MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS FOR COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES IN MALDIVIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

A thesis

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Abstract

This thesis explores how mentoring was perceived and experienced as a professional development strategy for two teachers in a Maldivian primary school. It reports on how the mentoring relationship between the two teachers and the researcher evolved over the period of the data collection process. The research also explores the two teachers perceptions of the existing professional development activities. Further, report on the existing barriers which restricted establishing continuous professional developmental opportunities in the primary schools of Maldives.

Data collection was through action research using concept maps for formative assessment purposes. The concept map was planned as an intervention at mentoring sessions to incorporate new pedagogy to create student-centred learning opportunities. The intervention was evaluated intensively through observation and feedback in the mentoring process.

The researcher had dual roles in this action research. One role was that of researcher: collecting data on the progression of the mentoring relationship and the pedagogical changes by the participants. The second was that of mentor: coaching and assisting the two teachers to reflect on the planning and executing of the intervention in their respective classrooms.

Through the action research process, data was collected on changes that the two teachers brought to their teaching. Data was also gathered on the mentoring relationship that evolved in the data collection process. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate the two teachers' willingness to engage in their own learning. The semi-structured interviews also explored the two teachers' perception on mentoring to establish a culture of learning in the school.

The study indicated that one-off professional development sessions and a system of in-school clinical supervision to be the main professional development activities for the schools. Further the findings indicated that these activities did not meet the teachers' learning needs.

Findings also indicated that the participants favoured the learning opportunities mentoring process created. The study further established both participants as keen learners, and willing participants in planning and re-planning the intervention in the mentoring process for the action research. The findings also report that the collaborative work atmosphere in the mentoring relationship assisted the two teachers to eliminate the fears associated with introducing new pedagogy.

In conclusion, the study reports on barriers that may restrict creating effective mentoring relationships in primary schools of Maldives. The barriers identified were associated time for mentoring, mismatch of mentoring partners, poor collaborative relationships and mentor knowledge and experience. In addition recommends exploring how the supervisors' current role of evaluator can be changed to mentor role and the possibilities of group mentoring. Further study is recommended to explore how long term mentoring relationships can be developed considering the time constraints in Maldivian two session primary schools.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mother Nafeesa, and my late father, Adam.

For their unconditional love and blessings

Acknowledgement

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

"In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Beneficent"

This thesis would not have been possible without the people who patiently gave up their time and supported me throughout this study.

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Chapter One – Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

This study researched how mentoring between supervisors and teachers could create opportunities for on-going professional development in Maldivian primary schools. The study further explored the relationship barriers that exist in the school systems and their possible impacts when looking to create a culture of continuous learning.

I come from an educational management background with six years of work experience in primary teaching and four years experience as a grade supervisor in a government primary school in Maldives. My initial training was in primary teaching, followed by training in school management before being promoted to a grade supervisor position in the senior management.

As a teacher and a grade supervisor, I had experienced relationship gaps between supervisors and teachers that disallow collaborative learning in the school. This had driven my interest to understand how a supervisor's role may be changed, so they can promote continuous learning for the teachers in their respective grades. Hence, in exploring new ways to build such developmental relationships, had lead me to believe that establishing mentoring partnerships between supervisors and teachers may have potential attributes to accomplish such on-going professional development relationships and may lead to creating a culture of learning in the process.

1.2 Grade Supervisors

Maldivian schools are presented with logistical challenges when looking to create on-going professional development opportunities for teachers, as all the schools in the country are shift schools. In most schools the lower primary grades are in the afternoon session and the senior primary grades in the morning session. The lower primary grades consists of students from ages 7- 9 (Grades 1, 2 and 3), with senior grades having students between ages10-12 (Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7).

Sessions are run as two different schools with separate senior managements and administrative staff. While the school principal is the over-all in charge of the school, assistant principals (or more, in larger schools) are in-charge of carrying out all programs within their respective sessions with support from grade supervisors in the session. Most primary schools have a supervisor for each grade, with some schools having subject supervisors as well. Supervisors are in-charge of looking over the welfare of students, teachers, which include monitoring including teaching and learning activities and administrative duties of the respective grades.

Organisation Structure of a Maldivian Primary School
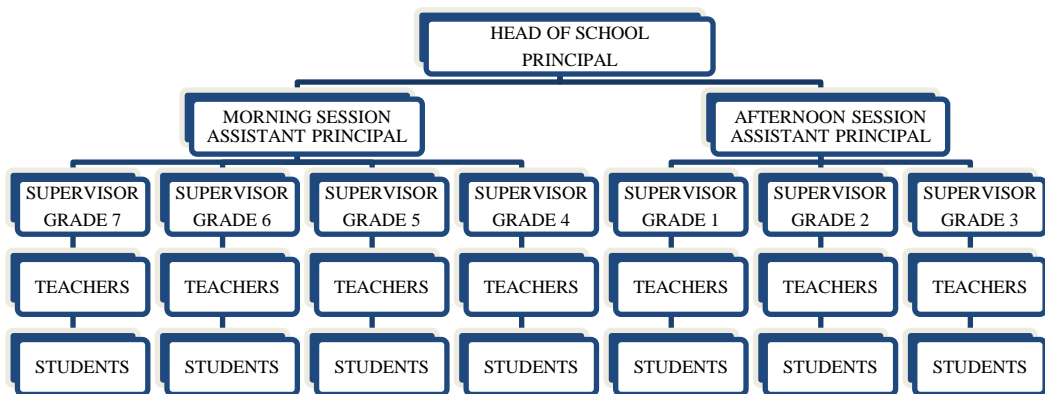
Figure 1- Adaptation of an organisation chart (Iskandhar School, 2002)

Most grade supervisors are trained teachers before getting promoted to the school management. They are the first point of contact with the school management (figure -1) for parents/caregivers, students and teachers in all issues relating to their respective grades. Hence, supervisors are directly involved in leading planning and directing curriculum related activities.

Supervisors also have the role of monitoring and co-ordinating teaching and learning activities in their respective grades. They report to the senior management of the school and the Ministry of Education on teacher performance in relation to staffing issues and promotion. In addition to that, supervisors have

the responsibility of organising staff development programs and evaluating teacher progress through a process of clinical supervision. This supervision process is made up of two parts.

The first part is the classroom observations, which are mostly done unannounced. The supervisor sits at the back of the classroom, takes field notes to later complete a standardized observation form and give feedback to the teachers.

Secondly supervisors check lessons plans ad the teaching aids that teachers would be using in their teaching. Teachers are required to get approval for their lesson plans and get consent for any notes that may be given from the supervisors before proceeding to the classrooms.

"Eighty percent of the schools including some of the largest schools in the county lack the basic learning and teaching facilities," (Ministry of Planning and National Development, 2007, p.16). As a compromise, the senior management of primary schools encourages teachers to share teaching aids amongst the grade teachers. The teachers are also encouraged to collected teaching materials on their own and use materials that they may have prepared in their training years. The senior management may also print out material from the internet and use photocopied material for teachers. Although such facilities are available, teachers sometimes may get teaching material at their own expenses to make up for the lack of resources in the school.

From my experience, supervisors have many administrative and management responsibilities assigned to them to ensure effectiveness of school activities. They are also required to monitor teachers to ensure accountability and meeting parental expectations and these records are kept on record. As a consequence, monitoring teacher performance and evaluating teachers and reporting on them had become the most important aspect of the supervisor's jobs.

Such close monitoring and the nature of control evaluation by supervisors deny teacher's creativity and innovativeness. From my experience, teacher's attitude towards supervision is largely negative; this may be because of the control factors related to the model of supervision used in the primary schools.

The negative attitude of teachers increased further because of the rigid hierarchical structure in the primary school system. The power of authority and

decision making is mostly from top to bottom without much input from teachers. The hierarchical structures in the schools can present barriers and negative attitudes towards supervisors that form a relationship gap between supervisors and teachers (Bowring-Carr & West-Burnham, 1997).

The negativities towards supervisors may have lingered on from how supervisors were appointment to their positions in the past. Supervisor appointment in the past had been highly discriminatory. They were not based on capability, credentials or qualifications but the selection was based on favouritism. Up until recently, teachers appointed to the supervisor position were not even interviewed. This had naturally presented a wall of resentment towards the appointees.

This negative attitudes towards supervisors may also have lingered from the evaluative nature of the supervision model practiced in the schools (Smyth, 1991). VSO Maldives (2005) reports that many teachers to believe that supervisors were not supportive in classroom learning and teaching. The processes of classroom supervision and monitoring can give ideal support and guidance to teachers if they were used for professional development purposes (Goldhammer, 1969; Smyth, 1991). But this can only happen if supervisors considered to building better personal relationships with teachers, by breaking down the barriers of hierarchy and authority that exist in the school. Supervisors need to consider building better professional relationships based on trust and honesty in order to play a better role in up-skilling and upgrading teachers.

In many cases, teachers have the expectation for supervisors to have more knowledge than them as they lead teachers from a school management position (VSO, 2005). But most supervisors have only had limited training (if any) for taking this leadership role in the school management. As a consequence, teachers perceive supervisors to have nothing new to offer when looking to assist teachers in their classrooms, as most supervisors and teachers have the same qualifications (VSO, 2005). Due to this lack of qualification, supervisors themselves are reluctant to approach teachers with critical comments on their teaching practices. This I believe makes promoting collaborative work relationships between teachers and supervisors, with intentions to give on-going professional development opportunities that much essential, so teachers and supervisors support each other to leading changes in the school.

1.3 Rationale

Maldives has achieved universal primary education with a net enrolment of 100 percent for both girls and boys in the year 2000 (Ministry of Planning and National Development, 2007). As a consequence of achieving universal primary education, the nationals focus has been now been put to improving the quality of learning and teaching in the primary sector, through by improving teachers.

Providing on-going professional development opportunities for teachers is a high priority for the Maldivian government (Ministry of Gender and Family, 2006; Ministry of Planning and National Development, 2007). At present, the Ministry of Education is working intensively to increase the number of qualified local teachers by introducing new qualifications and increasing the training programs offered in the teacher training college (Faculty of Education).

In addition to this, the Maldives Ministry of Education is intervening primary schools, in collaboration with NGO's such as United Nations Children's Fund and VSO to improve currently used teaching pedagogy in the lower primary grades (grades 1, 2 and 3) of the primary schools. The initiative is to change teaching pedagogy from teacher-centred rote teaching and learning, to student-centred active learning (Educational Development Centre, 2008).

Despite these efforts for change from external organisations, in-school professional development activities are still being left to one-off developmental seminars and an evaluative clinical supervision model, in most primary schools of the country. These one-off professional developments sessions are usually initiatives coordinated by different departments of the Ministry of Education or other ministries. Usually these seminars are linked to changes in curriculums (i.e. orientation to new text books and materials). From my experience, there is a need for Maldivian primary schools to initiate other professional development programs to support teachers to improve classroom teaching and ultimately improve student performance. Teachers need on-going support to develop new pedagogy, designing and preparing teaching material, as well as support to learn assessment techniques to goes with new pedagogy. Success of professional advancement for teachers' are highly dependent on how well they are supported on the systematic levels in the schools (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992).

The second form of professional development activity practices in schools is clinical supervision which is initiated and conducted by the school management. The current model of supervision is not perceived as beneficial by teachers. My experiences as a supervisor enables me to support this as supervision is not used to gain insight for areas of teacher development and so does not support learning needs of teachers. The data gathered at supervision are used to evaluate teacher performance for job advancement purposes.

Supervisors main responsibility as an instructional leader, is improve curriculum delivery through maintaining and improving teaching quality (Iskandhar School, 2002). But the current practices one-off isolated seminars and clinical supervision does not allow supervisors to get involved in classrooms, so they can make a positive impact on teaching.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study is intended to investigate how supervisors, who are already in a position of leading teachers, could be enhancing their learning opportunities using formal mentoring partnerships. It is being carried our in relation to the interventions by the Ministry of Education to introduce student-centred teaching pedagogy in lower primary grades of Maldivian primary schools. The study is also intended to explore how teachers feel about working in collaborative relationship with a supervisor in the process of changing their pedagogy.

The study is set as an action research to investigate the mentoring relationships between researcher (past supervisor) and two volunteer teachers, working in the process of introducing student-centred teaching pedagogy in their respective lower primary classrooms

The basic premise is that, it is important to devise collaborative partnerships between supervisors and teachers so that there are support systems in place to assist teachers in such transitional times. By working in collaboration, the change process that would enable teachers and supervisors to move forward in their partnership, as they gradually come to understand; become skilled and competent in the use of newly gained knowledge (Hall & Hord, 2006).

In addition, the study will seek to identify the necessary changes in the existing teacher evaluation and appraisal systems so that effective mentoring relationships can be established between supervisors and teachers. The study will further, explore how mentoring could enable teachers and supervisors to establish collegial and professional learning groups that are beneficial for the whole school community.

This research is important as no study had yet been done in the Maldives to investigate how supervisors and teachers can collaborate to establish continuous professional development activities to support quality improvement in their schools.

1.5   The Research Questions

Hence the research investigated the following three research questions:

1. What are teachers' views on current professional development programs for student-centred teaching in their classrooms?
2. What are teachers' evaluations of mentoring by a supervisor to foster professional development for student-centred teaching?
3. What are the implications of mentoring as a continuous professional development strategy for whole school re-culturing?

1.6   Definitions

1.6.1   Professional Development

"Schools must focus on creating school wide professional learning communities as training of individuals or small teams is not enough" (Fullan, 2001, p.16). In this research context, professional development is defined as learning that takes place in collaboration, as a shared and continuous process. In that respect the study argues that, experiences gained though the collaborative process gives teachers more opportunity to learn and advance in their career.

Effectiveness of a school is based on its ability to create communities that are able to learn and bring changes to meet the advancements in society and technology. This is focused around schools being learning communities, by building teams

and working in collaboration so that there is a positive impact on student learning (Senge, 1994).

Professional development is a vehicle that school leaders can use to effectively achieve school goals quickly and efficiently. Schools cannot be satisfied with professional development program that disallow continuous learning. Allowing teachers to continuously grow and learn would enable them to gain knowledge on the emerging trends in education and assist teachers to change their practices accordingly, which would ultimately build a culture of learning in school.

1.6.2 Collaborative Relationships

In this research "collaborative relationship" is defined as an on-going developmental partnership between a teacher and a supervisor to support and assist growth according to reform goals of the school. Collaboration is critically important to engage teachers in professional community building. Improvement in instruction comes from the processes of building awareness, planning, implementation and reflection which can only be achieved through shared expertise, with the intention to bring school wide change (Southworth, 2000). It is identified that a lack of collaborative culture in schools to be one main reason for teachers early exit from the teaching profession, which is important to consider in Maldivian school context (Teddle & Stringfield, 2006).

The isolation and privatism that is associated with the teaching profession restricts teachers from accessing new ideas for improvement (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). Building collaborative relationships will assist to breakdown these barriers of isolation and encourage teachers to work, learn and improve as a community (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). In addition, it will allow a giving and receiving of help in the school community for continuous professional development without any judgment.

In many circumstances, teachers are directed to improve outcomes without any support to improve current practice in Maldivian primary schools. But it is necessary that all academic staff (supervisors and teachers included) receive the opportunity to improve the necessary skills that are required. School leaders must provide assistance to support learning as without it, it is highly unlikely to see the

expected positive changes in the outcomes of improved quality in education (Hall & Hord, 2006).

Any requirement for differentiated teaching in schools has to be supported from supervisors as the people closest to the teachers. This support is central to the successful accomplishment of new pedagogy for teachers. In this research the change is the creation of new meaning through learning to give on-going support to teacher development.

1.6.3 Supervision

In context of this research, supervision means clinical supervision to improve teaching and to assist teachers to identify areas for improvement. Clinical supervision is defined as "face to face contact with teachers with the intent to improve instruction and increasing professional growth" (Goldhammer, 1969, p. 54).The fundamental principles of supervision, are based upon "improving quality of teaching and learning; and supervision and curriculum development" (Tanner & Tanner, 1987, p.49). The purpose here, is to help increase the opportunities and the capacities of the schools to contribute more effectively to student achievement in order to improve the education provided by schools for students (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). But supervision is only effective to the extent that it can assist teachers in solving classroom problems (Tanner & Tanner, 1987). Because of the close link between improving in-class instructions and professional growth, Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007), argues that "clinical supervision and staff development to be inseparable concepts and activities" (p, 233). But in many cases, supervision is received negatively by teachers and is not considered as support for teacher development, because it is also closely linked to teacher evaluation (Smyth, 1991).

1.6.4 Mentoring

Mentoring does not have one universal definition, but mentoring is widely defined as a long term developmental relationship for one-on-one learning. It is an interaction between two individuals in a nurturing process that fosters growth and development to improve student learning by improving teacher quality. Most literature talks about mentoring as support for teacher induction (Applebaum,

2000; Brockbank & Ian, 2006; Brookes & Sikes, 1997; Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Cochran- Smith & Paris, 1995; Hamilton, 1993; Scandura, Tejeda, Werther, & Lankau, 1996). Hence, mentoring is defined as acquisition of wisdom from a senior member of staff as part of new teacher induction (Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2001). But research also identify mentoring can be highly beneficial for experienced teachers (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Shea, 2001), as it breaks down the barriers of isolation and assists gaining new ideas and strategies to explore in their teaching pedagogy (Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Daresh, 1995; Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; Hobson, 2003; Sullivan, 2004). The intention of mentoring here is to meet the developmental needs of the mentee in a supportive and protective environment.

Mentoring is an active collegial and reciprocal relationship built on the basis of negotiation and trust, to give constructive criticism to support progression and career advancement of the mentee (Bush, Coleman, Wall, & West-Burnham, 1996; Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Daresh, 1995; Hauling- Austin, 1989; Scandura, Tejeda, Werther, & Lankau, 1996). In this research mentoring is defined as a relationship to assist teachers (both experienced and protégé's alike) in a process of on-going professional development by facilitating a meaningful collaborative partnership to support and engage mentees in implementing a change.

The terms "mentor" and "mentee" are widely used in this research in explaining the mentoring process associated with this research.

"Mentor" in this research context, is a facilitator for change and in this research context refers to a grade supervisor. Mentee in this research context is an experienced teacher of a lower primary grade working towards introducing student-centred teaching strategies with the assistance of the grade supervisor as the mentor.

1.7   Organisation of this Study

This thesis has six chapters to systematically investigate the issue of professional development in Maldivian primary schools. In doing so the study will investigate

what it may mean to implement mentoring relationships for continuous collaborative professional development support for teachers.

Chapter One: Introduces and gives an overview of the thesis and defines the common terms used in this study. It also discusses the background of the research and presents the rationale and purpose of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature review explores selected literature on professional development for change in educational settings and mentoring as an ideal professional development strategy to support teachers in times of educational reform.

Chapter Three: Methodology describes the action research process and the intervention used in the action research. The chapter further provides the data collection methods and data analysis.

Chapter Four: Findings, outlines the findings of the study.

Chapter Five: Discussion gives insight to the findings of the research in relation to the research questions

Chapter Six: Conclusions, recommendations, discusses the implications of this study, makes recommendation on areas for future study when looking to establish on-going collaborative professional development in Maldivian primary schools.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter is presented in ten sections. Firstly the chapter introduces arguments for a culture of on-going professional learning in Maldivian primary schools to implement educational reform and change (section 2.2). Secondly the chapter discusses selected literature on supervision as a professional development strategy and how teachers perceive supervision (section 2. 3). Then literature arguing for a need to implement collaborative practice between teachers and supervisors are presented (section 2.4). The chapter then goes to define mentoring as an ideal program as a professional development relationship for Maldivian primary schools (section 2.5). Benefits of mentoring are then discussed (section 2.6) with discussion on what mentoring in Maldivian primary school may look like (section 2.7), when established to as a collaborative professional development relationship. This section leads to the ideal models of mentoring in relations to teacher needs schools (section 2.8). The chapter then looks at the factors that may affect negatively on mentoring relationships (section 2.9), leading to the conclusion of the chapter (section 2.10).

This literature review explores how mentoring can build continuous collaborative learning opportunities to promote a culture of professional learning. The chapter also looks into the artifacts used in the classroom to assist teachers in changing their pedagogy in this research context.

2.2 Culture of Professional Learning

"As a young, inexperienced principal, my approach to professional development for my school was relatively straight forward: identify a relevant topic and provide a speaker who could inform and inspire. It took me a few years to figure out that even if the topic was timely and the speaker was able to generate initial enthusiasm, teachers were unlikely to gain mastery of the new knowledge and skill without frequent opportunities for practice and feedback" (DuFour, 1997, p.53).

Schools in Maldives need professional development structures that would promote continuous learning to improve quality of learning for students (Ministry

of Planning and National Development, 2007). At present the only training for most teachers is the teaching qualification achieved at teaching college and they do not get the opportunity to upgrade through in-service or short term refresher courses.

The culture of teacher learning through on-off professional development seminars does not seem to be supporting teacher learning as there is no evidence to indicate that what is leant at these seminars are transferred to the classroom. Transitional change does not happen with one-off professional development sessions (Bellanca, 1995). Educational reform initiatives such as introducing new teaching pedagogy need to focus on providing on-going professional development opportunities for teachers, if it was to enhance learning outcomes of students (Fullan, 2001; Spillane, 1999). This will ensure a culture of professional development with learning opportunities that would equip teacher with the skills and knowledge that they need to implement new teaching pedagogy. Schools that have a culture of learning and inquiry, invite deep and sustained professional learning that would ultimately have a powerful impact on student achievement (Fullan, 2001).

2.2.1 On-going Support to Assist Change

Change is defined as a realignment of meaning that happens through learning (West- Burnham & O' Sullivan, 1998). When not communicated right, change is faced with defensiveness and resistance and would lead to just short term successes (Fullan, 1999). Fullan (1999) highlights personal vision building, inquiry, mastery and collaboration to be the four capacities that all school leaders have to build to become experts in dynamics of change. These capacities are both inter-related and mutually reinforcing. For change to happen it is important that schools develop internal commitments to have learning at all levels in the school.

Educational change, occur when a school brings more than just political and logistical changes. It also needs to look at teacher qualifications, teaching background and ensure that teachers get the best possible upgrading opportunities. One aspect of professional development is to help teachers build their capacity to improve the quality of education delivered in the school. Teachers need concrete and continuous professional development to learn the new skills. This can be

achieved by school leaders having a mindset that focuses on engaging teachers in on-going learning initiatives. These initiatives have to be guided by long term developmental plans with goals to ultimately improve student learning. This means, primary schools in Maldives need to plan comprehensive and systematic programs to improve the ability of their teachers so that teachers educational change initiatives in the school organisation (Bellanca, 1995).

The success of any professional development activity depends on teachers' ability to work collaboratively, assisting each other to work through the dilemmas and challenges they face in the teaching process (Fullan, 2001).The emphasis here is on developing the school as a whole, as professional development of teachers cannot be considered in isolation to organisational development of the school. Such developments depend on building relationships where the management and support systems communicate the importance of teacher growth as a professional learning community (Fullan, 2001; Senge, 1994).

2.2.2 Features of a Professional Learning Community

Professional development in schools lie with the school's functioning as learning organisations with support systems in place so teachers can work towards achieving the visions of the school.

> Learning organisations [are] organisations where people continually
> expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where
> new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where
> collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually
> learning how to learn together (Senge, 1994, p.3).

Schools become learning organisation when they begin to work constantly towards improving the capacity of its community to meet the shared and personal visions for the school. Having a learning focus in schools means moving towards professional systems where individuals take informed risks to improve student performance. Stoll and Fink (1996) highlights that the most important thing that a school can do to make an impact on students, to be assisting the personal and professional development of their teachers.

A learning community has distinguishing features that separate them from an ordinary school. These features include shared vision and mission; a culture of collaboration; school structures and strategies that promote learning; and adequate resources and policies to support the learning.

a) Shared Vision and Mission

Members of a learning community clearly understand; share and promote the schools visions (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). The school's visions and missions are visible in all decisions taken in these schools. Further, these visions and missions are meaningful to the teachers and they are communicated well among the teachers. The importance of shared visions for an learning schools is because, if members do not have their own vision they only sign up for someone else's, which results only with compliance and a lack of commitment (Senge, 1994).

b) Culture of Collaboration

In a learning school, its culture values all students and their needs and there is commitment to helping all students of the school. There is a collaborative culture in these school communities with shared belief of common purpose. They have mutual norms of support and respect to other members' ideas with encouragement to openly discuss issues of difficulty. The members of a learning school share ideas, materials and create a momentum to drive improvement. They further, give support to risk taking and honest feedback for further improvement (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1998).

These schools promote structures that make collaboration and learning effective and productive (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). For example they promote open and inclusive decision making processes. They have team learning arrangements in planning, as well as problem-solving. They are action-oriented and they collectively inquire and experiment. Further, they are committed to continuous improvement and are highly result oriented in their learning (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). These schools also have well designed processes to implement specific programs and ensure follow-up. They regularly review and revise priorities of school the goals and

establish only a manageable number for action. Teachers in these schools are engaged in their individual growth to achieve the goals in the schools developmental plan (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1998).

c) Policy and Resources

In learning schools, teachers have sufficient resources to support in their professional development. Teachers are provided with professional reading material and curriculum resources and computer facilities are kept available so teachers can make take materials needed for their learning (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1998).

Professional learning schools on the whole, thrive on change. They encourage experimentation and communicate successes and failures by continuous assessment and review. They also facilitate learning opportunities through community support and give recognition and rewards learning. Further they create conditions that promoting reflective and reflexive learning (A. Harris & Muijis, 2005). They are aware of the cultural and structural conditions that surround the learning and are also aware of changes that may be necessary in existing frameworks in the school organisation so that they assist change (Bottery, 2003; Hargreaves, 2003).

This outline of learning schools identifies that, one way for primary schools of Maldives to create a culture of learning is to be utilising the existing structures (such as clinical supervision and supervisors) to give teachers the opportunity to learn in a collaborative, reflective, learning-oriented and growth-promoting approach to improve student-learning.

2.3 Problem of Supervision as a Model for Professional Development of Teachers

The main problem in the Maldivian context that may be restricting the professional development of teachers could be the model of supervision used as a model of professional development. Apart of one-off professional development seminars, supervision is the main support system in place for the development of teachers in Maldivian primary schools (Iskandhar School, 2002).

In this context, Maldivian primary schools have a well structured supervision system but this is used more for its evaluative function (Iskandhar School, 2002). This clinical supervision model includes a series of classroom observations, feedback sessions and monitoring of students work for progress by their respective grade supervisor (Iskandhar School, 2002).

Ideally, Supervision is a systematic and sequential process of inquiry that can reshape the social relationships in schools (Goldhammer, 1969). Earlier models of supervision (Goldhammer, 1969) were intended to be based on a self initiated and self regulated relationship where teachers worked collaboratively to inquire, analyse, examine and evaluate to articulate undefined problems in teaching. But these original meanings of supervision are lost as supervision is now used more as form of evaluation and not used for professional development purposes (Smyth, 1991).

Teachers do not consider supervision to be helpful for their learning when the model of supervision is focused on teacher appraisal and efficiency (Acheson & Gall, 1992; Goldhammer, 1969; B. M. Harris, 1985). Teachers view their evaluation in this context to be an administrative responsibility of supervisors. They consider the supervision to be designed to assist school management in making decisions about the adequacy of performance for teacher retention purposes (Acheson & Gall, 1992; Hoy & Forysth, 1986; McQuarre & Wood, 1991; Zepeda & Ponticell, 1998).

The literature identifies supervision to be unpopular with most teachers because of the evaluative nature of its structure (Acheson & Gall, 1992; Gorton, 1983; Hoy & Forysth, 1986). Smyth (1991) identifies this resistance to be due to the hierarchical and exploitative form of teacher evaluation introduced by certain versions of clinical supervision. For example through models such as (Hunter, 1980). "A secondary function of supervisory conference is that a teacher's placement on a continuum from "unsatisfactory" to "outstanding" will be established and the teacher will have the opportunity to examine the evidence used"(Hunter, 1980, p. 408). As a consequence, most teachers regard supervision to be rigid and mechanical, especially when it is initiated from the top (Smyth, 1991).

Teachers also perceive supervision to be a token, and a meaningless ritual of interventions, which makes it difficult to perceive supervision to be a positive and collegial practice. Acheson and Gall (1992) says that hostility that teachers have is not towards supervision but the style of supervision that they typically receive. Evaluative style of supervision creates mistrust and resentment when such a model of supervision as a strategy for professional development (VSO, 2005; Walkley, 1999; Zepeda & Ponticell, 1998). Walker (1999) identifies that the inability to clearly define the purpose of supervision i.e.: if it is for evaluating teacher behaviour or teacher development to raise conflicting questions for teachers. This misunderstanding is justified when some approaches to supervisory visits are by announcement: *initiated by manager* and others are by invitation: *initiated by teacher* (Smyth, 1991).

The evaluative nature of supervision in Maldivian primary schools, these practices of supervision means it is not used to inform the professional development of teachers (VSO, 2005). Supervision has to move away from its evaluative function for it to be successfully used for professional development purposes (Gorton, 1983).

2.4 Collaborative Practices

Rather than using a supervisory model for professional development, a model of collaboration would be more effective in establishing professional learning culture in Maldivian primary schools. In a learning community, all members would be actively involved in promoting growth towards solving problems in teaching and learning in a reflective collaborative, learning-oriented environment (Mitchell and Sackney, 2000). Collaborations brings sustainable improvement over time rather than bring a superficial change due to external pressures (Hargreaves, 2003). It also allows equality in partnership and brings mutual benefits from working together to accomplish the learning goals. In this research context, collaborative professional development would give the opportunity for teachers and supervisors in Maldivian primary schools to work together to support implementing new teaching pedagogy.

Collaboration also enables the interdependence of teachers, and supervisors, to draw out the best qualities in each other. When teachers and supervisors work

reciprocally, they would usually be initiated from a place of controlled behaviour, leading from discovery of small change which would lead to informed choices. Although in such relationships, teachers will work interdependently with supervisors, working collaboratively means, teachers will have the opportunity to diversify their personality, background, and experiences through the contributions made in partnership, which would ensure the richness of each others experience.

Collaborations is most helpful to facilitate change processes that occur in socio-cultural setting with social interactions (Briscoe & Peters, 1997). The interactive processes in these social settings eliminate the fears associated with taking risks and the isolation that teachers feel in their classrooms (Butcher, 2000; Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Daresh, 1995; Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Haack, 2006; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Hobson, 2003; Scandura, Tejeda, Werther, & Lankau, 1996).

2.5 Definitions of Mentoring

Mentoring is one ways of practicing collaborative professional development of facilitate continuous learning in schools. Mentoring is a very desirable collaborative professional development forum for learning, which can be used to identify what works and what does not in a change process (Briscoe & Peters, 1997). This type of mentoring relationship, when offered as practical help for teachers, where mentors are available on-site to provide guidance, can be very effective for when looking to provide on-going development support that are needed for Maldivian primary schools(Jones, Reid, & Bevin, 1997).

Almost all definitions of mentoring report development of the mentee (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2001; Krupp, 1985; Lancey, 1999). The traditional definition of the word "mentor" refers to father figure, or someone who sponsors, guides, and develops a younger person (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; Higgins & Kram, 2001). The implication here is for the mentor to be an older people who has acquired wide knowledge and experience of the world in general and specific areas (Gehrke, 1988; Hamilton, 1993; Higgins & Kram, 2001). But this traditional view of mentoring does not have the vision of the present trends in the education systems because of the lack of value given to teacher's ways of

knowing and the agendas behind school change (Cochran- Smith & Paris, 1995). Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) argue this point by saying that for profound transformations, mentoring cannot be conformed to be just a senior persons duty.

Mentoring emphasises professional development for mentees in processes of change (Brockbank & Ian, 2006; Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Daresh, 1995; Diaz-maggioli, 2004; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Megginson, Clutterbuck, Garvey, Stokes, & Grarrett-Harris, 2006; Owen, 2004; Scandura, Tejeda, Werther, & Lankau, 1996; Shea, 2001; Sullivan, 2004). It increased the opportunities for the growth of individual mentees first, and then results with potential benefits for the mentor and also the school (Daresh, 1995; Duke Corporate Education, 2006; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Hobson, 2003; Kram, 1983).

Mentoring is referred to as a relationship built mutually between two people with learning and development as its purpose (Gehrke, 1988). Butcher (2000) and Spencer (1996) defines mentoring in education as a framework of positive support by skilled and experienced practitioners to another practitioners who need to acquire complex new skills. Hence introducing the notion of collaboration and reciprocity between mentor and mentee are seen as contributing and learning. For example in Maldivian primary schools, we see novice teachers getting collaborative support from senior teachers of their grade in orienting them in to the schools culture. These relationships are usually informal and they have often progressed to be close friendships among the teachers. When I took on the job of supervisor, in the school management, I had experienced and learnt from such a relationship with support from colleague.

2.5.1 Mentoring for Professional Development of Teachers

There are many studies which indicate that mentoring has become an important and a successful mode of professional development in education (Bush, Coleman, Wall, & West-Burnham, 1996; Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Mathews, 2003). Most of these studies consider mentoring to be an ideal program for induction of novice teachers (Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Diaz-maggioli, 2004; Kram, 1983; Maynard & Furlong, 1993; Owen, 2004; Southworth, 1995; Sullivan, 2004). But it may also be effective to revitalise

experienced teachers when incorporated to increase proficiency and when initiated to achieve school-wide goals (Butcher, 2000; Hauling- Austin, 1989; Krupp, 1985; Shea, 2001). It can be an agent to guide change, enabling the mentor and mentee to learn collaboratively, while complimenting the professional development seminars conducted in the school (Hauling- Austin, 1989).

2.5.2 Mentoring Process

Although mentoring is a complex and interactive process, it has advantages in that mentoring is a practice that occurs between individuals of differing levels of experience and expertise. It facilitates learning in partnerships and enhances mentees personal and professional strengths by giving psychological support, motivation and guidance to challenge and take risks to mentees (Applebaum, 2000; Breadwell & Holden, 1994; Carmin, 1988; Lancey, 1999). This is by allowing mentees to take responsibility for their learning by using the opportunities initiated in the process of mentoring (McIntyre & Haggar, 1996). Hence, giving opportunities for all mentees is to be part of a learning community.

Giving appropriate feedback that is aligned to the developmental goals of the mentee is the most skillful part of a mentor's role and the mentoring process (Fletcher, 2000). The process is closely tied to open communication that would lead to greater collaboration between the mentor and mentee. The effectiveness of the feedback depends on how engaged the mentee and mentor are in their reciprocal conversation (Lee, Theoharis, Fitzpatrick, & Kim, 2006).

When collaborating in the mentoring process, dialoguing or reciprocal conversation are the ways of assisting mentees to "explore complex and difficult issues from many points of view" (Senge, 1994, p.241). The effectiveness of questioning skills paired with active listening helps to establish a climate of understanding, clarity and creates a shared meaning for partners in the mentoring relationship (Walsh & Sattes, 2005).

Allowing time for reflection is also another powerful learning strategy that can be considered a vital part of the mentoring process. Reflection provides a mean for examining beliefs, assumptions and practices. In addition, reflection allows mentees to sustain competence and gain the ability to exercise professional

judgment based on information generated from their own practice (Loughran, 2002).

2.5.3   Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring for professional development in a learning culture can be informal or formal, depending on the need of the mentee at that time. Informal mentoring is when the mentoring relationships occur between individuals without any intervention from a third party (Clutterbuck, 2005a). It is the natural coming together of a mentor and mentee so that they can counsel reciprocally and accordingly to meet the needs of each other (Johnson & Ridley, 2004; Rooser, 2005). While informal mentoring is highly favoured by mentees, the unstructured nature of the informal relationship makes it hard to keep record of outcomes from the mentoring (McIntyre & Haggar, 1996).

2.5.4   Establishing Formal Mentoring

This research looked at establishing a formal mentoring relationship to assist mentee learning; as such formal relationships can be monitored for progress, unlike in informal mentoring relationships. Formal mentoring is widely established in many professions (Clutterbuck, 2005a; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Kram, 1983; Mathews, 2003). It has grown popular in professions because the organisations can intervene and address the problems of homosocial reproduction associated with informal mentoring relationships (Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; McDonald & Hite, 2005). Homosocial reproduction associated with informal mentoring relationships often discriminates and restricts minorities and disadvantages such minority social groups. This is because they only invite those who are like-minded to be part of the their mentoring relationships (Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Cochran- Smith & Paris, 1995; Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Kram, 1983; Long, 1994). Hence, creating a negative hegemonic culture which reinforces mentees to conform to the mentors' perspectives (McDonald & Hite, 2005).

The success of a formal mentoring process depend on how well mentoring is integrated as part of a whole school restructuring (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Mentoring then becomes not just a way of supporting individual teachers

accomplish their own personal learning goals and a way to building a culture of continuous professional development dedicated to improve teaching and learning in the whole school organisation (Bush, Coleman, Wall, & West-Burnham, 1996; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; West-Burnham, 2004).

The success of a formal mentoring relationship also depends on how much mutual trust, care and loyalty is there between partners in the mentoring relationship (Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Cochran- Smith & Paris, 1995; Daresh, 1995; Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Elliott & Calderhead, 1993; Gehrke, 1988; Hobson, 2003; Scandura, Tejeda, Werther, & Lankau, 1996). This only comes from having a certain level of collegial friendship, so that the partners can honestly talk about any issues that are of concern to them. Bell (1996) identifies qualities for effective mentoring partnerships to be *balance*: understanding the differences in the partners while respecting the common needs and objectives of the process. Secondly; *trust*: where mistakes are acknowledged and worked through to master techniques. Thirdly; *Abundance*: having a partnership where there is abundance of generosity in giving while not taking each other for granted.

Formal mentoring process can also involve planned, structured and coordinated interventions with clear goals for the program (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; Rooser, 2005). The program will then have to be well supported and coordinated with a person in-charge to look over the whole program (Clutterbuck, 2005b; Sullivan, 2004). The effectiveness of such a mentoring relationship will depend on having clear developmental goals; assuring that the mentors and mentees are well matched and that mentors are competent to lead learning (Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Sullivan, 2004).

2.5.4.1 Developmental Goals

Establishing clear developmental goals is essential to the success of the mentoring relationships. Formal mentoring relationships are established with goals that organisations want to achieve through building these relationships. This enables mentors and mentees to establish mutual specific goals to achieve the school-wide goals (Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Sullivan, 2004). For example in the context of the research, the goal would be to assist the two participating teachers to establish student-centred pedagogy in their

classrooms to achieve the school wide goal of creating student-centred classrooms in lower primary grades of the school.

2.5.4.2 Matching Mentoring Partners

Formal mentoring programs that allow mentees to choose their mentor are more effective and are received with positive attitudes from teachers (Clutterbuck, 2005a; Long, 1994; Mathews, 2003; Megginson, Clutterbuck, Garvey, Stokes, & Grarrett-Harris, 2006; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). The responsibility of making a good match of mentoring partnership lies with both the mentor and the mentee (Mathews, 2003). Both the mentor and mentee need to have the right attitude and skills to work with their partner so they gain the optimal benefits from the mentoring relationships. What matters the most for the success of mentoring relationships is the reciprocity of certain behaviours between the mentor and the mentee (Clutterbuck, 2005a). These behaviours include: articulating of goals; good listening; respect; trust; honestly; self-awareness; as well as a commitment to learn; reflection and prepare for learning.

2.5.4.3 Mentor Responsibilities

The mentor's roles in mentoring range from sponsor to a coach and counsellor to fit the purpose of helping the mentees acquire their learn goals to advance their career (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2001; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Kram, 1983; Scandura, Tejeda, Werther, & Lankau, 1996).This means there is a need for a close relationship based on trust and friendship for mentoring to succeed. Mentors need to be competent when engaging with the mentee in a mentoring relationship. Mentors' knowledge has to extended beyond instrumental expertise (Smith & Alred, 1993). For example: Clutterbuck (2005) identifies that mentors need to be able to see the big picture and draw examples from a wide range of examples to assist the mentee. Mentors also need to be aware of the multiple responsibilities that come with being the mentor and act accordingly (McDonald & Hite, 2005). Mathews (2003) provides a comprehensive guide the responsibilities of a mentor and these include:

- facilitating mentees learning and growth

- providing information

- giving guidance feedback and constructive comments

- evaluating mentees learning plans and decisions

- supporting, encouraging and highlighting shortfall from agreed targets

- maintaining confidentiality

- managing learning experiences in the workplace

- managing the development of the relationship

- selecting and using appropriate learning strategies

- investing time and effort by maintaining regular contact times and communication

2.5.4.4 Mentee Responsibilities

Similar to mentor responsibilities, mentees too have obligations in the mentoring relationship as a reciprocal and collaboration partnership. Mentee responsibilities include:

- commitment to achieve new skills and knowledge
- identifying the developmental goals and setting targets
- creating an action plan to achieve learning goals
- seeking guidance from the mentor
- accepting responsibility for ones own decisions and actions, and maintain confidentiality
- acting on expert and objective advise
- carry out set tasks and projects
- investing time and effort to keep regular contact and communication with the mentor
- be receptive to feedback and coaching
- manage the development of the relationship

Source: Mathews (2003)

2.6 Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring has many benefits when it is established in a professional learning culture. Mentoring programs are usually devised with the intention of helping mentees to develop areas of need that are indentified by mentees themselves. The process is intended to help mentees identify their personal and professional developmental interests within the school's vision and missions (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Mentees can do this in light of their experiences, so that they can plan for their own professional development and changes (Haack, 2006). Here, it would not be a supervisor or school leader identifying developmental goals for teachers for them.

Much of the literature on mentoring present the common thread of benefits for mentees in terms of their professional development (Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Daresh, 1995; Hobson, 2003; Kram, 1983; Southworth, 1995; Sullivan, 2004). Irrespective of why mentoring is established, there is substantial evidence of enormous rewards and satisfactions recorded for mentees (Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Cochran- Smith & Paris, 1995; Daresh, 1995; Dimmock, 2000; Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Elliott & Calderhead, 1993; Haack, 2006; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Hobson, 2003; Scandura, Tejeda, Werther, & Lankau, 1996; Shea, 2001).These benefits include mentees gaining both career and psychosocial support and increased learning (Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Kram, 1983).

Some of the benefits recorded under the umbrella of career support includes: accelerated rate of learning

- improved personal communication skills, both personal and political
- improved technical expertise
- better problem analysis
- opportunity for sharing new ideas
- developed insight to teaching strategies
- opportunity for reflection on action
- greater openness and concrete feedback
- positive reinforcement
- access to resources
- smooth transition into change

Under the umbrella of psychosocial benefits comes:

- reduced the feeling of isolation
- less stress and frustrations
- increased confidence and self esteem
- opportunity for building networks
- help in achieving what mentees aspire
- friendship
- collegial support
- empathy, counselling and guidance

Sources: Butcher (2000), Clutterbuck and Sweeney (2005), Ehrich, Hansford and Tennent (2004), Hansford and Ehrich (2006), Hobson (2003), Mathews (2003) and Scandura, Teheda, Werther and Lankau (1996)

Mentoring is a two-way process and as a reciprocal relationship it gives fair amount of benefits to the mentors as well. Some of the benefits identified for mentors include:

- personal fulfillment and growth reflection and professional development
- improved interpersonal skills; assistance in projects
- increased confidence gains self awareness and sense of self-worth
- collegiality and networking

Sources: Clutterbuck and Sweeney (2005), Ehrich and Hansford (1999), Hansford and Ehrich (2006), Hobson (2003), Kram (1983), Mathews (2003) and Scandura, Tejeda, Werther and Lankau (1996)

Mentoring also has many potential benefits for the school over-all. Some of these include:

- improved education of students
- improved performance
- increase in productivity
- enhancement of services

- stronger work ethics

- increase in commitment to school goals

- discovers latent talent

- improved communication

- establishing support networks

- enhanced organisational culture and image

- cost effective professional development

Sources: Ehrich and Hansford (1999), Ehrich, Hansford and Tennent (2004), Mathews(2003) and Scandura, Tejeda, Werther and Lankau(1996)

2.7   Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring is used for professional development purposes in many professions, including education (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; Mathews, 2003). In schools, mentoring can be used to compliment the existing systems of professional develop. Mentoring has to be considered in relation to individual teachers' specific needs to make it most relevant to them. This asks for individualised mentoring programs for teachers (Hobson, 2003; Lewis, 1996; Mathews, 2003). For example in the context of this research, the mentor could use classroom observations to understand what mentees needs are and then coach, guide and assist accordingly, to achieve these needs.

The close proximity that the mentor and mentee work in makes it most important that these relationships are based on honesty, trust and openness to ensure there success. Often mentoring relationships develop to span the boundaries between personal and professional issues and no problems stay hidden from each other (Elliott & Calderhead, 1993).

Teachers always need encouragement and support, but they need these from a trustable friend, especially when teachers are faced with new challenges. The encouragement and support teachers get through such mentoring relationships would keeps teachers thriving as they will feel safe and valued in the relationship (DeBolt, 1992; Johnson & Ridley, 2004; Sullivan, 2004).

2.8 Ideal Mentoring Models for Collaborative Professional Development

The mentoring model adopted for the mentoring relationship will depend on the learning needs of the mentee. Using the appropriate model to assist the learning for the mentee is essential when establishing individualised mentoring relationships for professional development. A mentoring model chosen has to be grounded in adult learning theories so that the learning is articulated in existing beliefs and practices of mentees through reflection (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; Mullen, 2000; Terehoff, 2002). The mentoring model is underpinned by the methodology used for the process. In that respect, this research context looked at implementing a reflective coaching model of mentoring because both participant teachers expressed a need to learn new skills as well as gain insight.

Johnson (2004) emphasises that mentors need to be both teachers and coaches so that teachers are able to learn strategies new to them. Teaching and coaching in mentoring is about providing teachers the new knowledge, making recommendations and consultation on how to use these newly learn teaching strategies. In context of this mentoring model, reflective coaching is associated with refining the desired skills and behaviours that the mentees already have, so that they meet their learning needs (Sullivan, 2004). In this model, the learning is an exploration of context that is specific to the activity, which is shaped through experience (Brookes & Sikes, 1997).

Through this model, the mentor works as a reflective coach, assisting the mentee reflect on the learning intervention and its development. In this context, coaching is defined as a formal process that provides space and time for reflection in a partnership and framework of mutual respect and strict confidence (McCoy, 2005). The mentor/ coach then works proactively using planned interventions to analyse the new teaching strategies employed by the mentee to improve their learning (Brookes & Sikes, 1997). The mentor/coach does this by directly collaborating and assisting to plan the instructional change. In addition to that the mentor/coach supports in gathering material for teaching, observes the mentee at work, to later give feedback. In addition to that, the mentor/ coach would allow the mentee to reflect on was accomplished in the teaching and process of learning (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

The feedback provided has to be specific to the goals of change and have to find a balance between positive and negative comments (Duke Corporate Education, 2006). Feedback sessions in mentoring involves mentees and mentors having to work in partnership to co-enquire on the evidence (Maynard, 1997). This would enable the mentee to reflect on their teaching strategies so they take ownership for their own learning.

Reflection helps mentees to develop their own philosophies of teaching (Diaz-maggioli, 2004). Reflection here is associated with the traditional works of Schon (1983) who identifies "reflection on action", "reflection in action" and "reflection for action" as key to learning in schools. Reflecting on; in; and for action helps mentees to view problematic situations and convert them to potential learning opportunities that allow growth and development in day to day processes (Schon, 1983). In addition to that, reflection, assist mentees to gain new perspectives on problems that they identify and bring understanding to the underlying theories so that their teaching practices were well informed.

2.9   Factors that may have Negative Affect Mentoring

When planning to implement any project for change the program has to be weighed out to see its pros and cons. Mentoring can only be understood by being aware of the concerns and the negative aspects of mentoring. Concerns and negative aspects of mentoring can be looked from the perspectives of the mentor and mentee and as well as the perspectives of the organisational.

2.9.1   Time

Mentoring is a very time consuming for all involved in the process. Hansford and Ehrich (2006), Hobson (2003) and Long (1994) identify the unavailability of time for meetings for mentors and mentees as a major issue that would have to be looked into when establishing mentoring relationships. McDonald and Hite (2005) also highlight the time-frame in formal mentoring projects as the lack of contact time may restrict the nurturing relationship needed by the mentees. Both mentors and mentees have to be committed to be available to meet as required especially to fully benefit from being involved in a mentoring partnership to work.

2.9.2 Mismatch of Partners

The mismatching of mentors and mentees also compromises the effectiveness of the mentoring process (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2001; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Hobson, 2003; Long, 1994). It is the messiest and the most difficult process of creating a mentoring relationship (Megginson, Clutterbuck, Garvey, Stokes, & Grarrett-Harris, 2006). Mismatching mentors and mentees may have a more negative effect when there is just a handful of mentors taking on the task of mentoring (Ehrich & Hansford, 1999). The mismatch would create tensions between the partners especially if the mentee was from a minority social group (Long, 1994).

2.9.3 Poor Relationships

The lack of commitment from the mentor and the mentee will compromise the mentoring relationship because of lack of support in the partnership. When the mentor and mentee do not compliment each other and when there is a lack of shared responsibility between partners, it will often leave partners frustrated and demoralised. This would create a sense of betrayal and lead to a loss of self-esteem (Long, 1994). Poor relationship in terms of power (McDonald & Hite, 2005) may also present an unnecessary imbalance in the mentoring relationship. This is especially sensitive in the context of this research, as here the suggestion is for the mentoring relationship to be established between the supervisors as mentors and teachers as mentees. Supervisors being those who are already superior position the school hierarchical ladder.

Shea (2001) highlights that in a mentoring relationship, hierarchy cannot be just considered in association with a person's position, it can also be considered in relation to knowledge and experience; influences and personal complexities. Either way, the power imbalance has to be eliminated to assure the success of the mentoring relationship.   Although mentoring presents some form of power differential in the nature of the mentoring relationship, consideration has to be given to ensure that the power is not abused by any party involved. The power of balance associated with mentoring should never weigh too heavily towards the mentors as this would lead to disempowerment for the mentee (Diaz-maggioli, 2004). But when the mentoring relationship is developed between supervisors and

teachers with the right intentions, it may bring highly positive outcomes in terms of learning, networking and gaining resources(Shea, 2001). In the context of this research, the responsibility to ensure the relationships stays healthy is in the hands of the supervisor as the mentor and the guide in the relationship (McDonald & Hite, 2005).

2.9.4 Mentor Education

Chosen mentors not having the appropriate training is another major concern when establishing mentoring relationships (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2001; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Hobson, 2003; Long, 1994). Mentors will need to gain enough knowledge so that they can assist mentees in any learning process. Similarly, mentors have to assure that mentees understand how mentoring works and give them the necessary skills so that the mentees benefit from engaging in the mentoring relationship (Krupp, 1985; Long, 1994; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). Success of the mentoring relationship lies with mentors "who evidence moral purpose, display emotional intelligence and foster caring relationships and norms reciprocity for knowledge sharing show the way" (Fullan, 2001, p.132) to mentees success.

2.10 Conclusion

Teachers do not consider supervision to be a professional development support due to the nature of the evaluative model used for supervision practices. In fact in teachers consider supervision to be an administrative responsibility of their supervisors (Acheson & Gall, 1992; VSO, 2005).

To assist teachers in their professional development and establishing a professional learning community, collaborations and on-going learning support is needed to bring sustainable improvement towards achieving the visions and missions of the school. The success of professional development programmes depend on how well supported teachers feel in accomplishing their learning needs. Working collaboratively in partnerships will help teachers to minimise the isolation that teachers feel in their classroom when trialing new teaching strategies and would help the teachers keep motivated and focused in their learning.

One way for this collaboration to occur, is through mentoring. Mentoring is established to achieve learning goals that may be aspired by the mentee or by a collective group or by the school organisation. The mentoring process will give mentees the opportunity to engage in self-directed learning with support from their mentor, according to their own developmental needs.

As there are many models for mentoring, this research looked into a reflective coaching model as appropriate for this research context. A reflective coaching model assists teachers with gaining the necessary skill training and knowledge development through reflection and collaborative support until teachers are confident enough to implement their learning into practice.

No matter how small or how long the mentoring relationship may take, there are immense benefits for all engaged in the relationship. These benefits include both psychosocial support and career advancements for both the mentee and the mentor. The school also benefits for establishing mentoring to drive the on-going professional development, as formal mentoring is driven towards accomplishing the visions and missions of the school.

While benefits gained from mentoring are high, there are also limitations that have to be considered when implementing mentoring relationships. It is important to assure that the partners are well matched. Secondly the implication of time limitations for mentoring as Maldivian schools function as shift schools and teachers work only half day. Mentors not having the necessary educational background in the third issue have to also be considered.

Maldivian primary schools are going through a transitional period which is demanding that teachers gain more knowledge and build competencies that were necessary for this transition. Mentoring appears to be an ideal strategy to give teachers the necessary on-going professional support.

To my knowledge, there had been no research done in Maldivian primary schools to explore strategies that may assist building continuous professional developmental opportunities for teachers. This has led to my interest to investigate how mentoring can assist teachers in their professional growth and explore the following research questions.

1. What are teachers' views on current professional development programs for student-centred teaching in their classrooms?

2. What are the teachers' evaluations of mentoring by a supervisor to foster professional development for student-centred teaching?

3. What are the implications of mentoring as a continuous professional development strategy for whole school re-culturing?

These questions form the basis for this research project. Chapter Three discusses the methodologies and argument that supports how this research was conducted.

Chapter Three – Methodology

3.1   Chapter Overview

The methodology chapter provides a rationale and justification for how information and data were gathered by the researcher. This chapter justifies the selection of action research as the method to investigate how mentoring can be established for collaborative professional development in Maldivian primary schools. The chapter firstly presents an introduction to the research questions (section 3.2) and then explains the research design (section 3.3). The chapter then introduces the research context in terms of setting, participants and the intervention (section 3.4). The action research process as in this research setting is then discussed (section 3.5). The ethical issues related to this research are outlined (section 3.6). Data generation methods and analysis are then discussed (sections 3.7 and 3.8). Finally a chapter summary and conclusion is provided (section 3.9).

3.2   Research Questions

The purpose of the research was to explore the outcomes of mentoring relationships through working collaboratively in an action research process. The action research investigated the outcomes of an intervention trialed to create student-centred pedagogy in two lower primary classes of a Maldivian primary school. The study used the action research process to also investigate the ways in which, mentoring can be used to develop better professional relationships between teachers and grade supervisors to enable a culture of continued professional learning. It also sought to verify changes that were necessary in the existing professional development activities in the school to ensure that mentoring relationships benefited the teachers with on-going learning opportunities.

For this purpose the research was designed to enable the researcher/ mentor and two participating teachers/ mentees, to work in collaboration to establish student-centred teaching practices in the mentees respective classrooms. By working with two teachers, the researcher was able to generate data on the two teachers' views on the collaborative relationship that was established in this mentoring process. Further, the research was aimed to identify the two teacher's views on the

necessary changes in the existing school system to establish effective mentoring relationships.

The investigation was driven with the intention to answer the following research questions. These questions have been derived from issues relating to professional development in Maldivian primary schools and issues emerging from the literature review.

1. What are the teachers' views on current professional development programs for student-centred teaching in their classrooms?
2. What are the teachers' evaluations of mentoring by a supervisor to foster professional development for student-centred teaching?
3. What are the implications of mentoring as a continuous professional development strategy for whole school re-culturing?

The research was conducted as a small scale action research in two lower primary classrooms in a process of mentoring. The mentoring partnerships in this action research process required a genuine partnerships based on trust, communication and joint responsibility in planning (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). The action research process was designed to use an intervention to assist the two participating mentees to their teaching with contributions to support from the mentors/ researchers, if the need was identified. Keeping the research practical and manageable was necessary to fit it to the scope of this project (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002).

3.3 Research Design

Action research is defined as a "small scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005, p.227). It is collaborative and participatory research where the learning takes place through action, reflection. The research is owned by the everyone involved in the research process, which in this research context were the two participating teachers and the researcher (Alcorn, 1986). An action research process is cyclic in nature (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). It begins with defining a problem, leading to data generation, diagnosis and planning, action, observation and reflection for further planning (Alcorn, 1986). In this

research context, the action learning for the professional development of the two teachers was where they were able to develop, implement and describe the effects of the intervention in the plan of action. The execution of the plan was then followed by evaluation and reflection in order to further improve their teaching pedagogy to be student-centred for the second cycle of trialing (McCormack, Reynolds, & Ferguson-Patrick, 2006).

Carr and Kemmis (1986) emphasised that genuine action research only happen when the researcher and participants take a joint responsibility for their individual developments. This can be seen in this research design as this process emphasised action learning for professional development. I, the researcher, had a dual role in this research. One of them was to remove myself from the action and collecting data for the study. The other was of a research participant, as the mentor for both the teachers in the mentoring process.

The collaborative nature of the mentoring relationships, allowed for me to work in a one-on-one partnership between both participant teachers individually (Schmuck, 2006). Carr (1995) said that any research in education cannot just identify a problem in teachers' practices but had to also be prepared to critically evaluate, and suggest alternative activities that were in someway better. As such, this action research was concerned with studying any immediate change that the collaborative relationship brought in the teaching strategies that two participating teachers/ mentees employed.

3.3.1 Quality of Data

The purpose of a research design is to address the scope of the original research questions using specific questions that ensure construct and validity (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). Here the selection of the design was dependent on the nature of the research questions in order to report on the mentoring relationship and the change process.

3.4 Research Context

The Research context is discussed to give a perspective on how the context may benefit or limit the study. The context of this study is discussed to give an idea of the research setting, the participants and the research intervention.

3.4.1 Research Setting

The research site was a primary school in capital island of Maldives. As all primary schools in Maldives this too was a two session shift, government primary school. The school is biggest primary school in the country with a student population of over 2000. The students in the senior grades (grades 4, 5, 6 &7) 7 attended school in the morning session while lower primary grades (grades 1, 2 &3) were in the afternoon session. Morning session is from 6.55 am to 12.05pm and afternoon session from 12.55 pm to 5.55pm. Due to this teachers are in the school only for half a day in their session times.

The research was conducted in the afternoon session in a grade two and a grade three class, working with the two class teachers. Both classes had a student population of 30-33 students of mixed gender and mixed ability.

The sessions consisted of thirty five minute periods separated by the school bell. The teachers usually get just one non-contact period in the session and this period is often used for marking of books. After session all teachers get together for any grade meetings. Similarly, all meetings relating to the study, with the two teachers were scheduled to late evenings (after session) with some meetings going over to the weekend.

Teachers follow a strict time tables in Maldivian primary schools with thirty five minute periods for each subject. This is with class teachers teaching English, Mathematics, Environmental Science, Physical Education and Practical Arts. The other subjects including Islam, Dhivehi, Quran and Music (as part of Practical Arts) and Computer Skills are taught by subject teachers assigned for that grade.

Period Allocation per Week

SUBJECT	NO.OF PERIODS PER WEEK
English	7
Mathematics	6
Environmental Studies	6
Practical Arts	2
Physical Education	2
Islam	5
Quran	2
Dhivehi	5
Music	1
Computer Skills	1

Figure 2: Period Allocation for Subjects (Iskandhar School, 2002)

Doing my research in my previous school assisted me as the school management was highly supportive and willing to assist with the data collection process for my research project. It also gave me ready access to participants. I chose to collaborate with two teachers that I already knew and had a close relationship in the study so it supported me to jump start the mentoring relationship. Effectiveness of mentoring relationship depended on established close relationship between the mentor and mentees (Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005). Both teachers whom I invited to be part of this were already well known to me at a personal and professional level as I had previously worked with them as their grade supervisor.

In my job as a grade supervisor previously, my main responsibility was to improve student learning by assisting teachers in their development. For this purpose, I had to do classroom observations; check students' notes and books; and give feedback to teachers, which was done as mandated by the Ministry of Education. My experience as a supervisor enables me to say that current practices of professional development do not allow supervisors to get involved in the classroom in a way that they can make the better impact on student learning. Taking on this research for my Masters research has been led by my desire to find a way where both supervisors and teachers could work more collaboratively to establish a culture of learning in the Maldivian primary schools.

3.4.2 Research Participants

As mentioned in the previous section, mentoring relationships require both mentees and the mentor involved in the relationship to be well known to each other at a personal and professional level. The research participants of this research are two senior teachers with more than 10 years of experience teaching in different lower primary grades of the school. Both participants had worked along side me, with me as their grade supervisor for two years in the school. So the participants knew me both at a professional and personal level and this may have been the reason for them to accept my invitation to be part of this study project. Through out the research, the two teachers are referred to using pseudonyms of Seema and Fathimath (not their real names) and this is to give the two teachers some measure of anonymity.

In the collaborating with the two teachers to trial the intervention in the action research process, I gave consideration to eliminate the power imbalance that could otherwise be present in a supervisor/ teacher relationship. The two teachers were assured of their right to decline participation and withdraw from the research at any time, before I finalised the transcription of interviews. Secondly I assured to the two teachers that I would not come back as their supervisor for the year 2008 or the consequent year. Thirdly, I minimised the power imbalance by assuring that the data collected in the study would not be used to evaluate or appraise them in any circumstance. This assurance was given before starting the data generation

process by being available to the research participants for any queries regarding the research and gaining consent from the research two participants (Appendix-D).

Data was generated over a time frame of three weeks, according to the schedule presented below. Here the researcher worked with the two teachers separately, gathering data through in the mentoring partnerships created in the study.

3.4.3 Data Generation Schedule

DATA GENERATION METHODS	
Pre-interview (semi-structured interview)	Major themes- understanding teachers view on current monitoring system.
Pre discussion	Major theme- Beginning of mentoring session and Introduction of concept map for lesson
Mentoring Observation One	Mentoring session to master using of concept maps and get necessary material for lesson Complete observer- main purpose ; to allow teacher to use concept map without interruptions
Post-observation Feedback and Interview	Give feedback on how concept maps were used/ discussion on possible areas of improvement
Observation Two	Complete observer- to see the changes brought to lesson based on feedback
Post-observation Feedback and Interview	Feedback on lesson
Post Interview (Semi-structured interview)	To identify the changes in relationship with teacher and supervisor, and what teachers gained from working with the supervisor

Figure 3: Data Generation Schedule

3.4.4 Student Involvement

Although the research was directly concerned with the two participating teachers, indirectly the research did impact students, with introduction of the intervention and carrying out observation in class time. To minimise the impact of the study, I received consent from students and their caregivers giving all information of the research process (Appendix- A). Consideration was also given to introduce the intervention to introductory lessons so they did not have any impact on students' assessments.

3.4.5 The Intervention

Purpose of an action research is to plan, implement, review and evaluate an intervention with the intention of bringing a positive change into practices (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005).

This research was designed to assist the two teachers to change the pedagogy they used to enable them to use the concept map for formative assessment process so they could use the information gained to organise the rest of lesson. The concept map was designed and planned at mentoring/sharing sessions in collaboration with the mentor/ researcher.

Concept maps can be used by teachers as a formative assessment tool and can be highly effective in identifying the gaps in students thinking and knowledge. In addition it can reveal students misconceptions on particular subject areas (Derbestseva, Safayeni, & Canas, 2007). Concept maps are graphic tools for organising, representing and presenting information. They include concepts, usually enclosed in circles or boxes of some type, and used to show the relationships between concepts indicated by a connecting line linking two concepts (Novak & Canas, 2006). Concept maps can reveal patterns of thinking and help students clarify them, as well as help process, organise and prioritize information. In this research concept maps is used as a formative strategy to help teachers to encourage students to relate the ideas they learn in class to their prior knowledge so that meaningful active learning can be planned for the students (Holden, 1992).

As this research the concept map was used to organise the rest of the lesson according to student ability hence making their teaching student-centred. Seeking to use the concept map as the intervention allowed the two participating teachers and the researcher to work collaboratively in the mentoring process.

The concept map was introduced and planned after the researcher had conducted pre- interview (Appendix- H) with the two individual teachers to investigate the first research question of the research which is to get a better understanding of their views on current monitoring systems.

- *What are teacher's views on current professional development programs for student-centred teaching in their classrooms?*

The research was designed so that the researcher could use the information from the pre-interview to direct the action research process in the two teachers' classrooms. In addition the pre-interview meeting was also used to introduce the two participants to mentoring, as a process for on-going professional development.

A second meeting (mentoring session one) was then held with the two teachers to introduce the notion of concept map as the intervention to assist them in bringing the desired change. From then on, the two teachers were directed to focus on how they could use the concept map in their classes. Both were willing to change their previously pre-planned lesson to accommodate the concept map and plan extra work for the students.

Next, classroom observations (Hopkins, 1976) using a preplanned observation sheet to record data (Appendix- F) and feedback sessions (Appendix –G), were held with the two teachers, separately. This was to identify the problems that they faced in using the concept map and assist them to reflect on their practice to identify changes that may needed to plan for the next lesson. A second observation was then conducted which was also followed by a post-observation feedback session. To conclude the research collection process a post-interview (Appendix-I) was conducted to investigate the second and third research questions.

- *What are the teachers' evaluations of mentoring by a supervisor to foster professional development for student-centred teaching?*

- *What are the implications of mentoring as a continuous professional development strategy for whole school re-culturing?*

These questions were asked to learn about their experience of working collaboratively with a former supervisor as their mentor in the mentoring process. In addition the interview was used to gain their perspectives on mentoring for professional development and what the two teachers perceived to have gained from the whole research process.

While reporting how the concept map was utilised by the two teachers to create student-centred pedagogy was an aim of the research, equally important was to report on the mentoring relationship built between the two participant teachers and the researcher/mentor. Hence the aim of the research was to bring an understanding to how collaborative professional relationships can be established between a teacher and their mentor and as well as reporting on the learning process of the two teachers.

The action research was carried out within school session were there were other activities and obligations for the two participating teachers than just be part of this research process, which made this research both a social and a cultural process (W Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Carrying out research in real situations where the two participants had other responsibilities and obligations that were more important than participating in the research made a huge impacted on how the was study. For example: considerations had to been given by me to be available to the meet at times that teachers were free, after school hours, which usually was at night as the teachers worked in afternoon session.

3.5 The Action Research Process

Action research is an investigation, were, as a result of rigorous self appraisal of current practice, the researcher focuses on a problem (or a topic or an issue which needs to be explained), and on that basis of information (about the up-to-date state of the art, about the people who will be involved and about the context), plans, implements and evaluates an action then draws conclusions on the basis of the findings (Macintyre, 2000, p.1).

Action research has its roots in the sociological work of Kurt Lewin (1948) and is a popular method used in educational research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Action research can be defined as a research process of innovation and careful evaluation designed to monitor a change process using a well thought out interventions and understanding the situation that the change is focused upon (Alcorn, 1986; Kemmis & Di Chiro, 1987; Macintyre, 2000; Swann & Pratt, 2003). Action research cannot be taken up as an individual research project; it recognizes that people as social beings engaged in social relationships that are socially constructed. So in order to understand them, the researchers much analyse these relationships in their social context (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

3.5.1 Transformation through Action Research

Action research is research through 'self- reflective inquiry' by participants which is undertaken in order to improve understanding of the participants practices in context, with a view to maximizing social justice (W Carr & Kemmis, 1986). It involves evaluating a problem, making improvements or changes and implementing the new change. All action research is processes of transformative learning.

Transformation in action research is where learning and research is done together. It is based on engaging in true professional relationship based on trust and openness. It encompasses a high level of participation, action research, and transformative learning. It is research conducted with participants and organisations which broadens the base of perceptions and expectations. It is collaboration, where power and empowerment are shared so that there is an environment that facilitates sharing and reflection (Toomey, 1997). In this research process, action research happened when the teachers/mentees and researcher/supervisor collaborated in the process of intervening with new teaching pedagogy for both participant teachers in their classrooms.

Action research, as a transformational process also creates a transparent environment where the researchers are able to move beyond only seeing what they are expected to see. Hence the researcher acts as a catalyst, confidante, and collaborator who guides and facilitates discussions, ensuring the key questions are reflected upon in the data collection process. In this research process the

researcher was able assist planning actions that enabled getting the two teachers involvement in the research. For example: In the action research process taken on in this mentoring relationship, I got the two participating teachers to plan the concept maps on their own while I ensured the necessary information were included on the concept map. Action research process was adopted for this research because it allowed me as the researcher/ mentor to work in partnership with the two research participants to support them in building student-centred pedagogy in their teaching (Robertson, 2005).

3.5.2 Process of this Transformative Action Research

Action research consists of spirals of actions to cover a range of methodologies to investigate and improve a focused situation (Robertson, 2005). Each of these spirals repeated a series of phases that involved both action and research (Mutch, 2005). The spirals included stages of planning, action and observation and reflection and feedback. At the end of each cycle, consideration was given to begin a new cycle of learning and further refine the practice or to resolve the new problem that had emerged during the first cyclic action process (Cardno, 2003).

The planning stage of this research project involved bringing an understanding about the intervention and how the intervention would support teachers to change their teaching pedagogy. As the mentor, my role here was to support the two teachers to plan the concept map and help my two mentees identify and get the any resources that were needed to trial the intervention in the classrooms.

The action stage of the research process was where the two teachers trialed the intervention in their classrooms, with the necessary changes to pedagogy they employed. Here as the researcher, I observed the intervention being used, and took field notes (Appendix- F) and collected raw data for the feedback and reflection session.

The feedback and reflection stage was where both teachers had the opportunity to reflect on their experiences. This stage allowed the two teachers to reflect on their lesson, evaluate and integrate new knowledge to their teaching pedagogy. The first feedback and reflection sessions with the two participant teachers led to the second spiral of the action process. This spiral was repeated then repeated with all

the stages of the action research process beginning from the planning stage with consideration to changes in the interventions.

Action Research Spirals of this Action Research Process

Identifying the problem

Data collection on teachers need to bring about student-centred teaching

Redefinition of problem

Plan intervention in mentoring session

Feedback and reflection

Implement the differenciated teaching strategies with concept map and observe
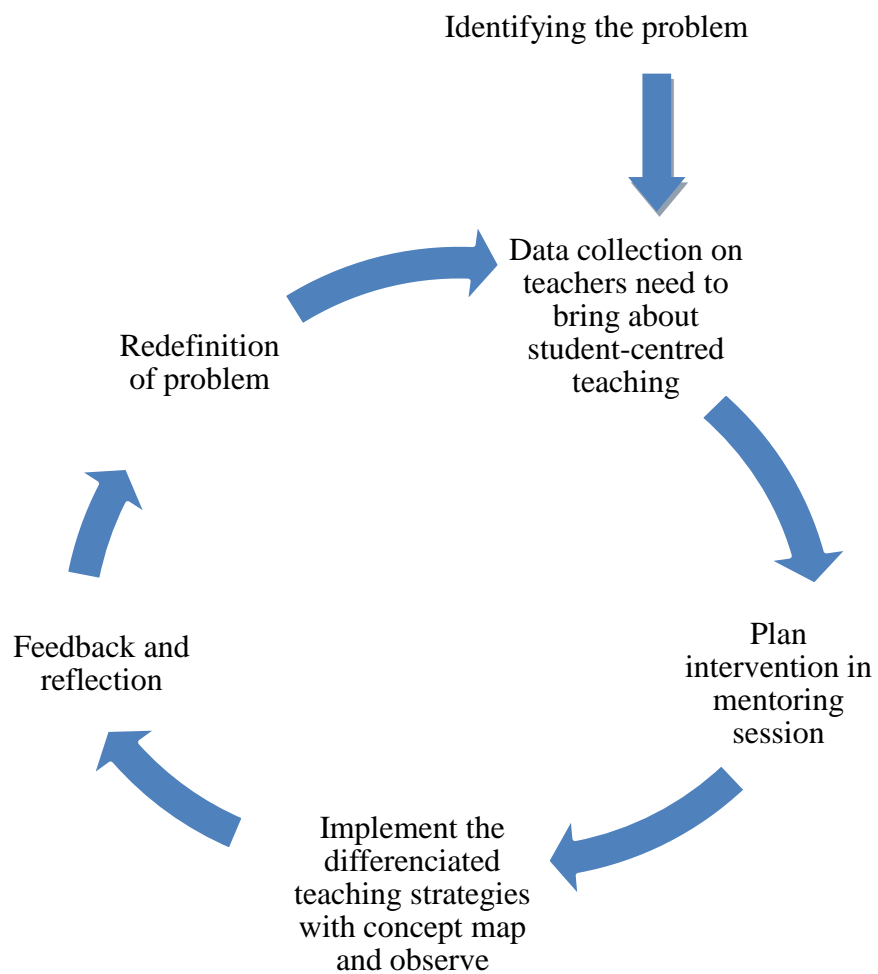
Figure 4: Action Research Process - Adapted from (Alcorn, 1986, p. 36)

Action research may differ from traditional qualitative research in purpose (Schmuck, 2006) but the two kinds of research over lap in the research methods they employ. This action research project employed semi-structured interviews, planning/mentoring sessions, observations, and feedback and reflection sessions for data generation procedures.

All interviews, mentoring sessions and feedback sessions were conducted in Dhivehi (mother tongue for all Maldivians) to ensure clarity and better communication (Scandura, Tejeda, Werther, & Lankau, 1996). The interviews were then transcribed in to English with care taken not to alter the meaning and to keep in context. Both research participants wanted to be kept anonymous. Caution was taken to comply with their request by giving both teachers pseudonyms in reporting the research findings. In addition to that the researcher did the transcripts personally and kept all the information on her personal computer.

3.5.3 Semi-structured Interview

Semi-structured interview "technique is open ended to enable the content to be re-ordered, digressions and expansions to be made and new avenues to be included," (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005, p.145). Interviews may be the most widely used method of data collection in education (Cardno, 2003). Interviews provide descriptive information about peoples perceptions of themselves, other people and events (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). But great care and skill is necessary for the interview to be successful. Good interviews depend on the nature of the participants, the quality of the questioning and the trust that exist between the researcher and the participant.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) argue that interviewing offers a place to learn what is important for the research, as it allows the research participants to relate to their experiences using a narrative approach. Mutch (2005) states that interviews have advantages over written questionnaires because it helps the researcher to check the understanding of the question. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the two participating teachers at two separate meetings. This was mainly to understand and describe individual teachers' lived experiences, challenges and the dilemmas. Semi-structured interviews allow for the flexibility in how my questions were directed and helped to probe to clarify ambiguities in the data

collected (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). Further questions enabled me to probe and encourage the teachers to describe their experiences in their own words.

Identifying an area of concern is methodologically central to any action research purpose (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002). I had two concerns coming into this research project. Firstly my wanting to investigate the two teachers' developmental needs to establish differentiated teaching pedagogy to assist teachers in creating student-centred classrooms. Secondly my concern for relationship building between teachers and supervisors in Maldivian primary schools which was from my past experiences of working as a supervisor in primary school in Maldives.

In this research process, data generated from the semi-structured interviews investigated, firstly the professional development needs of the two participating teachers. This was at the initial semi-structured interview (Appendix-H). Then the post semi-structured interview (Appendix-I) was used to investigate the mentoring relationship that developed between the teacher and the researcher in the stages of the action research. The post-interview also investigated two teachers' impressions of mentoring to create on-going collaborative professional development opportunities in the school in the future.

3.5.4 Mentoring/ Sharing Session

The mentoring sessions was also a data generation site in this research process. Here data was collected to support arguments on the mentoring relationship between the teacher/ mentee and researcher/ mentor. Data was also generated on the planning of the intervention and the change process that lead to the differentiated teaching in the classrooms.

The mentoring sessions were also used to collaborate and give supporting information to develop the concept map as the intervention so support the two teachers' in creating student-centred pedagogy. At these sessions the teachers/ mentees and the researcher/ mentor shared understandings of the concept maps. This was to assure an informed commitment from the two teachers before trialing the concept in their classrooms.

The mentoring sessions enabled us to develop a mutual understanding of what we were trying to achieve and how we were going to approach the change process. This was done by clearly defining the goals that we were trying to achieve by assuring that they were specific and measurable at the end of the lesson so that it would maximise student learning (Robertson, 2005). These sessions also enabled me as their mentor to assure that the two teachers were well recourse and well prepared to take on the trial in the classroom.

3.5.5 Observation

Observations help researchers to gather live data from live situations (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). In this research observations allowed me to record everything that I felt were relevant to the study including all interactions and behaviours rather than just perceptions and feelings (Mutch, 2005; Schmuck, 2006). Observations are very useful when the researcher needs to gather information on non-verbal expressions that would help understand how teachers lead and communicate a change process (Schmuck, 2006).

It is important to note that in observations, the presence of an observer might change the behaviour and the environment being observed (Cardno, 2003). As our mentoring partnership was to help the two teachers to bring a deliberate change to their teaching pedagogy, I chose to be a non- participant observer so that it enabled the two teachers' space to trial the concept map without any interruption or breaking of flow in the teaching.

A pre-set observation schedule (Appendix-F) was decided upon at the planning stage of the research so that the researcher knew in advance what she was looking for (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). Structured observations are considered to produce more valid data, as it looks selectively at the agendas that are agreed upon by the researcher and the research participants (Schmuck, 2006). This also increases the achieving reliability of the data collected (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005).

Specific categories for observation and teaching practices that needed recording were agreed upon at the mentoring sessions so both the teachers and I were well focused on the change process using the concept map. Emphasis was given to recording all aspects of the change process using categories that were

comprehensive under the exclusive themes (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). The categories observed firstly included how the two teachers introduced the concept map activity to the children. Secondly the activities that they assigned to students using the information they gained from the concept map were recorded. Also recorded was how the two teachers were able to make more time to focus on individual students.

Macintyre (2000) notes that field notes help the researcher to observe specific areas and behaviours from the participants. In this study, field notes allowed me to record everything that I felt relevant on-the-spot, so that the data was kept authentic and as living data. Doing field notes at observations also helped me at the feedback sessions as I had complete straight forward data records from the observation, ready for discussion.

3.5.6 Feedback Session

Giving feedback to the mentee is the most skillful part of a mentor's role (Fletcher, 2000). It is closely tied to open communication and leads to greater collaboration between the mentor and the mentee. At feedback sessions, consideration has to be given to provide general descriptions of the observations providing suggestions for further improvement (Lee, Theoharis, Fitzpatrick, & Kim, 2006).

Dialogue or reciprocal conversation is a way of helping people to "explore complex difficult issues from many points of view" (Senge, 1994, p.241) when collaborating in mentoring partnerships. Effective dialoguing strategies involve active listening, questioning techniques and skills. Effective questioning skills paired with active listening helps to establish a climate of understanding, clarity and creating shared meaning of the mentoring relationship (Walsh & Sattes, 2005).

The feedback and reflection sessions in this research context, were used to gather data on the two teachers' learning and the relationship that developed between the mentoring partners. These feedback sessions were also used to generate data on the concept map and investigate the necessary changed for the next cycle of the action research. In this research, the feedback session was planned to be a

reflective interview with specific questions to direct the reflective process (Appendix- G).

Reflective interviewing is about asking mentees questions that encourage reflecting critically on their practices. In this study, the questions asked at the reflect interview were directed to help the two mentees evaluate the use of the concept map and reflect on their prior understandings so they could prepare with necessary changes for the next lesson. Data was also generated on the responses of the students; this included identifying how students adapted to the differentiated teaching and what had to be done to assist students to work more independently.

3.5.7 Recording the Intervention

In recording the intervention, feedback session was used to encourage reflection on concern 'high inference teaching skills' (Duke Corporate Education, 2006). These included the two teachers' ability to respond to unexpected classroom events and sensitivity to student difficulty. In addition, to reflect of low inference skills such as board layout, giving instructions and eliciting vocabulary. This also included talking about the sensitive issues in the teacher's practice. In this research, the intervention was recorded to inform about teacher movement, how teacher responded to student queries as well as student responses.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher has an ethical and moral responsibility to protect participants and school from possible harm that may come as the result of the research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). The ethics of research, focus on the need to protect people taking part in the study from any possible harm (Cardno, 2003).

The ethical consideration in such educational research revolves around the following issues: a) informed consent, b) the right to privacy and, c) protection from harm. It is a responsibility of the researcher to obtain informed consent from all parties that may be impacted from the study.

In this research context, research ethics involved, firstly gaining approval from the University of Waikato to conduct my research. Secondly I gained written consent

from the Ministry of Education and the school, so that I could conform to their acknowledged standards before entering the school to begin the data collection process (Schmuck, 2006). I also received consent from both teachers participating in the study and the students and their caregivers before beginning the data collection process.

Social research is an intrusion, so participation in the research has to be voluntary (Cardno, 2003). The research participants were informed of their rights and obligations regarding the project by an information sheet handed before gaining consent for the research (Appendix-A). The principle of informed consent arises from the participant's right to "freedom and self-determination" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). To be informed, a participant must be made aware of the purpose of the research (Appendix- A), and risks and benefits, the procedure and the time involved, and the right to withdraw (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). I assured this explained that the main data-collecting techniques in detail to the two participants prior to gaining the consent from the teachers. Both teaches consented to participate in the research and gave me signed testimony before I began the research. I also informed the participant teachers that their identity in this research would be protected by the use of pseudonyms to assure anonymity in the data analysis and reporting in the thesis write up. However, I am wary that there is no guarantee of complete anonymity; especially when the research involved just two teachers from the same school in the small island city of Male'. I can only do my best to protect my participants' identity in being careful with my reporting in this thesis.

Although students were not involved directly in the research process, I gained consent from both students and their caregivers as the research was classroom based (Appendix- E). Care also had to be taken when choosing the lesson for trialing the intervention was not an evaluation period and that it did not impact on students' subject marks or grades.

Relating to participants with care and respect by connecting with them personally rather than considering them as research subjects is at the heart and soul of action research (Schmuck, 2006). This involves gaining trust and being credible as a researcher (Mutch, 2005). Conducting the research in my previous school meant that I knew the culture of the school and how the schools structures worked which

was an advantage for me going in to the study. It also meant I was known to the two participants and thus had previously established friendships which gave me ready access to participants (Mutch, 2005).

3.7 Data Generation Methods

Data was collected over three weeks, by fitting all one-on-one contact hours in non-teaching periods or after school hours. This included interviews, mentoring sessions and feedback sessions. Classroom observations were done within the school session without bringing any interruptions to the class timetables. All interviews, mentoring sessions and feedback sessions were audio taped and later transcribed. I received consent from both teachers to record the interview before recording our sessions. All sessions were conducted as one-on-one sessions with both teachers separately to ensure their confidentiality.

3.8 Data Analysis

Transcribed data were analysed under themes that answered my research questions.

1. What are teachers' views on current professional development programs for student-centred teaching in their classrooms?
2. What are the teachers' evaluations of mentoring by a supervisor to foster professional development for student-centred teaching?
3. What are the implications of mentoring as a continuous professional development strategy for whole school re-culturing?

The analysis included identifying common responses from both participants and catagorising them to different themes. This was done in relation to ideas that emerged from the data and literature review.

3.9 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter discusses the methodology chosen to answer the issues raised relating to professional development in Maldivian primary schools and issues emerging questions from the literature review. The research was conducted as a small-scale action research, conducted in collaboration with two teachers in their

classrooms. Here the researcher had dual roles in the data collection process, one of researcher and one of mentor. Data generation processes involved gathering data, firstly on the mentoring relationship established between the two participating teachers/ mentees and the researcher/ mentor. Secondly it involved gathering data at all the stages of implementing differentiated teaching pedagogy by the participating teachers/mentees classrooms.

The action research process was designed to use concept map as the intervention to assist the two teachers to redesign their teaching. The intervention was planned in collaboration between the teacher/ mentee and researcher/ mentor at mentoring sessions. The intervention was then trialed and observed. The observation field notes were later revisited at feedback and reflection session. Data generated at feedback and reflection session was used to inform on the changes needed for the second spiral of the action research.

Data was generated for this research was firstly through semi- interviews. The data generated here, were used to inform the action research process and to generate data on the mentoring relationship. Data on the intervention was generated at the mentoring sessions, observations and feedback sessions as they were all stages of the learning spirals of the action research.

The mentoring sessions were ulitised to plan the lesson by incorporating the concept map to differentiate pedagogy. These sessions were conducted as free discussions to assist the teachers to take ownership for their own learning. The account of the observations were recorded as field notes at it allowed recording all relevant information on the spot with feedback time to discuss the observations recorded. In addition, teacher reflections were conducted at the feedback sessions as reflective interviews. This was to assist the exploring underlying issues and the consequences when trialing the intervention in their classes.

Participants for the research were selected based on the previous relationships I had established from my working with the two teachers who had volunteered to be part f the research, as their team leader in my previous job. This was essential as mentoring can only be successful when there is openness and trust in between partners, which can only be achieved though established close relationships.

On top of getting consent from all parties that may be affected from this research, consideration was given to the possible impact on student learning even though they were not directly involved in the research. This was done by ensuring that the lessons which the teacher took to trial the intervention were not part of an evaluation and it did not impact students' final subject marks or grades.

Data collection took place in the school during non-contact hours or after school at the convenient times for the two participant teachers, while observations were done without disrupting the class timetables.

Data generated were later transcribed and analysed to themes to answer the research questions of the study. The findings of the research are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Four – Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the results of the study arranged in formal themes that emerged from the analysis of the two research participants' interview transcripts. Seven themes emerged from the analysis. Here I discuss each of them with supporting quotes from the both participants.

The seven main themes from the findings are:

1. Teacher attitude towards current professional development practices: *this includes personal views of the two teachers' on the existing professional development activities in the school. In addition the theme includes the two teachers' reflections on the established teacher performance monitoring system and clinical supervision process. The theme is linked to enquire about how these activities were used to help support teachers in their professional development.*

2. Teacher willingness to engage in professional development: *this presents findings on two teachers' willingness to learn independently. This theme looked into the appropriate learning styles that the two teachers' preferred and their need for collaboration. This theme was relevant in addressing the need for mentoring for collaborative learning opportunities to create a learning culture in the school.*

3. Trust: *this includes findings related the importance of trust to build collaborative professional development relationships in schools. Also the need for trust in the trialed changes from teachers and students. This theme is linked to the implications of building trust between supervisors and teachers' and gaining trust on the intervention trialed to gain cooperation from both students and teachers.*

4. Importance of a good relationship: *includes findings on the type of relationship that is needed for mentoring to be effectively established to meet the needs for on-going collaborative professional development. This theme is relevant when looking to create mentoring between supervisors and teachers in the Maldivian school context.*

5. Changes to teaching: *this presents findings on teachers' perceptions on differentiated teaching and their willingness to trial the interventions to bring change to their teaching pedagogy. This theme is linked to building collaborative learning opportunities and their benefits.*

6. Support for continuous development and change: *includes findings relating to the need for better and enough resources to support teachers in establishing new pedagogy. In addition giving teachers on-going support to reflect on their practices, as well as need for expert support. The theme is also linked to building confidence of supervisors through educational advancements so they can support the teachers in their learning.*

7. *Time: this theme includes the importance of time when looking to establishing mentoring in Maldivian primary schools but in relation to two teachers not identifying "time" as a relevant factor to consider in this research context.*

4.2 Study Context

The two participants of this research were qualified primary teachers, with over ten years of experience in teaching at primary school level. They were both female and had varied experience teaching at different grade in lower primary. Both research participants were well acquainted to me as a colleague. This was from when I had worked as their grade supervisor/ team leader prior to taking study leave.

My previous experiences as a supervisor meant I was researching an area of familiarity to me in this research endeavor. I had to ensure my supervisor/ researcher role was did not impact on the two teachers as a power imposition so

that they were able to engage freely in the mentoring and the action research process. This was done by assisting two teachers with relevant information and explaining all the stages of the data collection process. In addition by letting the two participants know of their role as co-researchers in the action research and letting them learn more independently.

4.3 Attitude towards Current Professional Development Practices

The first theme that emerged from data analysis was on teacher attitudes towards the current practices of professional development in their school. The data are discussed in the following three categories:

4.3.1 View on Current Professional Development

The first aspect of data analysis was on the comments the two teachers made on the professional development seminars held in the school. In my experience professional development for teachers in Maldivian primary schools is mostly from one-off seminars with guest speaker presentations for all teachers of the school. Most schools conduct two or three isolated seminars annually.

At the pre-interview (Appendix- H) the two teachers were asked for their view on the current professional development seminars held in the school. Presented here are the responses from the two teachers when I asked on their view on the benefits of the professional development sessions held on creating student-centred pedagogy in their respective grades.

> *Seema[1]:*   *I attended two workshops last year but had not had the opportunity to observe a model lesson yet. The seminars gave me background information… actually it would have been more beneficial if they had a practical component to it. I think observations would make it easier for me to gain better understanding of how to carry out their student-centred lessons*

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[1] Pseudonym

> *Fathimath[2]:*   *We were always asked to take student-centred lessons but we don't have enough exposure to these strategies. The workshops were more about getting out the ideas we have, I am yet to see a student-centred lesson by someone/ anyone.*

Both teachers acknowledged gaining background information to some extend on student-centred teaching pedagogy from these professional development seminars but insisted on the need to observe a model student-centred lesson to gain more knowledge so they could trial the pedagogies in their own classes. The implication here is for a need for more than what the current professional development seminars were providing, so assist the two teachers to support introducing new pedagogy in their classes.

4.3.2   Classroom Monitoring and Clinical Supervision

The second aspect of the data was on two teachers' attitude towards the existing classroom monitoring system and how the clinical supervision assisted their professional development. Observations and feedback were conducted as often as three observations per teacher annually by their respective grade supervisors as part of the school clinical supervision process.

In the pre-interview (Appendix- H), I asked if the clinical supervision and observations helped with the two teachers professional development.

> *Seema[1]:*   *I don't get that many suggestions to improve on my lesson after observations. I am usually given a general comment such as "good lesson". Most of the time, if the supervisor sees the lesson to be "good" then they have no suggestions to what I can do to change any aspect of the lesson.*

> *Fathimath[2]:*   *Supervisors do give feedback but they don't stress on areas that I can improve on. They say I am very experienced.*

Classroom observations are mandated by the Ministry of Education for all government schools. Supervisors conduct clinical supervision routinely, and along with checks students' books after observation to ensure they are marked and give feedback to the teachers. My experience as a supervisor enables me to say that

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[2] Pseudonym

school leaders do not consider these for any professional development purpose but were kept on record to use for teacher appraisals and performance evaluations.

4.3.3 Curriculum Planning

In the pre-interview (Appendix- H), both teachers were asked if they got any help with curriculum planning from their supervisors:

> *Seema[1]:* *This year, we were told to write the scheme with a student-centred focus. We wrote our schemes giving details into activities that can be given to different abilities in the class ....but it is left up to the teachers to decide how much they will follow it. My (as subject co-ordinator) scheme was checked by the principal and I had to include some suggestions from her. Most of these suggestions were about incorporating multi-media in teaching, which I did as much as possible*

> *Fathimath[2]:* *Supervisors are usually with us when we arrange the topics of the scheme in the grade meetings. Then we teachers work alone on the rest of the plan. Most of the time co-ordinating teachers take the scheme home to complete. When we bring them back sometimes, supervisors may comment on aspects of the scheme which we have to change before we the scheme is finalized.*

These comments reflect on the isolated nature of the teachers work in the school and how isolations are increased when there is no leadership to support teachers in planning.

While reflecting on opportunities created for professional development in the current school system, both teachers referenced to co-ordination meetings.

From my experience, co-ordination meetings are meetings held fortnightly to plan and distribute topics for the coming weeks. The meetings are held in a grade meeting headed by the supervisor, with subject co-ordinators distributing and allocating periods for topics using the scheme of work. Co-ordination meetings

are also used to make necessary changes in pedagogy according to needs of students and discuss any problems in their classrooms.

In the pre-interview (Appendix- H), the two teachers were asked for their view on how learning was promoted in the co-ordination meetings:

> Seema[1]: We use our schemes to plan for the coming two weeks. They give details on topics from the school syllabus, going into activities for different ability groups in the class. Teachers can decide on how closely the scheme is followed. The main reason for detailing the scheme this year was to save up time in the meeting so we could focus on sharing ideas that we may have to make our teaching student-centred.… As a co-ordinator I would make suggestions with hardly any comment from anyone else.

> Fathimath[2]: Last year the co-ordination meetings were very good, we used the coordination meeting to discuss activities for different levels. But then we had the issue of "time". The meetings were taking too long. It took us about two days to plan activities for just one week.

Two issues had been raised through Seema's comment. The lack of contribution from teachers has implications of teachers conforming to what is told by the co-ordinators. In addition this comment highlights a lack of opportunity to learn through co-ordination meeting in her grade. This has implications to a lack of leadership to direct learning at the meeting.

In her comment, Fathimath raised implications on professional development opportunity in relation to time. As shift schools (all Maldivian schools), time is a scarce resource for professional development purposes as teachers are at school only for half a day only in their respective sessions.

Co-ordination meetings and other related grade meetings are structures that already exist in the school system and I believe can be used to minimise teachers' learning in isolation by promoting group learning.

4.4 Theme 2 - Teacher Willingness to Engage in Professional Development

Maldivian schools are highly conservative in relation to school structures and hierarchies and new pedagogies such as student-centred, are not typically used. Hence it was necessary to analyse the data for evidence of the teacher's willingness to engage in professional development.

The second theme that emerged from the data analysis was that both teachers were their willingness to engage in their own professional development. Data for this theme was catagorised in to the four aspects.

4.4.1 Openness to Change

In the pre-interview (Appendix- H), one question was directed to gain evidence on how open the two teachers were to work alongside supervisors to assist them with introduce student-centred pedagogy in their classes.

> *Seema[1]:*   *Supervisors are welcome in to my classroom to help and give suggestions so that I can bring this change in to our classrooms. If the supervisor could give me suggestions as to what more I could do to make my lesson student-centred after observations would I be able to change to improve my strategies further.*

> *Fathimath[2]:*   *If they could at least give us ideas on activities that we could carry out to make our teaching strategies more student-centred and that would be most helpful.*

My experience as a supervisor and impression of teachers, whom I had worked with, is that most of them are very willing to be part of any learning opportunity. Young teachers, freshly out of teaching college were always on the look out for scholarships so that they could take the opportunities to advance their careers.

4.4.2 Teacher Motivation to Gain New Teaching Ideas

A second category indicating the two teachers' willingness to engage in professional development was through understanding their motivation to learn through this research process. At the mentoring session while planning the

intervention (concept map) both teachers changed what they saw necessary according to the needs of students in their respective classes. The following comments were part of sharing sessions that show that learning was taking place at the planning stage to make necessary changes:

> *Seema[1]:* *This lessons objective is to get students to observe things from the school grounds and drawing what they saw. I could take the students out for a few minutes and let the students do their observation and discuss what they saw at the beginning of the lesson. After that I will give the concept map as the second activity for students to do in their groups. This way I can give students more time to complete their work*

> *Fathimath[2]:* *This lesson is about getting students to do an experiment with a torch and ruler to record the movements of the pupil when light enters the eyes at different distances. This is the first lesson for the topic, and we have 6 periods allocated for the topic. So I don't think there is a problem with including all the areas that would be covered in the lesson on the concept map.*

The two teachers' motivation to change their pedagogy to a more student-centred one may be because teachers needed to gain insight to creating a student-centred classroom because the national reform interests for students in lower primary grades. All primary schools in Maldives are being intervened by UNICEF to create student-centred classrooms in the lower grades. Hence the teachers may be seeking to enrich their knowledge so that they too can adapt to the soon to be enforced changes.

4.4.3   Teacher Focus on Planning the Intervention

A third aspect of the data analysis indicated that the two teachers' willingness to engage in professional development which emerged when they got involved with planning the intervention in the mentoring session. In the pre-interview (Appendix- H), I had a question about how they would use the concept map in the class.

Fathimath[2]:   *I can ask them (students) to complete the concept map prior to lesson discussion. So I know how much they (students) understand. I could give the students to write examples for touch and then get them to write more details on the topic.*

Fathimath[2]:   *Unlike last time I will explain the concept map in detail and give it as an evaluative sheet to be done individually. The concept map would be the first activity for the students but I will give them more time to finish the concept map so I understand to plan the rest of the topic.*

Seema[1]:   *In this lesson I will give the concept map as a group work; I will assign different aspects of the topic to groups.*

Fathimath[2]:   *The concept map was more work at the planning stage but it made me think about my individual students and their capabilities and what I could achieve in a thirty five minute period through the concept map. This helped me to planned materials for the lesson.*

Both teachers were highly focused on getting students to complete the concept map and giving another activities based on the findings of the concept map. But the thirty five minute periods meant they had to continue on the work to the next available period for that subject, which was normally on the next day.

4.4.4 Professional Developments through Mentoring

The fourth aspect of data in relation to teacher's willingness to engage in their own professional development was through analysis of data on how the two teachers engaged in the collaborative relationship in the mentoring process. At the post interview (Appendix- I), I asked the teachers to rate the work we did in collaboration in the mentoring process and the following are the comments from both the teachers:

Seema[1]:   *I feel I was able to bring some changes with focus on student ability. I feel the sessions have helped me learn about using formative assessment through the concept map and use the information to make student work in their*

ability groups. I was able to move away from what was written on the scheme to think of the needs of individual children. I believe it would be easier on the children too. It was certainly helped me to focus on lower ability students…

Getting the opportunity to work in partnership helped me trial the concept map in my classroom which I don't think I would have been confident to do otherwise. The concept map would have left me clueless had I not worked in partnership.

Fathimath[2]: *Working in the mentoring partnership allowed me to gain insight to using the concept map and helped me gain knowledge into one way of establishing student-centred pedagogy in my classroom.*

Both comments reflect to how the two teachers may co-operate with a supervisor as a mentor in the future if it was initiated in the school.

4.5 Trust

The third theme which emerged from the data analysis was the importance of trust between teachers and supervisors to make the mentoring relationships effective. Further trust in the interventions from both teachers and their students are considered. The data that emerged for this theme are discussed under the following categories.

4.5.1 Trust and Friendship

The first aspect mentioned by the two teachers was, having trust in the friendship they had with me.

At the pre-interview (Appendix- H) I asked about the reason behind accepting my invitation to be part of this researcher process. Both teachers referenced to friendship, trust and assurance of confidentiality, as factors that made them get volunteer to be involved in this study.

> *Fathimath[2]:*   I believe it was our friendship that helped me so easily say *"yes" to work in this research. How much trust I had in you as a friend and a colleague also was a factor that I considered. Even from the beginning it was easy to open up, and share my thoughts as I was eager to know what you would introduce to help me make my teaching student-centred.*
>
> *Even thought concept map was a new tool for me... working with some one I trusted helped me gain the confidence I needed to use it in the classroom.*
>
> *Seema[1]:*   *Having had a close friendship prior to the research process helped a lot. My trust in you is also another main factor I think. Also having the confidence that what we share would be kept confidential and wouldn't be used to evaluate me as a teacher made me open up to with my thoughts*

If teachers' individual learning goals are not recognised ahead of mentoring relationships, friendship may also have a negative effect with the teachers not initiating their own learning and complying with all that the mentor tells.

4.5.2 Role of Trust in Trialing New Pedagogy

At the post interview (Appendix- I) I asked a question to understand what the two teachers felt had helped in trialing the new pedagogy in their classrooms. The aspect that emerged was the importance of trust when trialing new pedagogy. Both teachers highlighted having a close relationship with me prior to the research eliminated fear of judgment which helped them continue on trialing the concept map in their classroom.

> *Seema[1]:*   *Having had a close friendship prior to the research process helped a lot. This eliminated a lot of fears of meeting expectation and judgment.*
>
> *I didn't have any fear of failing to achieve the purpose of the trialing. I didn't feel that I had to be reluctant or anything either. I knew that you were there to help me even*

if I want able to achieve the lesson objective. I knew you would help me to improve my next lesson. I was very confident even in the first.

Fathimath[2]: *Even from the beginning it was easy to open up, and share my thoughts as I was eager to know what you would introduce to help me make my teaching more student-centred.*

In the short duration of the data collection process, both teachers were able to trial the concept map as formative assessment. The collaborative partnership we worked through had eliminated anxieties in relation to not being able to complete the work.

4.5.3 Trust to Address Teacher Fears in a Change Process

The third aspect of data collected in relation to trust was on how trust helped to create a sense of security for the two teachers. As their mentor, I was able to use the feedback sessions (Appendix- G) to support the two teachers in reflecting on the changes in pedagogy that accompanied the intervention.

Seema[1]: *Being this the first time doing it (using the concept map for formative assessment) I found it was difficult to allocate a time frame for it, but I think it is just a matter of practice.*

Fathimath[2]: *Some students found it hard to do the concept map and I found it surprising that some students didn't attempt it. I was thinking that I am failing in using the concept map. It may have been how I had presented the concept map and how much of the topic was covered. It could also be because I didn't explain the concept map enough...*

I felt more confident today (the second attempt) than I did last week. I am very satisfied and very happy with today's lesson. I am sure as I practice using the concept map in the classroom my strategies will improve more.

As their mentor, I was able to encourage and give suggestions to eliminate the concerns the two teachers had while trialing the concept map. Both teachers made

changes to how the concept map was used in their classes for the second lesson, based on the reflections on their experiences of the first lesson.

4.5.4 Trust in the Intervention

The fourth category for trust was a need to create student awareness. Using student-centred pedagogy was new to most of the primary schools in the country. While teachers were being prepared to take on the change, the analysis reflects that it was equally important to see how students reacted to the changes that of student-centred pedagogy.

The intervention of using the concept map to elicit thinking of students, moved away from the traditional style of rote learning practiced in the classrooms. As this research did not involve collecting data from students to support the arguments, the data in the observation field notes (Appendix- F) and teacher reflections in the post interview/ feedback sessions (Appendix- G) were used in this part of the analysis.

> *Seema[1]:*   *I felt that the students needed time to get used to the concept map as well. As right now students are used to another style of teaching (post interview and feedback).*
>
> *Fathimath[2]:*   *Teacher moved around all the groups reassuring and helping students with the concept map. Teacher used student's ideas to get the students thinking on what the concept map was asking the children to do. Because a lot of students were a little reluctant to attempt the concept map teacher had to give instruct the whole class about 4 times as she was going around the groups…(field notes).*
>
> *Some student's found it hard to do the concept map and I found it surprising that some of them not attempting to do it (post interview and feedback).*

As the concept map encouraged students to work independently in small groups and alone, there appeared to be reluctance from many students, especially in the first lesson. Using the intervention in the classroom without giving prior

information to students about the concept map and appeared to have made the students nervous in attempting to do it.

While gathering data on impact of the intervention on student learning was out of scope of this Masters thesis I felt that student reluctance made the two teachers' nervous.

4.6 Importance of a Good Relationship

Mentoring relationships are highly based on having trusting between partners. I believe there are several favourable conditions in our schools to establish mentoring between supervisors and teachers. The data that emerged are discussed under the following theme

4.6.1 Collegiality and Friendship

I have been away for 4 years from my school when I went back with this research projects. While many things had changed, I was greeted and welcomed warmly with by the friendly teachers and supervisors whom I worked with four years back. Both teachers whom I had approached for the study had previously worked with me, and knew me at a professional and personal level. This made it easier for me to invite them to be part of the research project. The post-interview (Appendix-I) I asked the two teachers about this collegiality to see how they felt.

Seema[1]: *Having had a close friendship prior to the research process helped a lot. My trust in you is also another main factor I think. Also having the confidence that what we share would be kept confidential and wouldn't be used to evaluate me as a teacher made me open up to with my thoughts. These eliminated a lot of fears of meeting expectation and judgment.*

Fathimath[2]: *I believe it was our friendship that helped me so easily say "yes" to work in this research. How much trust I had in you as a friend and a colleague also was a factor that I considered. Even from the beginning it was easy to open up, and share my thoughts with you, especially as I was*

eager to know what you would introduce to help he make my teaching more student.

This research suggested developing formal mentoring relationships between teachers and supervisors to achieve long term goals in the future. Literature on mentoring shows that mentoring relationships imposed on teachers to barely last till desired goals are achieved but if the relationship is built on trust between friends who respect each other, the relationship may carry on for a life time.

4.7 Changes to Teaching

Both teachers involved in this research expressed their interest to learn more than what they had gained from the one off professional development seminars about student-centred learning. Neither of them had any problem adjusting their teaching schedule or re-planning the lesson to incorporate the concept map. Both eagerly changed their style of teaching to trial the concept map from what they learnt in the mentoring sessions. Data analysis under this theme was recorded under the following two categories.

4.7.1 Using the Concept Map for the Purposes of Formative Assessment

The concept map as a formative assessment tool was introduced with the intention to develop teachers' thinking on active learning. The information was used to make decisions on pedagogy, curriculum and management of groups.

At the feedback session (Appendix- G), both teachers indicated using the concept map to bring pedagogical changes:

Fathimath[2]: *I could draw up the concept map showing relationship between concepts in the lesson. I could draw up a diagram with arrows joining key areas showing relationship between concepts in the lesson.*

Seema[1]: *While in the first lesson I was able to learn about individual students learning habits. By using the concept map as a group activity today, I saw that regardless of ability student's cooperated with each other and complete their*

work. With that I think I was able to use the concept map more to help me carry out discussion and give further direction to the lesson.

The following examples reflect how concept map was used by the two teachers to cover areas of the curriculum:

Seema[1]:   *Concept map gave me the opportunity to plan my lessons by considering aspect of the topic that the students did not know. I think it will help me get a picture of how students learned.*

Fathimath[2]:   *Concept map allowed me to take into consideration all areas that we had to cover for the students' age group and get materials for the lesson. It helped me plan and create the flow of the lesson. The concept map helped me to visualize the lesson and plan it so the whole topic was covered. That way I realised I would know areas I had to focus more on in the future periods for the topic. It helped me to think about individual children and their performance levels.*

Both teachers used the information from the concept map to manage learning in the classroom:

Fathimath[2]:   *I will use the concept map at the beginning of the lesson before the experiment so it gives me a clear picture as to which task group the students belong. And this would enable me to focus of student's ability for the rest of the topic.*

Seema[1]:   *I will use the concept map to organise the groups according to the students' abilities. While they are doing that activity, I will go through the concept maps so I can group students to the following activities.*

4.7.2 Differentiated Teaching

At the feedback session (Appendix- G), the two teachers commented on how they had differentiated their teaching using the concept map. That is using the information from the concept map to make pedagogical decisions.

> *Fathimath[2]:*   *For starters I will explain the concept map this time. I will give the concept map as an evaluative sheet. It would be the first activity for the students but I will give them more time to finish it too.*

> *Seema[1]:*   *I will use the concept map and ensure that it was related to the objectives of lesson, so that the whole topic can be covered in the concept map. I will guide the students a little this time.*

Engaging in the mentoring relationship and being part of the action research process enabled the two teachers to trial new concepts and bring necessary changes so the lessons were improved in the second cycle of the action research process.

4.8 Support Needed for Continuous Development and Change

The sixth theme that emerges from the data was on the support that the two teachers perceived were needed for continuous professional development. Data gathered signaled that there was a high expectation on teachers to change their teaching styles. Data analyses for this theme are discussed in the following three categories.

4.8.1 Fund and Resources

At the pre-interview (Appendix- H), Fathimath spoke of the importance of resources highlighting to its limitations in the school, with this quote:

> *Fathimath[2]:*   *We don't get any help from the school to make teaching aids so most of the time we have to make our own. This Saturday, our grade teachers came in to make teaching aids and school could only make a limited amount to*

material for us. Even now we are not able to make
materials that students may be able to use as we bear the
expenses for most materials we use in the class

Teachers need to be provided with resources that can be used in class so they can engage students in active learners effectively.

4.8.2 Building Expertise and Confidence in Supervisors to Support Change Initiatives of the School

The second category that emerged under this theme was the need for expertise inside the schools. Ideally, those in a mentor position need to be well informed and have the plenty of background knowledge to lead learning for teachers. During the process of data collection both teachers expressed that supervisors were unable to help them as they lacked the most knowledge. Highlighted in the data was the lack of expertise and confidence in supervisors to lead change.

Seema[1]: *What I can say that, the supervisors who come to observe my lessons do not give me any comment or give suggestions on making the lesson student-centred…So far they have not …Truthfully I think supervisors need to gain more knowledge on student-centred teaching. I think they need to have enough ideas on this concept to help us teachers. Then, they can give suggestions so that we can bring changes in our classrooms.*

Fathimath[2]: *We are not experienced in using student-centred teaching strategies. We need to build our experience in this area. Supervisors should help us build our ideas by explaining and telling us how to do it….*

I want to see one of them (supervisors) taking student-centred lessons.

I have to stress that, so far it (student-centred) is just a word used in our school and there is not much action taken to make this happen in our activities.

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This makes it important that supervisors were well informed and thorough with the changes introduced to the schools. Both teachers have signaled on their belief that supervisors need to have enough knowledge to support them in the change process.

4.8.3 Supervisors need Background Information to Support Change

The third aspect of data on support was teacher's belief that supervisors did not have the background knowledge to support the intended change of creating student-centred pedagogy:

> *Seema[1]:*   *For them (supervisors) it is all about monitoring what we do. If supervisors give suggestions to what more I could do to make my lesson student-centred after observations can try them.*

> *Fathimath[2]:* *They say we are very experienced. But we are not experienced in using student-centred teaching strategies. We need to build our experience in this area. So they should help us build our ideas by explaining and telling us how to do it.*

Creating student-centred classrooms in all lower primary schools in the country is a national change policy. It is essential that supervisors have more knowledge or are able to seek knowledge to prepare and support teachers in such change initiatives. Change is always contested and resisted when incorrect or enough information is not given.

4.9 Time

Time is a factor that had to be discussed in this research because if its relevance to all aspects of a mentoring relationship especially in context to Maldivian schools being run as shift schools. Neither teacher's directly showed any difficulty in making the time for our meetings in the evenings or the weekend to meet the research data collection schedule.

During the data collection period, out of the twelve meetings I had with the two teachers, ten of them were held after six in the evening with some of them taking

up more than an hour. Both teachers preferred staying for an extra hour or so afterschool than coming early before their session for meetings as they were with family at that time. I had to come to the school when they were free to attend the meetings. Four times I had to wait more than fifteen minutes for teachers to finish their respective grade meetings before we could meet. Two sessions had to be postponed to weekends due to other commitments.

Teachers in Maldivian schools are very used to attending school co-curricular activities in the weekends and at night. Certainly, establishing long term mentoring relationships were to be considered, availability time can become an issue for all parties involved.

4.10 Summary

The two teachers in this research indicated a need for assistance to learn and change their own practice through gaining insight by working in a supportive environment such as mentoring. Both of them emphasised that they were unable to make use of the information gained through the existing professional development activities to change their teaching pedagogy to be student-centred. The data analysis indicates that, the mentoring process of this research gave the two teachers the opportunity to engage in their own professional development. The active learning in the collaborative relationship gave the two teachers the opportunity to reflect on their practice and evaluate them, so they were able to their own learning.

Chapter Five – Discussion

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the research findings in relation to the three research questions. The chapter begins with setting the scene by introducing the chapter, to give an understanding of the importance of the discussion that follow (section 5.2). The chapter then discusses the results for each of the research questions in separate sections (sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5). Followed by a section on student reluctance and concerns of how time may affect the quality of mentoring relation in Maldivian primary schools (section 5.6). A conclusion to the chapter is then presented (section 5.7).

5.2 Introduction

The discussion brings insight to the findings of the research in relation to the three research questions of this thesis. This is to enable making connections between supervision and the arguments for mentoring as a collaborative professional development in Maldivian primary schools. The discussion further establishes what mentoring relationships between supervisors and teachers may mean to bring a culture of professional learning community in the Maldivian primary schools.

Maldivian primary schools are currently in a phase of transition with processes of introducing student-centred pedagogy such as active learning strategies in the lower primary grades. This intervention is a national restructuring to create student-centred classrooms in lower primary school and preschools which is being trialed in 150 primary schools of the country. The change is being established with support from UNICEF, with focus on providing professional support to upgrade teachers so they are better able to implement the necessary changes in the classroom.

The findings from the research questions are more or less inter-connected but the questions are gone through separately to give a clear picture of the research findings.

5.3   Research Question One

<u>What are teachers' views on current professional development programs for student-centred teaching in their classrooms?</u>

This question was used to investigate how the two research participants felt of the current professional development programs. In addition to understand if the existing professional development activities of one-off professional development seminars and supervision benefited the two teachers in their learning. Further if these professional development activities enabled the two teachers to incorporate the new teaching pedagogy in their classrooms.

One theme that emerged from the findings was that the current professional development programs did not assist the two teachers to bring desired changes to the teaching strategies employed to reflect student-centred pedagogy. Rather, the existing professional activities regarded teachers as capable to bring the necessary changes to their teaching.

Both participants indicated that the school held two professional development sessions on creating student-centred classrooms over the year 2007. But the two teachers reported that these professional development programs did not enable them to make favourable changes in their classrooms. They indicated difficulties associated to the lack of insight gained from the current structure professional development.

Professional development in Maldivian primary schools is based on one-off isolated professional development sessions held for all teachers after school hours (section 1.3). Both teachers in the research did not consider the professional development seminars to be very effective as these sessions were unconnected to the developmental needs of the teachers. They viewed these sessions to give only background information and to lie down the expected outcomes but not truly building the teachers knowledge to implement student-centred classrooms. Both teachers expressed their desire to observe a model student-centred classroom so that they could approach and practice student-centred pedagogy in their own classrooms.

Professional development is an important vehicle for improving schools (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). But isolated professional development sessions do not make a

difference in the classroom as teachers are reluctant to trial new strategies when they are unsure of what they are doing.

Change can only happen when there is an internal commitment in the school towards a culture of learning to give teachers the opportunity to learn. In addition the school is committed to keep teachers motivated by supporting teachers with activities that assist teacher to be part of the change process. Opportunity for on-going professional learning is necessary to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to confidently attempt the challenges of implementing a change in their teaching strategies (section 2.2). School leaders should ensure that they assist teachers to develop their personal vision, inquiry, mastery and collaboration (Fullan, 1999) so they can effectively back up the change process initiated in the school.

This research question was also linked to understanding the two teachers' perceptions on the existing system of supervision and the role of supervision in the professional development of teachers.

A well structured clinical supervision system exists in most Maldivian primary education schools. This is enforced by the Ministry of Education to maintain the quality of education provided in the public schools in the Maldives (section 2.3). The clinical supervision includes observation, feedback and monitoring of students work. Also included is close monitoring of lesson plans and teaching aids. Second theme that emerged from the two teachers' responses to this question was that classroom observations and feedback process was not used to inform their professional development. An ideal system of supervision would increase the opportunities for development of the teachers and would be focused on improving the capacity of the school so they are able to contribute more effectively to student achievement (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). But this can only be done when supervision is moved away from its evaluative nature (section 2.3). In Maldivian primary schools classroom observations are used mostly for teacher evaluation and appraisal purposes. This model of supervision has lost the real intensions of supervision in schools (Smyth, 1991). Ideally supervision was intended to be a self initiated and self regulated relationship where teachers worked collaboratively to inquire, analyse, examine and evaluate their teaching to articulate undefined problems in teaching (Goldhammer, 1969).

The third theme that emerged was the difficulty of getting materials for teaching aids. Although only one teacher mentioned this third theme, it holds high relevance in context to teaching in Maldivian primary schools. The teacher highlighted that on many occasions she had to bear cost of teaching aids for her class. Lack of resources is an issue for all Maldivian schools (Ministry of Planning and National Development, 2007). Lack of resources in schools is an important theme as it raises questions as to how committed and effective a school can be to establish new teaching pedagogy without necessary resources to support the change. For immediate relief on teachers' school should evaluate the school's budgeting so they meet the demand on new resources. Especially when creating new and important strategies such as student-centred pedagogy.

The success of any professional development depends on the support teachers gain from all systems of the schools so that they are better prepared to face the dilemmas and challenges of change (Fullan, 2001). Emphasis should be to develop the school as a whole organisation with opportunities to learn at all stages on the school system.

The research finding indicated that the current professional development strategies did not suit well with either of the teachers. Implications here were directed to say that the current professional development did not to cater to their learning needs (Terehoff, 2002). Adults learn differently depending on their maturity and life experiences. School leaders should approach professional development with integrated approaches of learning with recognition to individuals learning needs to achieve holistic development (West- Burnham & O' Sullivan, 1998).

Findings also indicated the school's monitoring activities such as clinical supervision was kept separate from professional development for teachers and they were not being used to identify changes in the teaching learning process. Supervisors carry out at least three supervisions per teacher in their respective grades. These clinical supervision activities could be used as a strong support for teacher development. But only if the supervisions focus of evaluating teachers was changed to create professional development opportunities.

Supervisors can also use structural artifacts such as school monitoring and grade meeting for their advantage to focus on continuous professional development (Halverson, 2003). Grade meeting can be ideal venues for supervisors to initiate

dialogue that would help teachers reflect on focused learning desired change processes. Directed dialogue in grade meetings can engage teachers in exploring ideas, beliefs and feelings that they have both individually and collectively (Bohm & Nichol, 1996). Allowing teachers reflective space also helps teachers to continuously learn and grow professionally (Kolb, 1984). Time scheduled for feedbacks after observations gives one-on-one conferencing time, which is an ideal venue for focused reflections.

While this research did not address the issue of time, but I expect the issue would arise as a barrier if schools look into establishing on-going professional development programs such as mentoring. This is due to the shift school system in Maldives (Ministry of Planning and National Development, 2007).

5.4 Research Question Two

<u>What are the teachers' evaluations of mentoring by a supervisor to foster professional development for student-centred teaching?</u>

This question was concerned with evaluating the mentoring relationship that we (supervisor/ researcher and the two teachers) were able to build in the process of engaging the two teachers in their own professional development through mentoring.

A mentoring process can be used to compliment and support the professional development seminars that are carried out in the Maldivian primary schools. This is can be done in the mentoring process by feeding off the seminars to direct the on-going support towards accomplishing the goals of the seminars. Establishing mentoring between supervisors and teachers to assist professional development effectively create collaborative relationship that would revitalize both experienced and novice teachers. Subsequently could achieve increased proficiency to cater for the learning needs of individual teachers. Mentoring can play a major role as a process to guide change by enabling the mentor and mentee to learn collaboratively, complimenting the professional development seminars (Hauling-Austin, 1989).

In Maldivian primary schools, the supervisors are part of those who are to take lead responsibility as grade leaders, to improve quality of education. Supervisors

are to   assure this, by closely monitoring everything that is done with regards to learning and teaching for their respective grades. But there are historical and existing systems as well as attitudes that stand barriers in accomplishing this (section 1. 1). Both teachers involved in this study, perceive supervision to be a token, and a meaningless ritual by supervisors for administrative purposes. The style of supervision creates mistrust and resentment of when supervision is used for teacher evaluation rather than professional development (VSO, 2005; Walkley, 1999; Zepeda & Ponticell, 1998). Historical barriers of teacher such promotions on Maldivian primary schools have also created a fear in supervisors due to the expectations from teachers for supervisors to always do better than teachers (VSO, 2005).

Both teachers in this research were accepting of the changes that mentoring relationship brought in regard to how involved when teachers had to get involved such individualized learning opportunities. Findings indicate that both teachers were very willing to be part of this action research process. Such collaborative relationship are built on mutuality with learning and development for both the supervisor and the teacher (Gehrke, 1988). It is professional development with benefits to both the individuals involved and the organisaton (Daresh, 1995; Kram, 1983).

Supervisors in Maldivian primary schools are mostly experienced teachers who had been promoted to middle management positions as part of the school's instructional leadership. Supervisors need to consider eliminating the existing attitudinal and structural barriers between them and teachers to play a bigger role in up-skilling and upgrading teachers. This asks of building better relationships with teachers based on trusts and honesty so both can work more freely in the collaborative relationship that the process of mentoring would create. The collaborative nature of mentoring relationship we built in the data collection process of this study enabled us to engage in the active learning process comfortably. This may have been because of the established friendship that I had with both the teachers prior, from when I worked with the two teachers. Many supervisors have similar friendships with teachers in their respective grades. So it is my belief that most supervisors could effectively break down the structural

barriers in the school system and initiate professional development opportunities for their grade teachers.

The action research was designed so I could work as the mentor for both teachers and to investigate how the mentoring relationship as the relationship evolved (Section 3.3). Both teachers made time to meet me in the evenings, after school and on occasions on the weekend so that we were able to meet for our mentoring and planning sessions. This reflects on the relationship that had evolved and flourished through the mentoring process. Finding indicates that both teachers were comfortable with being part of the mentoring relationship with me, even though I was once their supervisor. In the mentoring relationship we created, I assured that the two teachers felt safe and valued, by allowing them to direct their own learning without imposing my ideas on them. Teachers thrive in mentoring relationship as they felt safe and valued in the relationship we built (DeBolt, 1992; Johnson & Ridley, 2004; Sullivan, 2004).

Literature also identifies mentoring relationship as an ideal activity to build better collaborative relationships (section 2.5). As mentoring allow teachers and supervisors to span the boundaries between professional and personal issues (Elliott & Calderhead, 1993).The mentoring relationship would enable teachers and supervisors to honestly engage in dialogue on teaching issues. Findings indicated to a change in attitude on the teachers' side towards working with a supervisor through the one-on-one mentoring relationship (section 4.4). Both teachers indicated they were willing to participate in such learning partnerships with supervisors.

The action learning associated with planning the concept map, in the mentoring process, enabled us to collaboratively establish learning goals for the teachers. The two teachers then focused to achieve through developing their own plan for the lessons. As well as evaluate and reflect on consequences to ensure that the plan has action learning for students through out the lesson (McCormack, Reynolds, & Ferguson-Patrick, 2006).

The two teachers' indicated to gaining confidence by being part of the mentoring process . In addition, they indicated that the data collection process allowed them to initiate and direct their own learning to use the intervention and that had helped to understand some aspects student-centred pedagogy. This change occurred when

teachers saw themselves trialing new concepts and ideas that changed their pedagogy with the support they gained from the mentoring relationship. This finding is supported by literature as it indicates mentoring relationship based on trust increases confidence , creativity and risk taking in teachers and this makes achieving positive results possible (Bova & Phillips, 1984).

5.5   Research Question Three

<u>What are the implications of mentoring as a continuous professional development strategy for whole school re-culturing?</u>

This question was concerned with understanding the two teachers' perception of developing formal mentoring relationships between supervisors and teachers as a future on-going professional development activity to support teachers.

Professional development is necessary to assist teachers gain personal and technical knowledge and skills so that they able to take responsibility for achieving pedagogical change successfully (Bredeson, 1995). At present professional development of teachers depended on isolated one-off seminars that seemed to make very less relevance to teachers' practices in the classrooms. These seminars do not seem to be helping the teachers bring these desired pedagogies to the classroom. Both teachers indicated and showed enthusiasm to learn how they could develop student-centred pedagogies for the students. Findings indicate that current professional development sessions only gave teachers background information (section 4.3). Information that can only be translated to knowledge, when teachers take the risks to attempt the newly gained information in their teaching practices in the classroom.

Both teachers indicated that mentoring could be ideal for professional for the whole school based experiences on the changes they were able to bring through engaging in the research process (section 4.4). The two teachers further indicated that the collaboration helped them gain new ideas and assisted them to reflect on their practices. Further that it helped them take risk of trialing interventions which they would not have otherwise. But they also indicated that for supervisors and teachers to collaborate in a real setting, there need to be some changes brought to

the existing structural barriers such as hierarchical barriers for true collaborations to happen (section 4.3.2).

Both teachers reported that they felt supervisors needed to advance their educational background to effectively lead professional development for teachers (section 4.8.3). This was revealed through the two teachers' indications on the lack of support from their respective supervisors in annual planning and the lack of insight to change their teaching strategies through the process of supervision. Both teachers also highlighted that the supervisor were unable to use grade meetings to effectively communicate school-wide goals such as implementing student-centred pedagogy. Further, they implied that this to be due to lack of knowledge on supervisors' part. In Maldivian primary schools most supervisors are not given any training when they assume the role of grade leader (VSO, 2005). Mentoring literature gives evidence to the importance of mentor's knowledge in establishing mentoring relationships (section 2.9.4). The traditional definition of the word *mentor* refers to who sponsors, guides, and develops a younger person (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; Higgins & Kram, 2001). The implication here is the importance for mentors to have expertise and experience in the general happenings of the world as well as specific areas which they intend to develop in their mentees/ teachers (Gehrke, 1988; Higgins & Kram, 2001).

5.6   The Unexpected Findings

5.6.1   Student Reluctance

This research did not involve student directly. But it was interesting to finding that students may have felt intimidated by changes that teachers attempted in the process of evaluating the concept map (section 4.5.4). Both teachers identified reluctance from students in their class. One implication of this reluctance may be that students were too used rote learning that they were intimidated to engage in active learning. Another implication may be that they needed more exposure to the concept map that the students did not understand its purpose. Both these possibilities reveal a need for building awareness so that students were more acceptant of new pedagogy in their classrooms.

5.6.2 Time

Mentoring is a time consuming for all involved in the process (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Hobson, 2003; Long, 1994). Time for mentoring sessions did not surface as an issue in the process of data collection (section 4.9). Even when both teachers had to stay back late afterschool and when they had to come for meetings on the weekend. Literature identifies that lack of commitment to create time for mentees can break the mentoring relationship (Clutterbuck & Sweeney, 2005; Haack, 2006; Long, 1994). As mentioned earlier most of the mentoring sessions and feedback times were in the early hours of the night, which took both the teachers away from their homes and families. McDonald and Hite (2005) highlights time-framing of formal mentoring projects may restrict the nurturing relationship that may be favoured in change processes. The issue of "time" may not have risen in the research as the two teachers knew of the duration of the data collection period and they were so used to working after session on co-curricular activities in the school.

5.7 Conclusion

My argument from these research findings is that teachers need support through on-going professional development in schools, so teachers have opportunities to build their learning to accommodate change initiatives. These professional development opportunities have to be according to individual teacher's learning needs so that teachers can really improve through the learning.

Mentoring for collaborative professional development of teachers can be established between grade supervisors and teacher to enhance the professional relationship that to get the much needed a support system for professional development.

One thing I am convinced from the findings of the research is that, supervisors' need to increase their educational standard to assist teachers. Further, I argue that supervisors need to be open to utilizing activities already in place, such as the process of clinical supervision and monitoring, to better communicate the messages of change to the teachers. Findings also support my saying that teachers

being left to being change in the isolation of their classrooms will not enable the change desired to be established in the classrooms.

Maldivian primary schools need to create an internal support system is crucial to enable teachers to take risks and introduce changes to their teaching strategies. Supervisors are in an ideal position to directly support teachers. But this will only be effective if teachers see that supervisors as have the information needed to guide and support them. Transitional times like what Maldivian primary schools are experiencing with influential external organisations intervening with their expectations for change, schools should be working to breaking down teacher isolations and creating support systems. They should also be looking to create new systems that support the desired change processes by eliminating the existing structures that are conflicting with the change processes.

While there may be informal mentoring relationships between colleagues, there is no research done to inform us of these experiences in Maldivian schools. Establishing formal mentoring to support professional development is new for Maldivian schools. Creating such an on-going support system in our schools for all would help the schools to promote a continuous growth. This may be considered in relation to expenses; continuity and progress of professional development and over all creating a professional learning community. Creating mentoring relationships would allow the school to make better use of the school's human resources. Further, mentoring would open an avenue for continuous learning and collaboration. This has favourable implication to continuous growth in teachers and supervisors themselves.

Findings indicated that the two teachers were very open to discuss and share information with me, regardless of my being a former supervisor in the school. Over the years many supervisors would have similar friendships with teachers as I have with the research participants and this would work to their advantage when looking to establish mentoring between supervisors and teachers. But supervisors may need to build an honest and open relationship with the teachers so that can trust the collaborative relationship that they build.

It is important to be sensitive about student awareness when introducing new changes that directly involve them. While the research did not involve students directly, it was identified that students were reluctant to the quick change the

teachers brought in the lesson. It seemed difficult for students to accept the changed format of the lesson, as they may have not understood the reasons behind the new intervention and what they were going to achieve with them. I believe this implication justify my saying that change process has to be approached more holistically while giving consideration to the whole school community.

The concept map as an intervention helped to direct teachers thinking to student-centred teaching with the help of mentoring sessions. The mentoring sessions helped teachers to plan and share their anxieties associated with trialing a new concept in their classroom. In addition to the changes that the intervention may bring to student learning when the concept map was introduced in their teaching. The mentoring allowed the two teachers to have increased confidence and helped the two teachers gain some understanding to what student-centred pedagogy meant. These mentoring sessions also helped the two teachers to make necessary changes for their second attempt to use the concept map. The findings indicate that the two teachers took initiative in their learning and made changes to the lesson accordingly to meet the needs of students. The mentoring sessions provided to be most helpful and the two teachers indicated to gaining reasonable confidence in attempting to make further improvement to their plan to use the concept map to change their teaching pedagogy to further their student-centred pedagogies. This short research process identified that working in collaboration helped and supported both participant teachers individual learning needs.

I move to the last chapter with the intention to summarise and give recommendations that could be considered to further improve the quality of professional development in Maldivian primary schools.

Chapter Six – Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Summary of the Research Project

The aim of this research was to investigate how a mentoring relationship between a supervisor/ team leader and two teachers and how the relationship developed. The relationship was investigated as the supervisor assisted the two participating teachers to establish a differentiated teaching methodology. This was done by facilitating each teacher to trial the concept map for formative assessment as an intervention. The intention was to determine if mentoring as a collaborative professional development relationship between supervisors and the two teachers could work in Maldivian primary schools. Further, the research sought to ascertain if the two teachers preferred the learning opportunities that the collaboration provided. Subsequently the research was intended to identify the systems changes that may be necessary for such collaborations between teachers and supervisors to enhance professional development opportunities in the schools.

The research was conducted with the researcher as an active participant of the research. The researcher worked as the mentor with the two participant teachers in an action research process. The action research process was used to trial concept map for formative assessment purposes as an intervention to assist the two teachers create student-centred teaching strategies.

The research was set in the two lower primary classes of the participating teachers in the researcher's former school where the researcher had worked as a grade supervisor. Both participant teachers were known to the researcher at a personal and professional level as the researcher had previously worked as their grade supervisor.

The findings from this research confirmed that mentoring relationships between supervisors and teachers can assist to establish new pedagogy in the lower primary grades in Maldivian primary schools.

At present there are no on-going professional development opportunities in the primary school where the research was conducted. Professional development of teachers consists of only isolated one-off professional development sessions that school holds for all teachers to attend. Classroom supervision and monitoring is

used for evaluative purposes to ensure quality of teaching and learning in the school. As a consequence, both participants do not see the relevance of the existing school supervision system to their professional development. Neither participant felt that existing supervision system was helping their professional development as they do not consider it to relate to their learning needs.

The findings of this research indicate that the current practices of classroom supervision were not effective in its purpose to support teacher growth for the two teacher participants. This may be due to the close link between supervision and teacher appraisal and evaluation in the Maldivian education system. Both participant teachers affirmed that while there were expectations for them to change teaching strategies to student-centred teaching strategies, their respective grade supervisors never gave concrete feedback to guide change initiatives in their teaching. Both teachers' stressed that the supervisors seldom had any comment to improve their teaching. Maldivian primary schools need to look for new ways for building teacher capacity.

My working one-to-one with the two participant teachers in this study indicated that, they needed and valued ongoing support that working collaboratively established. They indicated to gaining insight to theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Both indicated that collaborating with me had enabled both of them to gain various necessary competencies to implement the changes to achieve school goals of student centered pedagogy in their lower primary classroom. In my point of view, supporting the two teachers through ongoing school-based professional development will not only assist them to trial new teaching strategies but also ensure that these strategies are embedded in the school culture of teaching and learning.

This small scale research tentatively indicates that mentoring would provide a structure for collaborative professional development that would enhance the schools professional learning culture. Mentoring relationships are ideal as school-based professional development approaches to engage teachers in an on-going learning culture (Saunders, Pettinger, & Tomlinson, 1995). This reflects the literature which asserts that successful professional development opportunities require that teachers get the opportunity to reflect on their current practices continuously. This is to assists teachers realise simple changes that can be brought

to their teaching strategies to better them move forward towards achieving the desired school goals. Mentoring practices are closely related to realising professionalism in teaching. It assists professionalism by facilitating teachers/mentees to acquire task-specific skills and job relevant knowledge. Mentoring enables this by providing information and resources that would facilitate success in establishing change towards achieving school goals (Butler, 1992; Kirchmeyer, 2005). Further assist primary schools teachers in Maldives to achieve the desired change of student-centred pedagogy. It would also allow teachers and supervisors to work reciprocally helping each other to rise above the existing structural and attitudinal barriers that exist currently in the school.

Considering the support needed to establish the current reform initiatives of establishing student-centred pedagogy in lower primary schools (UNICEF, 2007), providing better professional development initiatives seems necessary for lower primary grades of the schools in the country. Schools that are working towards implementing student-centred pedagogy in their lower primary grades need to establish a robust professional development program which is crucial to the success of this change initiative. At present too much reliance seems to be put on the one-off professional session to transform teachers and their pedagogy. National initiatives such as creating student-centred pedagogy in lower primary grades of the country will only go in vain and leave teachers ill prepared if there are no on-going professional support structures in the school (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992).

Mentoring is an ideal professional development process that can be implemented in Maldivian primary schools so teachers are continuously supported in the process of developing teaching practices in the lower primary schools (Gunter, 2005). Students' development is enhanced in school environments where teachers too are developing and learning (Lambert, 2003). A school culture will be strongly influenced as mentoring contributes specifically to improving students learning by improving teachers professional development (Butler, 1992; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). Evidence from the findings of this research indicates the mentoring can be beneficial to build better relationships between supervisors and teachers to support teachers through in Maldivian primary schools. The success of the mentoring relationship is based on having trust and honesty between partners,

so that teachers/mentees are better able to talk openly about the problems they face in the classroom. The research findings indicated both participating teachers/mentees to be willing participants and that they were equal partners in all the decisions made to improve their teaching strategies. There were no barriers of hierarchy or negative attitude that posed to resist the collaboration between the teacher/mentees and the researcher/mentor (their former supervisor).

Evidence from findings of this research indicates that the two teachers were willing to work reciprocally with the researcher (even through the researcher was a former supervisor) in the mentoring relationship. The mentoring relationship was found to be very beneficial by both participating teachers and they highlighted how working in partnership had helped change their thinking. The research indicates that working jointly in a mentoring relationship allowed the researcher/ mentor and the two teachers to collaboratively plan, establish learning goals which would enable the supervisor to coach and assist each teacher to reflect on the trialed new teaching methodologies.

6.2   The Need to Redefine the Role of Supervisors

This research supports the general view in the research literature that establishing mentoring for teachers to support their professional development will assist lower primary teachers to change from rote-learning teaching strategies to student-centred learning in Maldivian school. Section 1.2 gave the background to the work done by the relevant departments in the Ministry of Education to support professional development sessions in their efforts to implement new teaching methodologies at lower primary grades of the country. But the success of developing the new initiative depends on how well professional development is integrated with and is supported within the primary school (Dimmock, 2000; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). For example: Maldivian primary schools need to create an ongoing support system to enhance on the work of Ministry of Education so there are more learning opportunities to support teachers in establishing new teaching methodologies in the lower primary grades.

Supervisors are responsible for communication and leadership with respect to schools strategic goals. Supervisors are in the best possible position to work collaboratively to support the teachers (Kirchmeyer, 2005). Supervisors have first

hand account on the quality of education student receive. But at present supervisors work more as teacher evaluators with in the current system of supervision established in our primary schools, than mentors.

I, like the two teachers I have worked with, consider the current system of supervision to be more an administrative ritual that supervisors perform, and to have no part in the professional growth of teachers. On-going clinical supervision is grounded in Maldivian primary schools. School leaders should be looking for ways to use supervision for more than just teacher evaluation and monitoring and used to inform the professional development for teachers. Changing perspective of supervision from evaluative to coach and guide or facilitate teacher's professional development through mentoring can create better relationships between supervisors and teachers. This research indicates support this change of role of supervisors as both participant teachers supported the mentoring collaboration between the researcher and each of them in this research. The mentoring relationship allowed the two teachers the opportunity to work in partnership with the former supervisor/researcher and share equally in all decision making processes with regard the intervention and the change process.

Collaboration is a vital necessity to the success of professional development of teachers. Redefining the supervisors' role from an evaluator role to a mentor role would mean establishing collaborative ways of working that would eliminate the isolation associated with the existing the teaching profession in the primary schools of the country and supporting teacher learning. Teachers would be continuously encouraged in mentoring relationships to take risks and experiment with new strategies in their classrooms. Further engaging in mentoring relationships would give teachers a sense of security and feeling of being valued which in return builds teachers confidence and self esteem to take risks in initiating change in their classrooms.

6.3   Mentoring for On-going Development of Learning

Mentoring allows for the on-going professional development (Applebaum, 2000; Bush, Coleman, Wall, & West-Burnham, 1996; Butcher, 2000; Elliott & Calderhead, 1993) and as this research reports, mentoring give teachers the needed support to introduce a new methodology in their classrooms. Professional

development can be seen as teachers learning and this learning happens not just in pre-service teacher education but throughout a teacher's career. Professional development activities need to have continuity from teachers' experience so that teacher can get better involved in inquiry based learning in developing the new pedagogies.

Teachers tend not to change their teaching strategies only from the information gained from the one-off professional development seminars (Bellanca, 1995). This study indicates that both participant teachers did not feel they could confidently establish student-centred learning practices from what they had gained from these seminars. Both teachers identified a need to observe a student-centred lesson so they have exposure to what student-centred teaching mean, and look like in the classroom. The two research participants were experienced senior teachers with specialised skills and knowledge, which they were quite confident in using.

Although the participant teachers were experienced teachers, they needed advice, support and insight to promote their professional development. The collaboration established in this research through the mentoring relationship was made stronger by two teachers' strengths and experiences. As it allowed for the professional development to advance and build on two teachers' existing knowledge and competencies (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992).

Findings from the research indicate that at present supervisors as team leaders do not contribute to the professional development initiatives of the Ministry of Education in their quest to change the teaching methodologies in lower primary grades of the country. But the schools organisational structure (figure-1) indicates that supervisors were in to an ideal position to make a difference in the professional development of teachers. Of concern, are the findings of the research that indicate that there is a lack of confidence in supervisors to effectively support teachers in the present quest for change.

Both teachers openly posed a challenge to their respective supervisors to take a student-centred lesson for them to observe. As they felt that supervisors lacked the necessary knowledge or the competencies required to assist them in creating student-centred classrooms and this is supported by VSO (2005). This necessitates the need for supervisors to build their educational background to be better instructional leader in their respective grades. Although supervisors are in an ideal

position to guide teachers, they need to be prepared to take on such challenges, as proposed by teachers in this research. This can only be achieved by supervisors gaining the necessary the training and increasing their knowledge to be effective as change agents in their undertakings. Mentoring relationships as proposed in this study poses an ideal professional development basis to support teachers and supervisors to establish favoured change process in the schools.

6.4 Recommendations for Implementing Mentoring in Maldivian Primary Schools

Maldivian primary schools are looking to develop pedagogies in the lower primary grades from their existing rote learning strategies to student-centred learning strategies. One-off professional development sessions are held in schools by Ministry of Education to support teachers in these initiatives, but the irony is that teachers are not supported through existing systems in place in the schools to effectively establish the changes in the classrooms.

The two teachers in the study indicated a need for support so they could translate the theoretical framework put forward by the Ministry of Education on student-centred learning into instructional practices in their classroom. The findings signal that while teachers are expected to change their teaching strategies, the supports systems around the teachers were being kept the same. Schools need to review their existing professional development structures to ensure change they support change initiatives. Changes need to be made to the existing systems in schools that cause obstacles to creating student-centred classes in the schools. The argument here is that changes need to be made to the hierarchical nature of the Maldivian primary school structure, and the school monitoring systems to establishing favourable collaborative and on-going professional development opportunities in the school system.

Through the mentoring process created supervisors can assist teachers to develop their teaching strategies. The action research conducted in this research project resulted in a quick change in both participating teachers' thinking. The intervention introduced to the two teachers allowed an enabled immediate change from their usual teaching strategies to favour student-centred teaching strategies. The mentoring process of the study ensured that the intervention was planned in

detail considering all the teaching material, time management so that the two teachers were confident to use it in their classroom. Findings indicate that the guidance and support that teachers got from the mentoring process brought an attitudinal change which differed from the mindset that they held previously about working with supervisors collaboratively.

The study indicates that building collaborative professional learning cultures through mentoring will enable supervisors and teachers to support one another in on-going professional development. The research findings highlights that as the mentoring process progressed, both participant teachers were keen on working collaboratively. The mentoring partnership gave the two teachers the opportunity to gain the professional support they needed towards introducing student-centred learning in their classrooms. The positive affect of the short term relationship instigated through this research process resulted with a positive change in the level of learning and interest in both participating teachers. This reflects an appreciation to promote mentoring in a professional learning culture on the part of both teachers involved in the mentoring relationship.

Supervisors, as immediate instructional leaders to teachers need to be doing more than evaluating and appraising teachers. They need to take on a bigger role in professional development of teachers by facilitating, mentoring and coaching and guiding teachers in their on-going learning. They could be using contact times with individual teachers to mentor teachers to bring in new teaching pedagogy into their classrooms. Mentoring can also be done in grade meeting such as co-ordination meetings, and other related meetings. This could be done supervisor taking the role of group mentor and taking the opportunity to assist all grade teachers reflect on their work and directing learning from there.

To do this, supervisors need to have an expert level of background knowledge on changes initiatives so they can successfully mentor and coach teachers for their professional development. The findings indicated that the two participating teachers were not convinced that supervisors had the relevant knowledge to initiate and drive a change process. The background to the research and my personal experience as a supervisor reveals that supervisors need opportunities for educational advancement opportunities to effectively assume their role as instructional leaders to teachers and direct student learning through mentoring and

coaching. Only these educational opportunities will allow better perform from them as change agents as expected to lead mentoring in schools.

Mentoring has many career and psychosocial benefits for teachers/ mentees and supervisors/mentors. It allows development opportunities where both teachers and supervisors can rely on the expertise of the other and work to improve the quality of teaching in the classroom. Establishing a mentoring partnership with a supervisor in this research context had potential benefits for the two teachers even though supervisors were part the senior management. For example supervisors can use their influence and networks to seek out relevant information and support teachers. They can also use their position in middle management to lobby for necessary teaching resources to better cater for the needs of students in the teacher's classroom to assist in the change processes. As for the school organisation, mentoring benefits the school in achieving their visions. As mentoring relationships between senior management members and teachers would mean the schools strategic objectives are better communicated and implemented.

6.5 Limitations

In exploring the learning by the teachers in a mentoring relationship, the research did not consider how students may respond to the new teaching methodology (concept map for formative assessment) being introduced in the class. The findings indicated that students to be reluctant to attempt the new learning activities introduced. Creating student awareness to the pedagogical changes may have improved student support to the intervention.

Although the study was done with consideration of the researcher's previous role as a supervisor in the school, the researcher not being part to the present senior management team of the school may have affected the nature of the study. For example: in the interest of the study, I was flexible in meeting the two teachers at times that was suitable to them which may not be the case for supervisors in the real world. This is because of the demand for teachers and supervisors to attend meetings, co-curricular activities and school related functions outside of session time. On many occasions teachers and supervisors will have some school commitment that they have to attend even on weekends. The success of mentoring relationships is highly based the duration in the mentoring relationship. For this

reason, time is one component that has to be given major consideration when establishing mentoring relationships. But the nature of the research process and its time line for the data generation was restricted as study was partial requirement for a qualification

This study investigates a short term relationship between the researcher, as the mentor and the two volunteer participant teachers and reports on the relationship build with these two teachers. Due to the small nature of the scale of the study, it would be hard to generalise the findings to all primary schools of the country.

The true success of the mentoring relationship would be if the two participating teachers continued to use the new pedagogy in their teaching process.

As mentioned in chapter one a methodological limitation of the research was that the study was done over a short period of time with only three weeks of data collection. The data was collected at different stages of the action research process and through semi-structured interviews. More coherent and richer data could have been derived if the study was conducted as a longitudinal study over a period of time. This would have allowed data collection over the significant phases of the mentoring relationships and there outcomes.

6.6   Directions for Further Studies

Mentoring for professional learning is a new concept in the Maldivian primary school context. One area for further research in the Maldivian school context may be how the role of supervisors as evaluators can be changed to supervisors as mentors within the existing structures.

The study can also be extended to identify the possibilities of group mentoring for respective grade teachers by their supervisor in Maldivian primary schools to ensure that supervisors can enhance learning opportunities for all teachers in the grade.

Further it would be interesting to note how long term mentoring relationships can be developed considering the time restrictions in the schools session times.

6.7 Thesis Conclusion

Maldivian primary school teachers need to be supported and assisted for their professional and personal growth and development through ongoing professional development programs when introducing new pedagogy. Teachers need to gain the necessary knowledge and skills which cannot be instilled by one-off isolated professional development sessions. For teachers, there is a high level of anxiety and stress is associated with expectations of change and they need on-going professional development opportunities to support their needs to effectively implement such changes in their classrooms.

Supervision in Maldivian primary schools is expected to play a central role in creating learning opportunities for teachers. But the present structure of supervision in Maldivian primary schools cannot be considered favourable in this cause due to its close link to teacher evaluation and appraisal.

The idea of schools learning communities, where continuous learning occurs at all levels, validates mentoring as an ideal professional development approach for Maldivian primary schools (Senge, 1994). This research explored how establishing mentoring relationships between supervisors and teachers can create better opportunities of continuous collaborative professional development opportunities in the school as opposed to relying on the current structure of supervision as appraisal. Mentoring relationships could encourage and support positive attitude in teachers and supervisors towards continuous learning (Ehrich & Hansford, 1999). Mentoring relationship could reduce the feelings of isolation associated with the teaching profession (Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Hobson, 2003).

The research was conducted as action research. The process was undertaken by the researcher taking on the role of mentor. The relationship was based on the previously established personal and professional relationship with both research participants and the researcher as a supervisor. This was because of the trust that was essential for a mentoring relationship to be effective.

An intervention was introduced through the action research process to explore the teacher's willingness to engage in the professional development opportunity that mentoring relationship created. The intervention was the two teachers using

concept map as formative assessment to inform the two teachers' curriculum and pedagogical planning.

Mentoring enables teachers and supervisors learning collaboratively, through a process of constant inquiry and improvement (Johnson & Ridley, 2004). Mentoring partnership involved activities such as collaborative planning and closely monitoring and evaluating progress. Further mentoring can ensure support, challenge and facilitation to establish professional vision so teachers are better prepared to overcome the associated with learning in isolation (Lambert, 2003). The mentoring relationship developed in the short duration of the data collection of this research process suggests that such mentoring relationships have real potential to create on-going collaborative professional learning culture in Maldivian primary schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Information Sheet

Kulsam Shareef- Student Researcher

40A Howell Avenue

Hillcrest

Hamilton, New Zealand.

RESEARCH TOPIC: Mentoring Relationships for Collaborative Professional Development Opportunities in Maldivian Primary Schools

The aim of the research is to explore how supervisors and teachers can work collaboratively in a mentoring relationship as part of professional development towards creating student-centred teaching pedagogies. It will clarify the changes that may be essential in the existing professional development programs and teacher appraisal systems to establish an effective mentoring process towards this change.

Research Questions

 For this purpose the research seeks to answer the following research questions.

What are teacher's views on current professional development programs for student-centred teaching in their classrooms?

What are the teacher's evaluations of mentoring by a supervisor to foster professional development for student-centred teaching?

What are the implications of mentoring as a continuous professional development strategy for whole school re-culturing?

Anticipated outcomes of the study

At the end of the research I anticipate gaining insight to the necessary changes in the existing professional development programs to create reciprocal and continuous professional learning between teachers and supervisors for the purpose of improving student learning opportunities.

I anticipate making suggestions on how to establish effective formal and informal mentoring relationships as part of professional development in primary schools.

The research will clarify the role mentoring can play in building effective professional relationships between teachers and supervisors based on trust and honesty so that both parties work collaboratively towards improving student achievement.

Benefits for participating teachers

Through this research project teachers involved have the opportunity to develop professionally in an area that they are passionate about. They will gain knowledge and experience on how to create student-centred teaching approaches in the classroom. Being involved in a mentoring relationship may eliminate many fears and concerns experienced when teachers and supervisors work together and help teachers gain confidence in using the tools for student-centred teaching.

Participation is voluntary and the teachers invited have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage before the confirmation of the transcript of the last interview. The researcher will take all measures to maximise teacher anonymity through using pseudonyms, and will assure confidentiality through keeping data collected confidential.

Over the course of three weeks, teachers will be involved with the researcher for maximum of six hours in the following activities:

Two semi-structured interviews (audio-taped) one at the beginning and at the end of the research data collection process.

Two mentoring sessions (audio-taped) to prepare the teacher's to use the intervention in the classroom.

Two classroom observations conducted and recorded to see how the intervention is utilized by the teachers.

Feedback sessions (audio-taped) to reflect on the use of the intervention and give feedback on observed lessons.

Data collected would be archived indefinitely in secure storage.

At completion of the research the thesis would be made available for the participating teachers.

If for any unfortunate reason there is a dispute need to be addressed the participant may contact the research project's supervisor or principal of Iskandhar School.

Associate Professor Beverley Bell (research supervisor)

Department of Professional Studies in Education

School of Education

University of Waikato

Private Bag 3105

Hamilton, New Zealand

Email: b.bell@waikato.ac.nz

Ms. Shifa Mohamed (principal of Iskandhar School)

Male'

Republic of Maldives

Appendix B - Letter to Ministry of Education

Dear Madam Zahiya Zareer,

I am a current student at University of Waikato doing my final year towards a Masters in Educational leadership. I am required to do research towards a thesis for this qualification. I have chosen to do research which I feel is relevant to our Maldivian Education System. As I have chosen to do the research in Maldives, I would like to ask for consent to do my research at Iskandhar School where I was previously employed and which is the most convenient location for me. This project is self funded and intended to explore how teachers and supervisors can work collaboratively for professional development purposes.

My research topic is: Mentoring Relationships for Collaborative Professional Development Practices in Maldivian Primary Schools.

The aim of the research is to explore how supervisors and teachers can work collaboratively in a mentoring relationship as part of professional development towards creating student-centred teaching pedagogy. It may clarify the changes that may be essential in the existing professional development programs and teacher appraisal systems to establish an effective mentoring process towards this change.

My intended time frame for data collection is the first three weeks of new academic year for 2008. The data collection process will take no more than three weeks. I intend to work with two teachers both in and out of their classrooms.

Two teachers will be invited to be part of the research on a voluntary basis and they will have the right to withdraw from the research at anytime before the transcription of the final interview. Work will begin only after obtaining consent from the teachers and the students and their caregivers.

The research requires me to observe the two volunteer teachers while they are teaching in their respective classes and I may copy students work for research purposes. I shall ask for consent from students and caregivers. The materials would only be collected from those whom I receive consent.

At completion of the research the thesis would be made available for the participating teachers, Iskandhar School and the Ministry of Education.

Details of the research project are attached to this letter to clarify you the details of the project.

Sincerely

Kulsam Shareef- Student Researcher

Madam Zahiya Zareer

Ministry of Education

Male'

Republic of Maldives

Appendix C - Letter to Principal of Iskandhar School

Dear Ms. Shifa Mohamed,

I am writing to you asking for consent to do my research for my Masters in Educational Leadership at Iskandhar School.

My research topic is: Mentoring Relationships for Collaborative Professional Development Practices in Maldivian Primary Schools.

The project will explore how supervisors can get involved in creating collaborative learning opportunities for teacher development of student centered teaching pedagogy. Teachers and supervisors will use mentoring as the process through which supervisors will contribute to bring continuous professional development practices with focus on helping teachers to create student-centred pedagogy in curriculum planning and delivery.

I hope this is a topic of interest to you and that you will allow me to research the topic at Iskandhar School.

My intended time frame for data collection is the first three weeks of new academic year for 2008. Data collection process will take no more than three weeks. I intend to work with two teachers both in and out of their classrooms.

Two teachers will be invited to be part of the research on a voluntary basis and they will have the right to withdraw from the research at anytime before the transcription of the final interview. Work will begin only after obtaining consent from the teachers and students and their caregivers.

The research requires me to observe the two volunteer teachers while they are teaching in their respective classes and I may be copying students work for research purposes. I will ask for consent from students and caregivers. The materials would only be collected from those students from whom I receive consent.

At completion of the research the thesis would be made available for the participating teachers, Iskandhar School and the Ministry of Education.

Details of the research project are attached to this letter to clarify you the details of the project.

I will be in Male' for data collection when you open for new academic year in 2008.

Sincerely

Kulsam Shareef - Student Researcher

Ms. Shifa Mohamed

Iskandhar School

Male'

Republic of Maldives

Appendix D - Consent Form for Teachers

Title of project: Mentoring Relationships for Collaborative Professional Development Practices in Maldivian Primary Schools

I have read the information sheet and I understand that I will be involved in the following activities

Interviews	2
Sharing Sessions	2
Classroom Observations	2
Feedback Sessions	2

I understand that the professional development interviews, sharing sessions and feedback sessions will be audio taped.

The research will meet ethical principles in the following ways:

- Pseudonyms will be used to protect my anonymity as far as possible.
- I have the right to withdraw from the research before the confirmation of the transcript of the last interview.
- Assurance of secure data storage
- Data may be used for the thesis, conferences, seminars and for published articles
- The thesis would be made available to me at the end of the project
- Data collected will not be used for my appraisal
- The researcher would not take a role of immediate authority over me in the year after the research
- I can contact the research supervisor or the Iskandhar School's principal regarding unresolved disputes.

Sign: _____   Date: _____

Appendix E - Consent Form for Students and Caregivers

I have been informed about the research project and I understand that:

- some of my work may be copied
- my teacher will be observed in the classroom teaching me and other students

I understand that my work as part of the research project will not be used for any assessment purposes and would not affect my subject grades.

My work will not be identified in the thesis or in any published material.

Student Sign: _____

Caregiver Sign: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F – Observation Schedule

Teaching Actions to be Observed	Field Notes
Introduction of concept map to students	
Student engagement	
Talking and helping small groups and individuals	
Post-activity presentation	

Appendix G - Post Observation Feedback & Interview

Teaching Grade: _____

Age group of students: _____

Subject: _____   Period: _____   Duration: _____

Topic: _____   Date: _____

- First ten minutes of the feedback would be to get the teacher to reflect on the lesson.

1- How did concept maps help you in planning for your lesson?
2- What sort of insight did you gain from using them as part of the lesson?
3- What benefits and obstacles did you face from using concept maps?
4- What changes do you think you need to bring to your next lesson to improve your lesson?

- Have discussion on responses from students in the concept map activity to find out what the teacher learnt that caught her off in surprise.

Appendix H – Pre-Interview Schedule

1- What professional development have you had in the past two years to learn about teaching in a student-centred way?

2- What do you do in the class when you are teaching in a student-centred way?

3- In what ways do the current practices of classroom monitoring, benefit you to develop your student-centred teaching?

4- What support do you get from supervisors to make curriculum planning and teaching student-centred?

5- In what ways do you think supervisors can assist you to do student-centred teaching?

Appendix I – Post Interview Schedule

1. Can you tell me about what changes you think you have made to your teaching with the concept map?

2. What helped you change?

3. How did you find working one on one with me as a mentor?

4. How do you feel about the relationship we built through this research process?

5. What helped you form the relationship we created through participating in this research?

6. What is your opinion of establishing mentoring as a professional development tool for the whole school?