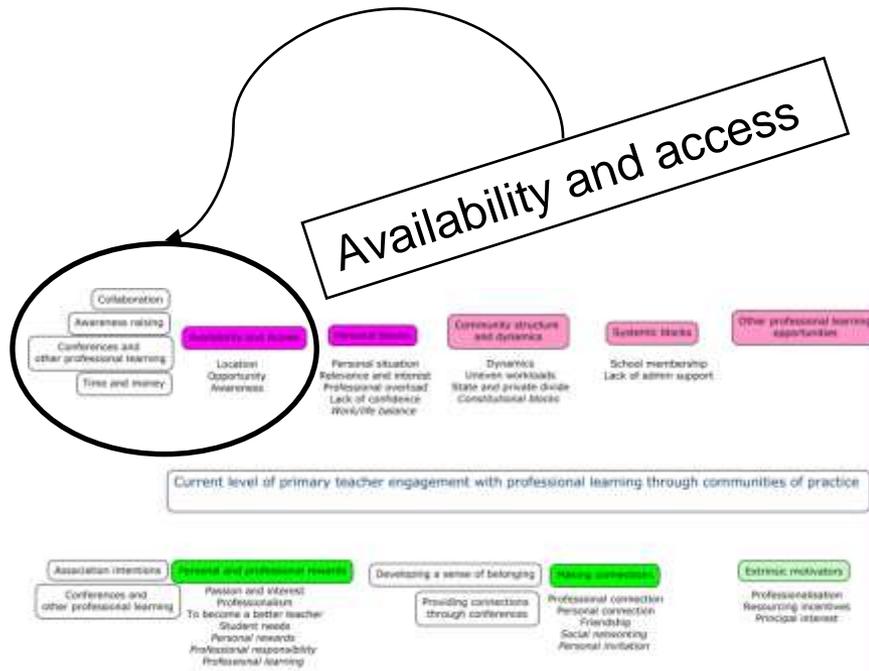
Are we authentic in our representation?

Is the intent of the community aligned with attracting primary teachers to become members or to engage them in learning opportunities or transformational learning?

•USING THE FORCE

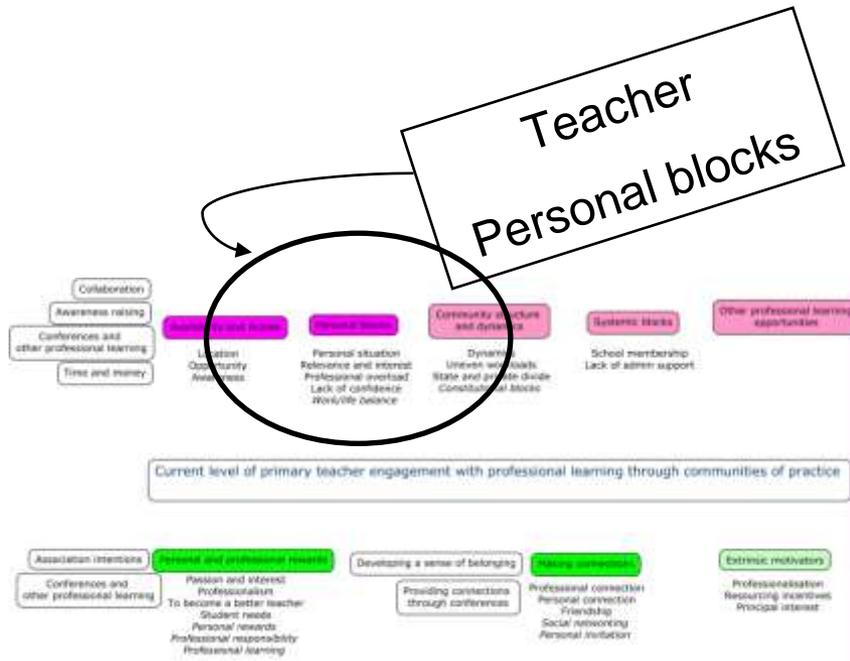
Is our practice aligned with our intent?

Questions



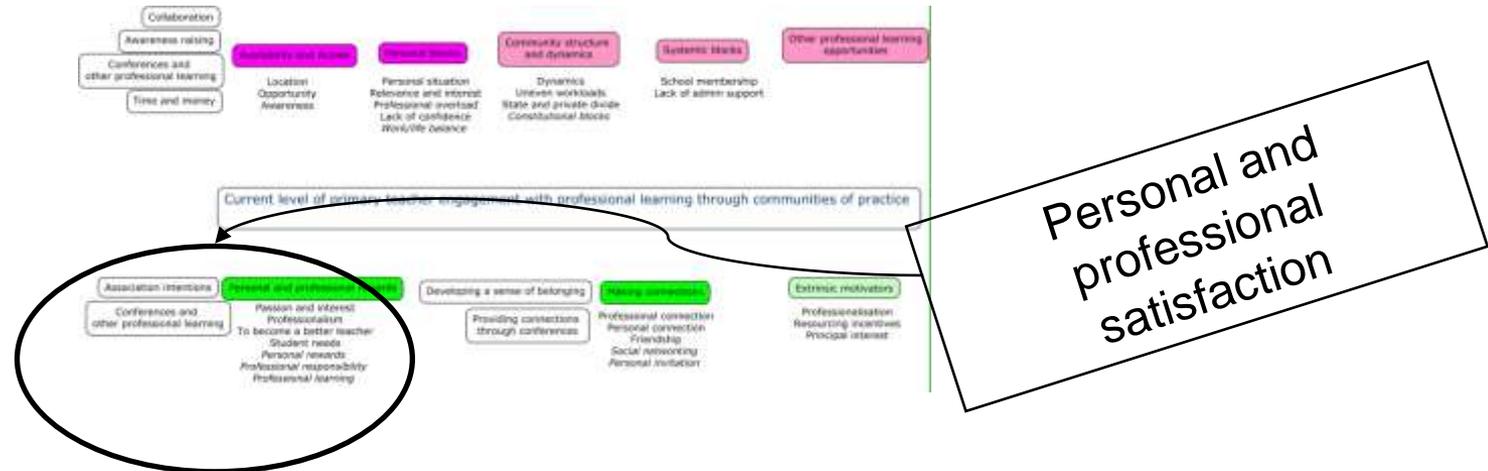
- How are we raising awareness of our association with pre service and practising teachers?
- How do we cater for teachers in remote locations?
- Do we offer teachers from remote locations quality learning opportunities?
- How do we collaborate with other associations to raise awareness?
- Are our costs for membership and professional learning opportunities offer value for money?
- Do our professional learning opportunities consider the timing of primary teachers?
- Do our professional learning opportunities consider timing for remote teachers?
- Is the timing of our events regular?
- Are our learning opportunities based on practical professional learning?
- Do we provide for our 'give me give me' members as well as those wishing to extend their engagement?
- How do we recognise the contributions of those teachers who provide quality learning for others?
- What measures can be put in place to support administration of associations?
- Does our advertising of events include regular fax and email contact?
- How effective is our word of mouth advertising?

Questions



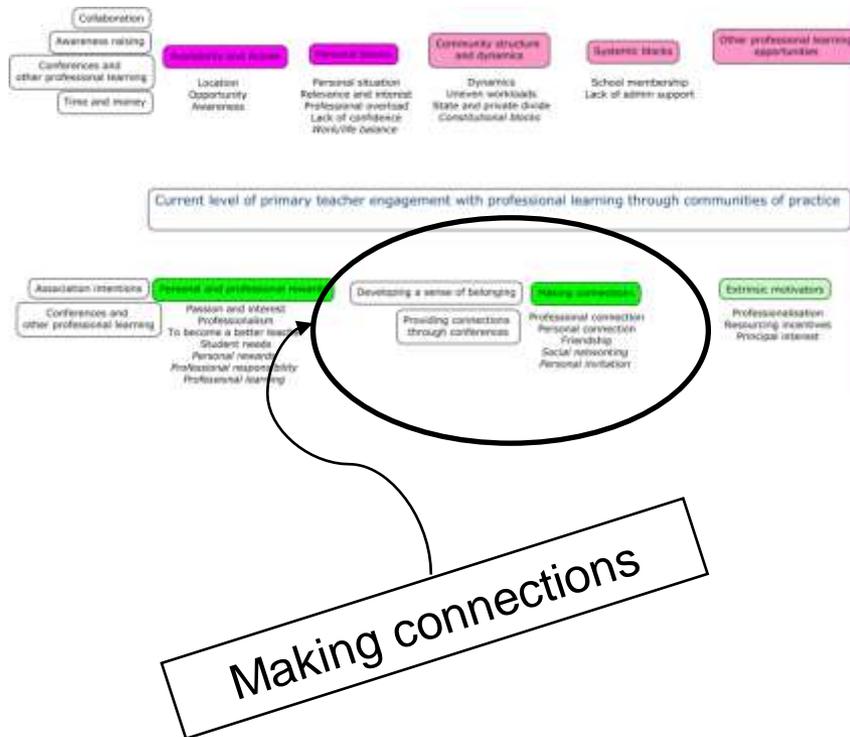
- If we want to attract members with family commitments how do we ensure flexibility and accessibility with our approach?
- How do we ensure that primary teacher input is valued?
- How can we support the confidence of primary teachers to contribute?
- How can we identify what is relevant and interesting to primary teachers?
- Have we considered the life stage of our target audience?

Questions...



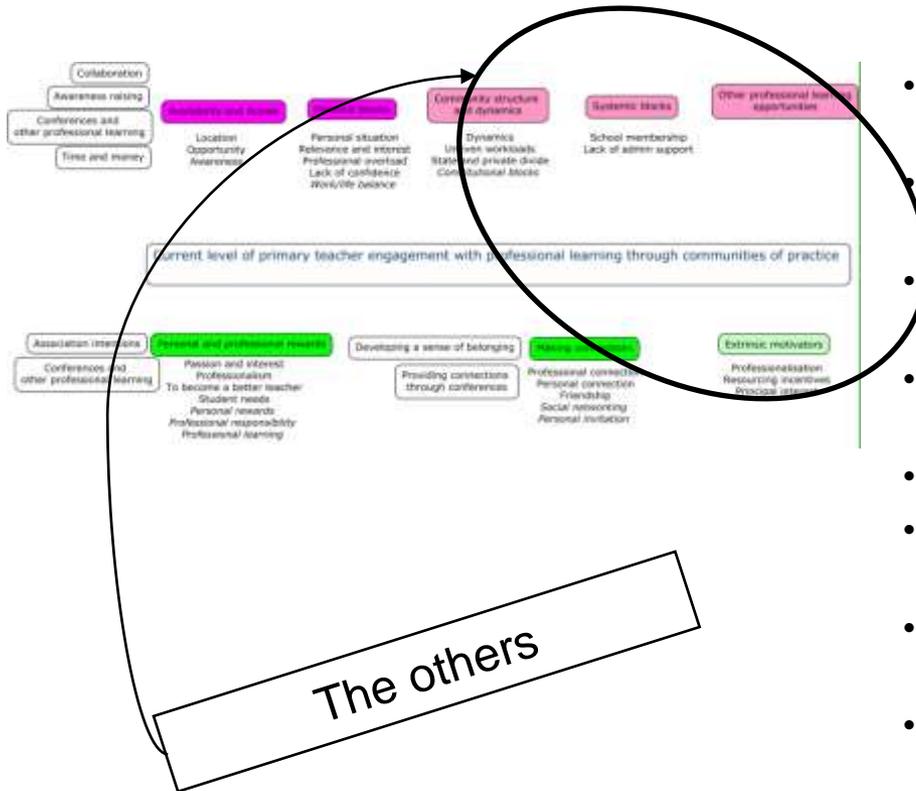
- What student needs are common to primary teachers?
- Does the professional learning offer teachers a chance to improve the experiences they provide for their students?
- Does it offer teachers a chance to improve their pedagogy?
- Does it offer support to teachers when they find themselves in a particular context?
- How can professional associations make links to student need in order to provide professional learning opportunities?
- How can we best tap into the informal networks that already exist within primary teachers to boost late career membership?
- How can succession planning within associations best be addressed?
- Could we use the driving factor of client commitment as a basis of a strategy to increase engagement of primary teachers?
- What areas do primary teachers as group or as individuals feel passionate about? If the executive or the highly involved are fulfilling their passion through their involvement, does this mean that they may be the only members fulfilling the needs of a community of practice? And is this significant?
- What is the actual intent of our association? Does this align with what is espoused? Is this relevant to primary teachers?

Questions...



- How do professional associations use the concept of professional connection to attract teachers who are primed to contribute?
- Are social networking needs being met elsewhere such as schools or informal networks?
- How can those who are not currently having this need being met be encouraged to find it within a professional association?
- Is the social benefit of being in an association being promoted?
- What type of teacher is the community trying to attract?
- Which kinds of connections are being offered?
- Are professional connections being offered as a way of attracting teachers to the association? Are the needs for personal connection and friendship being met?
- Is this level of connection reserved for the executive?
- If social networking is a significant factor for this group, does the like mindedness of the group work as an advantage or disadvantage for the association?
- Does the professional association as a whole act as a community of practice, or does it only serve as a community of practice once you are part of the inner circle – the executive or committee member? Is the actual intent of the professional association to act as a community of practice?
- How could personal invitations be used to assist with particular issues within the association?

Questions...



- Do professional associations want to tap into the professional learning of primary teachers?
- If so, how can they compete with other providers of professional learning?
- Do we reflect on our dynamics and how that influences others to become involved?
- How do we ensure that both state and private schools are welcomed?
- Does our constitution encourage primary school teachers to join?
- Are our workloads shared evenly?
- Are membership structures encouraging to primary teachers?
- How can we work with administrators to value our contribution?
- Are the extrinsic motivators we offer sustainable?
- Do we link professionalisation issues with the professional learning we offer?

UNFREEZE

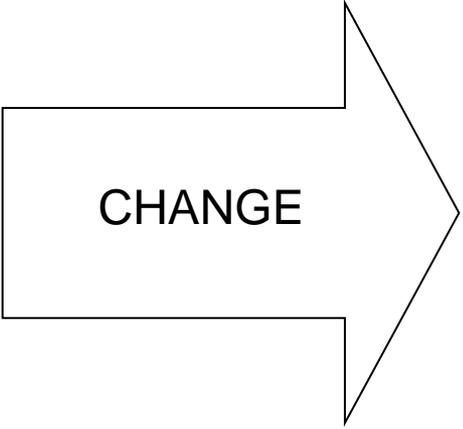
Research

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Association

Primary teacher current

Intent and purpose



CHANGE

