Leading-for-teacher-learning in Vietnam: A sociological analysis

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Abstract

This thesis explores the leading-for-learning practices of teachers and school administrators in a regional province in Central Vietnam, particularly in relation to two high performing/exemplary schools in that province. The research focuses on teacher leadership practices pertaining to teachers’ learning in a context of strong pressure and support for the teaching of English. This includes national educational reform initiatives that are part of the global spread of English as a necessary and desirable capital. The thesis draws upon Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts of field, habitus and capital in order to better understand the nature of these leading-for-learning practices. Specifically, the research reveals the complex and contested nature of these practices, the habitus of teachers and formal school leaders involved, the capitals accrued as part of this process, and whether and how these capitals contributed towards improved teacher learning. Two schools were focused upon most strongly specifically because they were considered ‘exemplary’ schools and the most prestigious academic schools in the province. The first was a school for mainstream students and the latter was for gifted students. Interviews with principals, teachers and administrators were conducted as well as observations of teachers working together, teacher workshops, professional activities and staff meetings.

This research provides new insights into the varied practices of leading-for-teacher-learning in these two high schools and district office, and in schooling settings more generally. The research also helps inform understandings of the leadership capabilities of teachers and administrators through a better understanding of the constraints and possibilities for action, and capacity building of teacher leaders. The research is significant beyond the specific case, making a substantial contribution to the existing literature on leadership practices in relation to teacher learning, not just the leadership practices of formal school leaders (especially principals) – a key focus of attention within the leadership literature – but also in relation to leadership practices of teachers and district personnel. The application of a Bourdieuan sociological approach reveals the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning as complex and contested, involving tensions, pressures and stress faced by teachers and associated educational professionals in their practices of leading learning as part of their professional work. Through this process, educators’ habitus is revealed as both shaped by and shaping changing relations in what is described as the field of leading-for-teacher-learning. The research also tries to capture the complexities of how teachers and administrators responded to these broader policy and institutional demands on teachers – evidence of the broader field of power upon the field of leading-for-teacher-learning. The thesis reveals the nature of this field, its dominant logics of practice and how these came to constitute and be constituted by those within its influence. This included a strong focus on English language learning, a key focus of the leading-for-learning
practices within the province and schools. The research reveals how the field of teachers’ leading for learning is characterised by complex, contested practices of leading-for-teacher-learning evident both within schools and outside schools.

Specifically, the field of leading-for-teacher-learning within schools is characterised by the complex and contested practices of English teachers helping maths teachers in their subject department; teachers struggling to implement new curricula more broadly; and teachers in different subject departments learning through designing thematic lesson plans, and determining collaboratively how to teach teams of gifted students effectively. At the same time, the field of leading-for-teacher-learning is also characterised by contested practices of leading-for-teacher-learning in relation to practices outside schools. This included: contested responses from teachers taking the initiative to attend workshops and intensive courses in the region; and teachers’ struggles to respond to their own and others’ encouragement to develop their own learning by undertaking short- and long-term study abroad. Through these experiences, teachers faced many possibilities, challenges and pressures, reflecting competing broader and more localised policy and political and institutional demands. The research argues practices of leading-for-teacher-learning have potential to constitute and are constitutive of substantive teacher learning for education reform, but that these possibilities are heavily influenced by the broader and more localised pressures and demands that simultaneously co-exist and challenge these more productive practices. These pressures included more reductive approaches to English language learning, and approaches to English that do not value the multiple ways in which English is enacted in non-native speaking contexts.
Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my research higher degree candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

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Publications during candidature

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Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree

None
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Keywords

Educational leadership, Bourdieu, policy studies, teacher learning, professional development, field of teacher-leading-for-learning, Vietnam

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ANZSRC code: 130313 Teacher Education and Professional Development of Educators, 30%

Fields of Research (FoR) Classification

FoR code: 1608 Sociology, 70%
FoR code: 1303 Special Studies in Education, 30%
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>The Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEM</td>
<td>The Asia–Europe Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEFR</td>
<td>The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOET</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELT specialist</td>
<td>The English Language Training specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLs</td>
<td>Foreign Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCMC Youth Union</td>
<td>The Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and communications technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information and technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOET</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UQ</td>
<td>The University of Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>The World Trade Organisation</td>
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Chapter 1. Introduction to the Research

1.0 Introduction of the Context: Background to the Research

The Vietnamese education system has undergone continuous reform over the past decade. Throughout this period, a number of positive changes and substantial achievements have been evident. These include increased enrolments in schools, the diversification of education delivery modes, improved school infrastructure and an increase in the level of mass education (Government of Vietnam, 2012c). A relatively complete, unified but also diversified education system has been built at all levels from pre-school education to doctoral training, and is seen as gradually integrating into the common trends of “world education” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2012; MOET, 2006a). The facilities of schools and classes have been gradually modernised; the quality of education at all education levels and training levels has made progress; educational management has made positive changes; international cooperation has expanded; the implementation of social equity has continued to improve; teaching and management staff have been increased in terms of quantity and gradually improved in quality. There are attempts to overcome weaknesses, and to reduce the gaps between Vietnam’s education and that of advanced countries. Education also needs to find a balance between the requirements to: quickly increase the enrolment with limited resources and at the same time enhancing quality; and undertake fundamental changes to retain a relatively stable education system. The changes in structures and economic development require that education keeps pace with and is appropriate for the country’s social development (MOET, 2006a).

However, Vietnam’s strategy for educational development in the period 2011-2020 (Government of Vietnam, 2012c) and the Conclusion of the 6th Conference, the Party Central Committee XI (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2012) have also identified numerous weaknesses directly related to socio-economic development. For example, the overall quality of education is still poor and does not meet the demand for developing the country further in terms of industrialisation, modernisation and international integration (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2012; Government of Vietnam, 2012c). Education in Vietnam has lagged behind the advanced education levels of some other regional countries, and the rest of the world (Government of Vietnam, 2012c). The relationship between the increase in enrolments and the demand for quality improvement has not effectively been addressed (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2012). There are also ongoing problems in the management of schools, for example the complex issues of subsidies, centralisation, and lack of autonomy and accountability (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2004, 2012; DOET, 2012; Government of Vietnam,
The State’s investment in education has not adequately focused on priority items such as the learning of teachers and principals (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2012; Government of Vietnam, 2012c). Furthermore, the general education content and curriculum, methods of teaching and learning, as well as forms of outcome assessment require further work (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2012; Government of Vietnam, 2012c). For example, “the content focuses more on theory rather than practice, and the proactiveness and creativity of students have not been really promoted. Further weak points are a lack of teaching facilities and lack of satisfactory policies for teachers and managers” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2012, p. 2). Teaching staff are insufficient in number, and a number of teachers have outdated knowledge and expertise (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013). The policy reforms in this area have been unsatisfactory, so it has been difficult to attract and retain excellent people into education (Communist Party of Vietnam, 1993; Government of Vietnam, 2012c). Thus, “the training and nurturing of high quality teaching staff has not met the requirements of the education reform” (Government of Vietnam, 2012c, p. 4).

The continued professional learning of staff, and how to enable such learning, is an area of continuing need, and reflects a very particular set of circumstances. This is the case beyond Vietnam, as well, where teacher professional learning is deeply problematic, and heavily contested. In her overview of literature on teacher learning, Borko (2004) describes how the professional learning opportunities for teachers are ‘woefully inadequate’ (p. 3). In part, this is because of a lack of conceptual clarity about what constitutes beneficial teacher learning, with ‘professional development’ often associated with short term, typically one-off workshops, and notions of ‘professional learning’ as more ongoing initiatives involving teachers taking a more active role in their own learning; For example, Murray and Zoul (2015) capture these tensions in the way they describe each concept:

We refer to professional (and personalized) learning experiences as opposed to professional development. … [A] training – or development opportunity – connotes an event teachers attend to obtain a specific skill that they can, in turn, use in scripted ways and in specific settings. To truly affect student learning, teachers must not merely be ‘trained”; they must learn deeply in a way that results in the learning being transferred to their own classrooms and shared with other teachers with whom they interact (p. 8).

This contestation over terms is also evident in the substance of professional development/learning practices. Day and Sachs (2004) indicate how competing approaches to teachers’ learning play out in practice. More traditional ‘professional development’ approaches are seen as more ‘deficit’ approaches in response to, typically, government demands for improved practice, and in response to what teachers are perceived to ‘lack’. In contrast, more democratic professional approaches involve teachers taking much more active stances in their own learning, and that of colleagues. Under more
managerial circumstances, more democratic conceptions of teachers’ work become more challenging to enact.

At the same time, these professional learning practices also often seek to influence others – to ‘lead’ their learning. However, as with the term teacher learning, I also use the term ‘leading’ aware that this is a similarly contested concept, and that notions of leading and leadership are multifaceted, and characterised by deeply competing interests (Lingard, Hayes, Mills & Christie, 2003; Niesche, 2011).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In the thesis, therefore, I seek to explore the nature of the ‘leading-for-teacher-learning’ practices that characterise teachers and schools’ efforts to foster various forms of teacher learning, where ‘teacher learning’ is used in a broad way, and understood to encompass both short-term, often ‘workshop’, approaches to learning, as well as more substantive practices where teachers are more actively involved in and promoting their own learning. I try to capture the variety of different forms of professional practice associated with efforts to foster more agentic, democratic teacher learning, as well as the more traditional modes of ‘learning’ typically referred to as ‘professional development’. This thesis seeks to provide insights into the nature of these circumstances, as they influenced the learning practices of teachers in two schools in Vietnam.

Furthermore, the study explores the important role of English and English language learning as part of this process of ‘leading-for-teacher-learning’. The teachers reported in the research are either teachers of English or teachers who are asked to teach their subject matter in English according to the major educational reforms from the Vietnamese government. Much of the data includes the participants’ experiences and accounts related to the English language in one or another way. English plays an important role in key educational policy reforms influencing teachers’ work. Just as it tries to capture the contested nature of notions of leadership and teacher learning, the thesis also seeks to capture English language learning (including English as a medium of instruction) as a deeply contested field of relations.

In recent years, although there have been some substantial achievements, high school education in Thao Anh Province has still experienced a lot of difficulties (DOET, 2012). One of the most serious problems is related to teaching staff and administration staff. As in more deficit oriented approaches to teachers’ learning (Day & Sachs, 2004), there are concerns expressed that some teachers’ and managers’ capacity and expertise are of a limited standard, especially in the

1 Thao Anh is a pseudonym
knowledge and skills of how to use information technology in management and pedagogy, and how to apply new methods of teaching, testing and evaluating students (DOET, 2012; Principal, 2013a, 2013b). Like other provinces in the country, teaching and administrative staff in some high schools in Thao Anh province are not sufficient in number, do not have an appropriate structure and are under qualified, and so cannot meet the demands of increasing student enrolments, along with the improvement in education quality and efficiency. This is seen to result from a lack of investment in teacher learning and personnel recruitment. In fact, the professional qualifications of the teaching staff are seen as not meeting the requirements for reforms in general education, for example, teachers of English in Thao Anh. On 2 January, 2013, the examination which aimed to evaluate teachers’ capacity of English based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) revealed that among 582 candidates, only 56 were successful, making up 9.6% of the total candidates in Thao Anh who effectively met the requirement of CEFR (Ngoc Tu, 2013). Five out of 115 accounted for 13% of high school teachers of English meeting the requirement of C1 (equal to 6.5 IELTS); 32/291 (10.99%) lower secondary teachers have obtained B2 (equal to 6.0 IELTS); and 9/174 (5.17%) primary teachers have achieved B2 (equal to 6.0 IELTS). In regard to personnel recruitment, filling vacancies, or replacing retired teachers has proceeded slowly, causing many officials to be overworked and resulting in poor outcomes. Additionally, the building of high schools has not met the proposed targets. At present, there are 3 out of 50 high schools, making up 6% of the schools, that meet the national standard (DOET, 2012). Finally, the administrative and leadership skills of some high school leaders are seen as inadequate (DOET, 2012).

As these insights reveal, as well as a focus upon deficit discourses more broadly, there is much concern around education framed in relation to the teaching of English and English language learning. And there are a variety of ways in which efforts have been undertaken to try to ‘lead’ teachers’ learning as part of this process. Leadership practices oriented towards such learning are seen as particularly important. That is, what is described in the thesis as Leading-for-teacher-learning is seen as key for improving the teaching staff in high schools in Thao Anh Province in particular, and in Vietnam in general. However, there is a need to better understand actual practices of leading-for-teacher-learning. For these reasons, an investigation into the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning in high schools in the province, with a particular focus on what are considered the most successful schools, has been undertaken to better understand the complexities and challenges faced by teachers and leaders in high schools in order to help inform responses to these problems. This includes trying to make sense of the contestation that attends this work.
1.2 Research Questions

The research focuses upon leadership practices in relation to teachers’ learning of DOET administrators, school administrators, specialists and teachers, and how they influence teacher learning in one province, and particularly two schools within the province, in Vietnam. This includes in relation to English and English language learning. The two schools are the most prestigious academic schools in the province, and have been chosen because they are considered ‘exemplary’ schools – reflecting their consistently high academic results in all subject areas, their high performance in academic competitions at the province and nationally, and the high rates of success of their graduates at attaining university entrance. At the outset, I also acknowledge that I have an ‘insider’ perspective in relation to these schools, as I have worked at both schools since 1996. It was my work in these sites that enabled me to gain access to them, and that influenced the nature of the research questions under investigation. It is also their focus as ‘exemplary’ schools which is of much significance, because it might be expected that the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning that occur in these schools could be seen as similarly ‘exemplary’ in relation to other schooling sites, and perhaps able to inform practices in other schooling settings. This thesis explores whether indeed this is the case.

Educational leadership is a key variable in the development of high quality educational outcomes (Harris & Muijs, 2005; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). By specifically focusing on leadership for teacher learning in Vietnamese high schools, the aim of this research project is to explore the nature of efforts to raise educational standards at the high school level in the Thao Anh Province in Vietnam. In order to achieve the aims, the research will address the following research questions:

1. **What are the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning of administrators and teachers that influence teacher learning in Thao Anh Province, particularly in two ‘exemplary’ schools, and including in relation to English language learning?**

2. **How do these practices of leading-for-teacher-learning come about in these sites? How are they developed? Who is involved? What resources are involved? What are the socio-political circumstances that influence this leading-for-teacher-learning?**

1.3 Aims of the Research

The aims of the research are to examine, in detail, the contextual challenges and opportunities that influence leadership practices oriented towards cultivating teacher learning in exemplary schooling
settings in one province. To do so, I focus upon the current state of practices of leading-for-teacher-learning in two high schools in the Thao Anh Province in Vietnam. This involves exploring teachers’ experiences and practices. Drawing on the latest literature and theoretical approaches such as productive leadership, teacher leadership and professional learning communities, and applying French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s thinking tools in practice, I aim to suggest how the identified practices have come about, and how teachers’ learning is currently enacted. Suggestions towards improving professional learning communities, leading to improved outcomes for students in Thao Anh Province as well as other areas in Vietnam will be intimated as part of this process.

1.4 Significance of the Research

The research is significant because it highlights the nature of both enabling and constraining conditions for leading-for-teacher-learning. The relatively small amount of research that focuses explicitly on instances of leading-for-teacher-learning under current conditions makes it important to explore the nature of such practices in more detail. While there is an expanding body of literature pertaining to teacher leadership, this literature is not necessarily explicitly focused upon practices for teacher learning, or the intrinsic imbrication between the individual and the social, and the complexity and contestation that attends such practices, including in relation to English language learning. Lieberman and Miller (2004) provide some useful insights into the nature of different forms of teacher leadership, including various ‘portraits’ of teacher leaders in practice. They also provide some insights into how teachers help facilitate teachers’ learning and inquiry in schooling settings. Durant and Holden’s (2006) research into ‘teachers leading change’ also provides some useful insights into efforts to foster teachers’ inquiry practices as part of a process of leading for teacher learning, while Murray and Zoul (2015) also point to the value of professional learning communities for such purposes to help foster what they describe as ‘leading professional learning’. However, there tends to be less of a focus upon the contestation that attends such learning.

This is similarly the case for more leadership-oriented literature. Moller and Pankake (2013) focus on the work of principals in their outline of how to foster teacher leadership. While part of their attention is given over to teacher learning, this is not developed in depth in relation to specific instances of such learning, and the contestation surrounding such learning. Rogers’ (2002) Teacher leadership and behaviour management provides insights into teacher leadership and behaviour management but without focusing strongly upon teacher learning per se. Putnam and Borko (2000) provide useful insights into the sociality of learning, referring to how cognition is always a socially situated practice. However, again, these social practices are not explored in ways that foreground the complexities that attend their enactment.
This thesis is significant because it explores the leading-for-learning practices of teachers and school administrators in two schools in a regional province in Central Vietnam, under circumstances of strong educational reform. The research focuses on teacher leadership practices pertaining to teachers’ learning, including in a context of strong pressure and support for the teaching of English. This includes in relation to national educational reform initiatives that are part of the global spread of English as a necessary and desirable capital. While there is a body of literature that critiques the nature of English language learning more generally (Pennycook, 1994; 1998; Phillipson, 1992; 2009), and in Vietnamese higher education settings (e.g. Pham Hoa Hiep, 2006a; Phan Le Ha, 2005; Ngoc Ba Doan, 2014) there is relatively little that pertains to high school settings. Pham Hoa Hiep (2001) does provide some preliminary insights into the nature of teachers’ experiences in relation to English language learning more broadly, and the need for much more substantive teacher learning opportunities in this area, but again with an emphasis upon tertiary contexts.

The research is also significant because it highlights in much more detail how leading for teacher learning is practised in high school contexts – a key priority in Vietnamese education reform – and what are seen as ‘exemplary’/high performing schools. The research provides insights into how teacher leadership might be expected to be facilitated and developed in such sites, and investigates the relationship between teacher leadership and teacher learning, and reveals the conditions in which leadership for learning can grow, and the conditions which challenge more productive leadership for learning practices, and particularly in relation to English language learning. Adding to the theorising of practices of leading-for-teacher-learning, the research provides a good understanding of the present leadership practices of district administrators, school administrators, specialists and especially those of teaching staff in high schools in Thao Anh province, Vietnam, and of the reasons for the existing potentialities and problems. The research will also potentially help to improve the leadership and learning capabilities of the people in question. Such practices, in turn, provide the conditions for potentially improving the educational outcomes of students to meet the demands of the education reform. The focus on ‘exemplary’ sites will also provide insights into the nature of leading-for-teacher-learning practices in what seem to be more highly performing schools (on academic measures), and will perhaps provide insights into whether and how such practices might transpire in other, more ‘ordinary’ (Maguire, Perryman, Ball & Braun, 2011) school sites.

This research will also be significant beyond the specific schools and province, and will make a substantial contribution to the existing literature by exploring leadership practices in relation to teacher learning, drawing upon perspectives of teachers and regional personnel, not just the
leadership practices of school principals – a key focus of attention within the leadership literature (Niesche, 2011).

Significantly, the application of a Bourdieuan sociological approach also reveals important insights in relation to practices of leading-for-teacher-learning in context. The research reveals the complex and contested nature of these practices, the habitus of teachers and formal school leaders involved, the capitals accrued as part of this process, and whether and how these capitals contributed towards improved teacher learning. As part of this process, a clearer understanding of the conditions within which teacher-leading-for-learning is undertaken is important. The following sections provide information about the nature of the Vietnamese educational context to better understand these leading-for-learning practices.

1.5 Vietnamese Education Policy Context

1.5.1 Historical Context

Vietnamese education can be traced back to Vietnam’s history after 1945. The Viet Minh Front, which was initiated by Ho Chi Minh, successfully led the August Revolution in 1945. This revolutionary success enabled him to read the Independence Declaration of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam a month later, on 2 September, 1945. After the Second World War, Vietnam was divided into three regions: the North, Central, and South. The South and Central regions were under the Japanese administration from 1945 to 1946, because the French lost control in the Japanese coup d’état in Indochina. After the return of the French in 1946, Vietnam was divided into two: the North and South. While the North followed socialism, the South was placed under the French until the Dien Bien Phu victory in 1954. After the North claimed independence from the French, with their financial and military support, the Americans renamed the South as the Republic of Vietnam from 1954 to 1975, when the whole country was reunited (Huynh, 1982; Institute for History Studies (Vien Su hoc), 2007). Vietnam commenced reconstructing its country after 20 years of division.

In the process of overcoming the consequences of the long war, Vietnam faced many challenges. Before 1986, Vietnam experienced an economic crisis caused by the Soviet-style centralised economic and political management system. This system concentrated on heavy industry and collectivisation of agriculture (Thayer, 1999). Until December 1986, Vietnamese leaders planned for a major historic national reform known as the policy doi moi or “renovation”, and especially the fundamental market-oriented reform of 1989. This aimed to adopt socio-economic reforms by shifting from the centrally planned model to a socialist-oriented market mechanism (Thayer, 1999). The socialist-oriented market economy in Vietnam is a type of economic organisation based on both
the principles and rules of the market economy and on the principles and nature of socialism. The orientation of socialism is shown in the aspects of production relation such as sharing the proceeds of economic development for the benefit of all.

It has been stated that some major socialist orientations of the market economy involve (Vu, 2013): firstly, fulfilling the objective of a “Wealthy people, strong country, democracy, equity and civilisation”, not for the benefit of capitalists. Secondly, developing the economy with many forms of ownership, and economic sectors in order to foster potentiality from the inside of which the State economy plays the main role. In terms of the orientation and distribution of society, economic growth is connected to the implementation of progress and social equity in order to restrict the negative effects of the market economy. Distribution is based on labour results, economic proficiency, the level of contributions of capital and other resources and through social welfare. In terms of management, there was promotion of the people’s right to mastery to secure the economic management and regulation of the law-governed socialist State under the leadership of the Communist Party (Vu, 2013).

Reform guidelines have aimed to build a socialist-oriented market economy under State management, boost economic growth, foster industrialisation, modernisation of the country, and get Vietnam out of crisis, gradually becoming a country which is not poor and underdeveloped any more, and to enable it to become “a modern-oriented industrialised country by 2020” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011a; 2011b, p. 4). In reality, reform guidelines greatly affected Vietnam’s economy, developing the economy, getting Vietnam out of the economic and social crisis, and making considerable achievements in the industrialising and modernising stage of the country’s development. The results obtained in the economy are the foundation to promote reform in culture and education development (socialisation in education, facilities, requirements for increasing teachers’ level of skills, etc.). Investment for education and technology science is the nation’s top priority.

In order to develop a socialist-oriented market economy, the State also adopted multilateralism (Communist Party of Vietnam, 1986). This helps the economy integrate into regional and global market economies. To make use of international support and opportunities to participate in the global trade, the Party has changed its foreign relations policy and allowed a multilateral orientation by improving relationships with all countries in the international community and making considerable effort for peace, independence and development (Communist Party of Vietnam's online newspaper, 2006). Vietnam has extensive relations, does not distinguish between the nature of different political regimes, advocates equality, respect for independence, and sovereignty of each
other and does not intervene in other countries’ domestic affairs. As a result, Vietnam’s position has become more important in the region and in the world, for example, ASEAN, ASEM, APEC. Vietnam has also appealed to foreign investment and since the 1991 Seventh Party Congress, the country has been diversifying its foreign relations. By the end of 1996 the country had expanded diplomatic relations with 163 countries whereas it had diplomatic ties with only 23 non-communist countries in 1989 (Thayer & Amer, 1999, p. 5). By 2005, Vietnam has developed trade relations with 221 countries and regions, and signed 90 bilateral trade conventions, the most prominent of which was with the US (Communist Party of Vietnam’s online newspaper, 2006). This facilitated goods exchange with foreign countries and willingness to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

This history has affected Vietnamese education during this time. Vietnam has undertaken a number of major education reforms in order to develop the country at each stage. One of the first three education reforms was in 1950, several years after the success of the August Revolution. Professor Pham Tat Dong, Vice-Chairman, General Secretary of Vietnam Study Encouragement Association stated in an article entitled “Fundamental and comprehensive education reform in Vietnam: The fourth education reform in Vietnam” (19 June, 2012) that that period’s education curriculum had some developments, but still depended partly on the education curriculum applied under French colonialism. The educational objectives at that time were to train manpower for both the war and the country’s rebuilding. Professor Pham also mentioned the milestones and the educational missions of the second and the third major reforms as below:

In this period, Vietnam did not have time and conditions to be able to build a completely renewed education system, so certain parts of the education curriculum under French colonialism were used, but further developments of these materials were also undertaken. At that time, Vietnam needed to both train the people who directly served a war of resistance against French invaders and prepare a force to reconstruct the country when the war ended. The second education reform was in 1956. It was implemented when half the country was liberated. The country needed a force for restoring the economy and build the north, and the other young force to serve the struggle for country reunification. 1979 was the year when the third education reform was conducted. It was when the whole country was unified and built upon a socialist orientation. (pp. 1-2)

Professor Pham (2012) emphasised that from 1979 until early in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the country had experienced new periods of development, but the model of education had not been changed significantly. For example, the education goal of the reform in education in 1979 had not met the requirements for a socialist-oriented market economy, but at the Sixth National Party Congress in 1986, with the policy to reform the overall country, especially economic reform, the goal of education was not fully discussed.
Professor Pham referred to another significant milestone in 2001, at the Ninth National Party Congress, when the Party set the policy to gradually foster the knowledge economy (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2001a). Professor Pham (2012) explained the importance of the knowledge-based economy, and international integration in the context of globalisation. Rapid globalisation has fostered formation of the knowledge economy, resulting in forming a learning society:

This was seen as necessary to establish a learning society, carry out education for everybody, and give everyone the opportunity to study during their lives. As part of a process of confronting globalisation, the Party required active international integration. From this policy, Vietnam became an official member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). (2012, p. 2)

The capitals valued here were primarily economic, and the way to foster these economic resources was via new knowledge, and the deployment of knowledge for economic advantage. Professor Pham (2012) added:

At this point, the goal of education might have been considered to be significant; however, education was not extensively reformed, but only subject to minor changes: There were some changes in education curricula and textbooks, in assessment, and in divisions of knowledge into groups of social and natural sciences subjects; these caused a crisis in education management, forming a picture of education development with a number of incompatible parts.

In the article on 9 October, 2013 entitled “Vietnam’s education with the most expected project” by the author Pham Mai (M. Pham, 2013), Professor Pham also remarked that since 1986, when the Vietnamese economy shifted to a socialist-oriented market economy, Vietnam’s education started to look problematic; however, since then until the present, there have been only some minor modifications and there has not been any large scale reform in education.

However, there has been some recognition of the attempts toward education reforms in terms of increased scale, networks, various kinds of training, and expanded international cooperation to meet the need for people’s learning, with 22 million learners (in institutional educational settings) out of a total population of more than 80 million people (Dan Tri, 2012). The Minister of Education and Training Pham Vu Luan also highly valued the contribution of the previous education reforms. The Minister remarked that each reform or renewal set up targets, specific plans and achieved a number of substantial achievements (Giao duc thoi dai, 2014; MOET, 2013b). He also pointed out that the three previous major reforms left many elements of education unchanged. For example, fundamental changes in curriculum content, and methods of teaching and learning basically remained unchanged (MOET, 2013b). The fact that teachers gave lectures and students listened and took notes (a one-way provision of knowledge) has brought about problems. A number of students learned only for examinations, so they were less active and creative. The quality of education overall has progressed but has not met the goals of creativity and ingenuity required for all manner
of human and social development, including what is required for economic industrialisation and modernisation. Vietnam’s education and training have been construed as not contributing much to developing high quality human resources (Giao duc thoi dai, 2014). Many policies, mechanisms, and solutions to reforming education have become unsuitable for the country’s new phase of development, requiring modification and supplementation (MOET, 2014b).

Vietnam is in the process of integrating into the world more deeply. The dramatic developments in science and technology and competition in many fields among other nations is seen as requiring significant reform in education. The competition among nations is the competition for human resources, related to science and technology. The common tendency of the world in the 21st century is the implementation of education reform or renewal in these areas, in keeping with the logic of human capital development.

Building and defending the country in the new context (that especially requires changing into the depth-based growth mode and restructuring the economy according to quality, efficiency, and increased competitiveness) requires that education has to satisfy the demand for people’s various learning needs, contributing to producing high-quality human resources. Without the fundamental and comprehensive education reform, human resource development has been construed as a barrier to the country’s development. From an economic viewpoint, it means that it would be difficult to improve human resources to meet the needs of the global technological revolution, and to build a solid foundation for advanced industry development by the year 2020.

Therefore, coming into the second decade of the 21st century, the Communist Party of Vietnam required fundamental and comprehensive reform in education and training. Professor Pham (2012) claimed that the first thing to do was to consider what qualities of a person the market economy, the industrial economy and knowledge economy needed, and what qualities of Vietnamese people were required by international integration. He added:

> From this, we are able to design education goals accordingly. When the goal is set, from a traditional policy perspective, the belief is that the training curriculum in teachers’ colleges and universities, and the nurturing curriculum in institutes of educational management will be reformed. Teachers and managers are made to feel they are capable of implementing the education reforms. (p. 2)

From a formal policy perspective, Vietnamese education actively shifted to the improvement of the quality of education and training, meeting with society’s demands; this included considering the improvement of quality pursuant to the plan of human resource development as the goal of training development (Dan Tri, 2012). Considerable resources are being invested in Vietnamese education for the attainment of improved educational practices, largely as a consequence of an increased
emphasis upon how to improve the economic viability of the country as a whole. The Minister of Education and Training affirms that this time, change to teaching and learning will occur, mainly through providing knowledge dissemination from teachers to students, into a new way of education whose goal is to more creatively form the capacity and qualities of people for labour market reform (MOET, 2013b).

1.5.2 The Recent Policy Context

Historically, Vietnam’s education system has been dominated by public schooling, whereas now it has expanded to include non-public schooling, different forms of informal education, open learning, distance education and joint ventures with foreign institutions with a tuition fee system applied to almost all levels (MOET, 2006b). At the same time, domestic education institutions are encouraged to cooperate with overseas providers in order to enhance the capacity of management, training, scientific research, technology transfer; to train teachers, lecturers, scientific and administrative officials (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013; Government of Vietnam, 2012c).


Vietnam’s education and training have been influenced by several macro-policies. Since the Communist Party of Vietnam (1991), education and training is considered to be “the nation’s top priority” (p. 4), the development of education is the nation’s top priority, aiming to improve people's intellectual level, train the manpower and foster talent (Giaoduchthoidai.vn, 2014).

Since the 2001 Ninth National Party Congress, industrialisation and modernisation are some of the key aspects in Vietnam’s strategy for socioeconomic development (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2001b). As Vietnam moves into a national industrialisation and modernisation stage, many new skills are recognised as being required to support these developments (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011a, 2011b; Government of Vietnam, 2008, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c; MOET, 2010a). Human capacity is seen as the most important factor “to develop sustainably, develop the country in the international arena, integrate globally, and stabilise the society” (Government of Vietnam, 2011a, p. 1). Therefore, investment in education is considered as
investment in development, taking priority over all other programs and plans to develop economy and society (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013).

Importantly, as this overview of education policy in Vietnam indicates, this focus upon development is very much economic in nature, and broadly outward-looking, in an increasingly neoliberal fashion. This is evident, for example, through efforts to engage with the WTO, at the same time as such organisations also seek to expand their influence into countries not previously engaged with a more liberally, economically-oriented agenda. Such contextual factors influence how education is construed within nation-states.

Thus, the necessity to reform education was established in Vietnam’s strategy for socioeconomic development in the period 2011-2020 (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011b):

Reforming fundamentally and comprehensively Vietnam’s education towards standardisation, modernisation, socialisation, democratisation, and international integration, in which the reform in educational management and the development of teaching and managerial staff is the key task. (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011b, p. 11)

Under these conditions, overall fundamental reform in education and training is understood as requiring teaching and learning experiences which enable this more “outward”, economically-oriented disposition amongst Vietnamese citizens. That is, there is strong support for such reforms, and this support is evident in how key educational policies have been framed.

As part of this work, there is a strong emphasis upon developing teaching staff. This is seen as contributing to build new dispositions to meet national requirements – requirements framed by a more individualistic, neoliberal, economically oriented sense of self in modern Vietnam, even as it continues to engage with more social and collectivist practices and philosophies. The complexity of these conditions, including this complex policy ensemble, and how they play out in practice are key foci of the thesis.

1.5.3 Developing Teachers in High Schools

High school education is considered especially important because at this level students are being prepared for either entering universities and vocational colleges, or joining the labour force (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2005). Raising the educational standards at the high school level has become one of the priorities for central and local governments as well as students and their families. The rate of youth who can achieve high school education is expected to be 80% in 2020 (Government of Vietnam, 2012c). In light of these broad issues, high school education in Vietnam has been facing major conflicts between the immediate requirements for the standardisation of the staff in quantity, structure and quality with the ability to carry out such educational reforms. In
order to tackle these problems, some effective measures have to be simultaneously implemented, the most important of which is improving the quality of classroom teachers and educational administrators as they are the key factors enhancing education quality (Fullan, 2010; Hayes, Christie, Mills, & Lingard, 2004; Leithwood et al., 1999; Lingard et al., 2003; Sofo, Fitzgerald, & Jawas, 2012).

Vietnam’s strategy for socioeconomic development in the period 2011-2020 (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011b) affirmed that in order to implement a fundamental and comprehensive reform in Vietnam, what was required was an education system fostering increased standardisation, modernisation, socialisation, democratisation, and international integration. Tasks such as innovating the mechanism and modes of education management and improving the expertise of teaching staff and management staff are a key part of this process (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011a). Some of the duties stated in the Decision on the approval of Vietnam’s strategy for educational development in the period 2011-2020 are training, nurturing and implementing policies which give impetus to developing teaching and administration staff to meet the demands of education reform, especially focused on the preparation of conditions for carrying out general education after 2015 (Government of Vietnam, 2012c). The Project to develop high school and professional teachers involved the development of professional standards for teachers and principals. This also included training 1,471 teachers and providing 2,340 scholarships for ethnic minority students to help them become teachers at these levels (MOET, 2010c). All of these policies influence practice in schools, including efforts to foster/lead teachers’ learning.

### 1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The study is divided into eight chapters.

Chapter 1 has introduced the research topic, delineated a contextual description of the study, including some preliminary insights into Vietnamese education policy in terms of history, recent politics, and the development of high school teachers. It outlined the statement of the problem and aims of the study. It has also indicated the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 outlines the broad bodies of research literature related to the study. The first set of literature explores some of the main theories and models of leadership. The second body focuses on the nature of teacher learning. The chapter then considers the nature of leadership for teacher learning; this explores how practices of leadership and teacher learning intersect. Given the attention to English language learning in Vietnamese educational policy and practice, the next body of literature pertains to English language learning in general. The final body of literature examines
approaches of teacher learning, and particularly English language learning in relation to the Vietnamese context. This chapter also integrates with the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 3, and addresses a gap within current studies – specifically the nature of teacher leading-for-learning practices, and the logics that characterise such practices, in the context of current policy and practice in support of English language learning.

Chapter 3 sets forth the theoretical framework of Bourdieu’s theory informing the research. Bourdieu’s main thinking tools of field, habitus, and capital are presented with a discussion of their application to better understand the nature of these leading-for-learning practices. The research seeks to reveal the complex and contested nature of these practices, the habitus of teachers and formal school leaders involved, the capitals accrued as part of this process, and whether and how these capitals contributed towards improved teacher learning. The chapter also provides insights into the limitations of a Bourdieuan approach. The chapter provides preliminary insights to enable such an analysis in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4 outlines the methods and methodological considerations informing the research. The chapter provides an overview of the methods used, and the methodological approaches of field, habitus and capital applied to the research, as well as a discussion of the limitations and insights arising from the processes of collecting data. To provide insights into my efforts at being reflexive as an integral part of the research process, the chapter concludes with experiences and challenges associated with my own leading-for-learning experiences as a teacher of English in Vietnam, and then as a PhD student in an international context (Australia).

Chapter 5 introduces an overview of the policy and political context for leading-for-teacher-learning in schools in Thao Anh Province, Vietnam. The chapter highlights key policies that influenced teacher learning as part of teachers’ work and form an important part of the broader field of schooling practices within which this leading-for-learning was undertaken. The chapter also draws upon insights from the theoretical framework and literature review, analysing these policies using Bourdieu’s concepts, and in light of literature on teacher learning and English language learning practices.

Chapter 6 begins the analysis of what is theorised as the “field of leading-for-teacher-learning” within schools. The chapter focuses upon the nature of the field associated with the complex and contested practices of English teachers helping maths teachers in their subject department; teachers struggling to implement new curricula more broadly; and teachers in different subject departments learning through designing thematic lesson plans, and determining collaboratively how to teach
teams of gifted students effectively. The data analysis in Chapter 6 extends current theoretical and practical understandings of leading-for-teacher-learning, for education reform.

Chapter 7 continues the argument begun in Chapter 6. The research presented in Chapter 7 focuses specifically upon the field of leading-for-teacher-learning characterised by contested practices of leading-for-teacher-learning in relation to practices outside schools. This includes: contested responses from teachers taking the initiative to attend intensive courses at some universities in the region; and teachers’ struggles to respond to their own and others’ encouragement to develop their own learning by undertaking short- and long-term study abroad.

Chapter 8 provides a summary of the research’s findings, contributions, and the implications of these findings. Chapter 8 summarises the theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions of the study, its success and limitations, and how it seeks to inform practical understandings of the leadership capabilities of teachers and administrators through a greater understanding of the constraints and possibilities for action, and capacity building of teacher leaders through the field of leading-for-teacher-learning. The chapter concludes with implications for policy, practice and further research.

This chapter has presented the background of the study, Vietnamese education policy context, the research problem, and the aims of the research, and the research questions to be explored. The chapter also discussed the significance of the research. The next chapter, Chapter 2, will introduce the literature on the main theories, and models of leadership; leadership-for-teacher learning; approaches of teacher learning, English language learning; and how such practices are currently conceptualised in the Vietnamese context.
Chapter 2. Literature Review: Leadership and Learning

2.0 Introduction

As indicated in the Introduction, I seek to try to capture and analyse the nature of the leadership practices that characterise efforts to facilitate teachers’ learning in one province, and particularly two ‘exemplary’ school settings, in Vietnam. In an effort to do so, I use the term ‘leading-for-teacher-learning’ to try to capture the variety of these different practices. In this chapter, therefore, I review relevant bodies of literature that intersect around the term ‘leading-for-teacher-learning’. Given that much of this learning pertained to the learning of English, this also includes some literature specifically focused upon different aspects of teachers’ professional growth, community of practice and negotiation of professionalism and values in relation to English language learning in current-day Vietnam.

I begin by referring to the field of leadership practices, which is characterised by contested positions. This includes more traditional ‘trait’ theories, based on various attributes; ‘situational’ and ‘contingency’ theories, based on the circumstances in which leaders find themselves, and; ‘transformational’ modes, which foreground fostering change through vision. This then leads into more recent conceptions of leadership as ‘distributed’, with its focus upon how leadership might be shared within the school beyond those in formal positions; ‘instructional’ leadership, foregrounding the nature of teaching and learning practices, and the conditions for enhancing such practices, and; ‘productive’ leadership, with its emphasis upon cultivating both social and academic learning, and broader economic, political and cultural dispositions. This section reveals varied understandings of each of these concepts, and significant differences between these conceptions of leadership.

This contestation is shared with the field of teacher learning, which constitutes the next section of the chapter. This section flags varied understandings of teacher learning, and the conditions for such learning. This includes recognition of the contested nature of understandings of teacher learning and concludes with a broad-based synthesis to help define the nature of teacher learning practices as characterised by competing practices, as inherently contested.

The following section then seeks to provide evidence in the literature of where notions of ‘leading’ and ‘teacher learning’ have been ‘brought together’ as a pre-cursor for making the case for a need
for further research into the nature of what is understood as ‘leading-for-teacher-learning’, particularly as a complex and contested concept.

The final section refers more explicitly to research in the Vietnamese context. Because of the significance of English language learning within the leading-for-learning practices of teachers and other educators reported in the research, this necessitates an elaboration of the nature of English language learning more broadly in postcolonial settings such as Vietnam. This then leads into an account of English language learning practices in Vietnam more specifically.

2.1 What Is Leadership?

Leadership-for-teacher-learning is a key focus in this thesis. Therefore, in this section I briefly explore some of the main theories and models of leadership that have been developed, and how more recent conceptions of leadership have been expressed in relation to teachers’ learning. There are a huge number of leadership approaches (Van Ameijde, Nelson, Billsberry, & Van Meurs, 2009) so the literature used here will be selective. When looking at any forms of leadership, one needs to be familiar with a number of the key debates in the literature. The research focuses on teacher leadership but it is still a form of leadership more broadly, albeit a different form from the traditional view (which, in schooling contexts, usually focuses upon the leader of the school – school principals). The aim is to provide some background to the approaches that are particularly relevant for education and this particular study, namely leadership, teacher leadership, and leadership in relation to teachers’ learning.

Leadership has been described as a “universal human phenomenon” (Bass & Stogdill, 1981, p. 5), but at the same time is one of the phenomena that are most observed and yet least understood (Burns, 1978). Leadership has been related to notions of influence, power, control, authority and supervision (Yukl, 2002). Christie and Lingard (2001) consider leadership as a form of influence exercised either inside or outside an organisation and which is practised by not only the head or a particular individual, but also by teachers, parents, students and principals in various contexts. They argue that “leadership needs to be understood in terms of the complex interplay of the personal, organisational, and the broader social, political and economic contexts” (2001, p. 20). The significance of culture in educational leadership has also been highlighted in the work of Dimmock and Walker (2005). Leadership is argued to be exercised at all levels of the school, such as through distributed, dispersed or parallel leadership (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006). Thus, leadership can emerge from everywhere in the organisation (Morrison, 1998). This is the main difference between the concept of leadership and headship. The former refers to the exercise of influence over others,
and the latter indicates a person’s status and responsibilities for a formal post in the educational institution, for example, as a principal, or department head (Christie & Lingard, 2001).

2.1.1 Trait Theories

Trait theories of leadership or “great man” theories, regard leadership as attributes of a person (Christie & Lingard, 2001). These approaches were some of the most common approaches to leadership theory until the 1950s. However, still today these concepts are supported in various forms. For example, one can find a large number of leaders’ biographies in bookstores, leadership position advertisements, and the common refrain that “leaders are born and not made” is still often heard. These sorts of discourses frequently rely on trait theories and individualistic accounts of leaders and leadership.

Earlier research into the concept of traits tried to prove whether certain traits could be identified as necessary for effective leadership (Stogdill, 1948, 1974). Stogdill (1948) made it clear that there was still not any evidence of universal leadership traits. This means that whether each trait is important or not is dependent on the situation, and Stogdill’s (1948) research did not identify any traits that were necessary or sufficient to ensure leadership success (Yukl, 2002). Yukl (2002, p. 201) concludes that when traits are examined one at a time, it is difficult to interpret the results. It is necessary for a combination of traits to be shown in many situations and in interaction with the leader’s behaviours. As a consequence, this model fails to show how the traits are interrelated and how they interact to influence leader behaviour.

Although identifying individual leadership traits may be considered necessary for organisational success, they cannot explain the social relations of leadership fully in broader contexts in which this leadership takes place, nor do they take into consideration leader behaviour and the relationships to “followers” (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Fiedler, 1967; Niesche, 2011; Stogdill, 1974).

2.1.2 Situational and Contingency Theories

Another set of theories of leadership is called situational or contingency theories. These move the focus from individual leader qualities and characteristics to styles of leadership behaviour and settings. Fiedler (1967), one of the best-known theorists of this model, summed it up in the following words:

Any one style of leadership is not in itself better than any other, nor is one type of leadership behaviour appropriate for all conditions. Hence, almost anyone should be able to succeed as a leader in some situations and almost everyone is likely to fail in others…It also follows from this theory that one can improve group organisational performance either by changing the leader to fit the situation or changing the situation to fit the leader. (p. 246)
These theories move beyond the role of the individual and emphasise the behaviour of leaders and situations in which they occur (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Lingard et al., 2003). These theories claim that it is necessary for leaders to show their flexibility in different contexts, which means their behaviours need to be flexible and appropriate depending on each situation. However, one of the major problems is that it is more important “to do the right things than to do things right”, which means that the led obey the leader’s order to do the “right” things (according to the leader’s perceptions) rather than being dominated by how to perform the tasks; as a consequence, these models often do not consider the issues of ethics and morals of leaders’ behaviour, and when applied, can result in the manipulation of followers (Christie & Lingard, 2001, p. 5). That is, there is the risk that people may become pressured or coerced into undertaking particular actions which they may not consider appropriate or proper, to achieve particular goals and ends. It is not simply the ends that matter, but how these are achieved, but situational theories may not consider such concerns in sufficient detail.

Although contingency theories provide insights about leadership under different circumstances, the question of whether contingency theories can be applied in real situations is raised, for example showing managers becoming more effective when they are so busy tackling the issues that they cannot stop to analyse the situation (Yukl, 2002). Yukl (2002) argues “the lack of explicit leader behaviours and intervening variables limit the utility of the model” (p. 211). The research into these theories has also shown that there is little evidence that these approaches enable leaders and managers to perform effectively (Yukl, 2002).

Like trait theories, contingency models do not fully explain leadership practices. It has been argued that they should be integrated with other approaches to leadership (Rice & Kastenbaum, 1983).

2.1.3 Transformational Leadership

Through the 1980s and 1990s, increasing attention was given to exploring the concept of transformational leadership (Gronn, 1995). This model focuses on developing the organisation’s capacity to innovate. Instead of focusing on direct coordination, control, and supervision of curriculum and instruction, transformational leadership is concerned with building an organisation’s capacity through development of a vision.

The concept of transformational leadership was first developed by James MacGregor Burns in 1978 and further expanded by Bernard Bass in 1985. Both Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) contrasted transformational leadership with transactional leadership. Both view transactional leadership as an exchange of respective rewards.
Burns (1978) defines leadership as persuading followers to perform for certain targets that represent the values and the motivations – of both the leader and the led. He identified two types of leaders: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership occurs when “one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things” (Burns, 1978, p. 19). Transactional leaders are those who lead through social exchange. Burns takes politicians as an example, who lead by “exchanging one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions” (p. 4). Similarly, transactional business leaders reward financially for productivity or cut down rewards for lack of productivity (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leadership, on the other hand, occurs when “one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978, p. 19).

In contrast with many earlier leadership models applied to school administration, this model focuses explicitly on vision. For instance, Lingard, Hayes, Mills and Christie argue such an approach entails leaders that “persuade followers to sacrifice their own self-interests in favour of the interests of the organisation more broadly” (Lingard et al., 2003, p. 57). As Bass and Riggio (2006) claim, transformational leaders’ behaviour motivates and inspires the people around them by giving significance and challenge to their followers’ work. However, again, what this actually looks like in practice is not readily apparent.

2.1.4 Distributed Leadership

One recent trend in leadership studies that has sought to capture some of the multiplicity of practices is distributed leadership, or leadership spread beyond single individuals. The notion of distributed leadership, also referred to as multiple leadership, dispersed leadership or parallel leadership, are increasingly emerging in the literature (Gronn, 1995, 2002, 2003, 2008; Harris, 2009, 2012; Harris & Muijs, 2005; Hartley, 2007, 2010; Leithwood & Harris, 2009; Thorpe, Gold, & Lawler, 2011). The term distributed leadership is widespread, but what it means is still somewhat confusing (Mayrowetz, 2008; Woods, Bennett, Harvey, & Wise, 2004). (Gronn, 2002) argues that distributed leadership starts with the labour division in organisations that sets out to capture leadership in more “collective” forms. Other critics of distributed concepts of leadership discuss how they appear to incorporate democratic procedures, but without actually doing so (Woods, 2004).

There seem to be two main reasons for the emergence of distributed leadership: firstly, the “charismatic hero” associated with transformational leadership was unsuccessful; and secondly, there is the greater complexity of the tasks which challenge school leaders now (Hartley, 2007).
Distributed leadership is not a new concept despite widespread contemporary interest in this form, and it is argued from the current school improvement literature that distributed leadership can enable schools’ development by building internal capacity (Harris, 2005b; Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, & Hopkins, 2007) because it can be implemented by many participants. As Spillane (2006, p. 102) points out, “the appeal of distributed leadership lies in the ease with which it can become all things to all people; various versions of distributed leadership have been associated with democratic leadership, participative leadership, collaborative leadership, and so on”. “The reason for its popularity may be pragmatic: to ease the burden of over-worked head teachers” (Hartley, 2010, p. 271). In other words, “it is also clear that the role of the principal within a distributed leadership model is no longer one of absolute authority. Distributed leadership implies sharing of power and decision making and therefore, at times, the principal may not have either positional or expert authority” (Harris, 2012, p. 15).

There is widespread use of the term distributed leadership, but definitions of the term vary (Harris et al., 2007). Harris (2005a) suggests that “distributed leadership is an emergent property of a group or a network of interacting individuals” (p. 81). Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004) similarly imply that this form of leadership is a way of understanding leadership whose emphasis is the interaction and exploration of complex social processes. It means that “school leadership is best understood through considering leadership tasks; and leadership practice is distributed over leaders, followers, and the school’s situation or context” (Torrance, 2009, p. 11). It implies a social distribution of leadership where the leadership function is stretched over the work of a number of individuals and the task is done by multiple leaders when they interact with each other (Harris, 2005b). Lingard et al. (2003) prefer the term dispersed leadership to show the spreading of leadership across the school to avoid the notion of power being understood as a possession of specific individuals, and not others.

2.1.5 Instructional Leadership

The model of instructional leadership emerged in the early 1980s from early research on effective schools (Hallinger, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003). It has become increasingly popular in North America and is attracting attention in Britain, but researchers and authors in the UK have usually preferred to use the term educational leadership or pedagogic leadership (Southworth, 2002).

During the early 1980s, several notions of instructional leadership developed (Hallinger, 2003). According to Hallinger, the first characteristic is concerned with the role of principals. Such roles include the coordinating, controlling, supervising, and development of curriculum and instruction in the school. Furthermore, it is important to establish the mission and purpose of the school, which is
influenced by a variety of factors such as the arrangement of school structures (e.g., academic standards, time allocation, and curriculum), socio-economic status of the school and school size. Principals are also expected to actively participate in promoting curriculum and instruction, and be willing to work with teachers on the improvement of teaching and learning. Another factor is that, “Instructional leaders are viewed as culture builders. They seek to create an ‘academic press’” that fosters high expectations and standards for students, as well as for teachers (2003, pp. 332-332). Moreover, new research on how leaders in education influence student outcomes gives increasingly specific guidance about the relative impacts of different types of leadership practice (Gavin & Constance, 2012). It is clear that instructional or learning-focused leadership plays an important role in improving students’ learning outcomes.

2.1.6 Productive Leadership

Productive leadership is the concept used to show leadership practices that support the development of productive pedagogies as teaching practices with which teacher learning and students’ learning build the whole school as a learning organisation (Hayes et al., 2004). It is considered to be a set of leadership practices that focus on the learning of both students and teachers and that are dispersed among multiple leaders in schools (Hayes et al., 2004).

There are various forms of productive school leadership. Lingard et al. (2003) show their interest in leadership focused on improving students’ social and academic learning. Drawing upon the work of Bourdieu, they have developed a normative concept of leadership habitus which is called productive leadership, namely leadership for learning. It is teachers, not principals, who have a strong influence on students’ outcomes. They emphasise that teacher characteristics play a more important role in improved student performance than all other aspects of a school combined (Hayes et al., 2004). Therefore, learning how to support teachers to improve and develop productive pedagogies is one of a principal’s key purposes.

Hayes et al. (2004) argue productive leadership is crucial to schools and is exercised by not only individual leaders, especially principals, but also individuals and groups other than the principal. Accordingly, the notion of leadership dispersal is used to describe how productive leadership may be distributed throughout a school community (Lingard et al., 2003).

Hayes et al. (2004) find individuals and context-appropriate activities important as part of leadership. They apply Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and field to imply the leader is not simply understood in terms of personal characteristics and influence, but also concerning the structured
social spaces that constitute the field of the school. For example, Hayes et al. (2004) refer to habitus as:

People’s acquired, socially constituted dispositions – the internalisation of the social structure so that its practices seem familiar, “taken for granted” and common-sense. Fields refer to structured social spaces with their own “invariant properties”, their own logics of practice, power relationships, internal structures and “rules of the game”. (p. 521)

Successful school leadership requires a habitus formed in relation to the field of the school, and which overlaps with economic, political and cultural fields. One of the tasks of the principal is to mediate the impact of these fields on the school (Hayes et al., 2004).

### 2.2 Teacher Learning

As indicated in the Introduction, the concept of ‘teacher learning’ is a deeply contested notion. This pertains to both the terminology used in relation to teacher learning (most obviously in relation to the term ‘teacher professional development’), and the substance of the concept. This section begins with some insights into the existing literature in the field of teacher learning, with a focus upon the conditions for teachers’ learning, and then explores the nature of this contestation more specifically. It concludes with a definition of teacher learning as encompassing a diverse range of practices, some of which are problematic, while others of which are more ‘productive’ of enhanced learning on the part of teachers.

#### 2.2.1 The State of the Field of Teacher Learning and the Conditions for Teachers’ Learning

In her account of the state of the literature on ‘teacher professional development’, Kennedy (2014) describes how this literature is ‘partial in its coverage, is fragmented and under-theorised’ (p. 689). Writing in the dedicated journal Professional Development in Education, Kennedy (2014) flags how there is a plethora of literature across a range of areas, perhaps contributing to this fragmentation and partial coverage of generally under-theorised approaches.

There is also some literature that seeks to describe various syntheses of professional learning and development literature. Timperley, Wilson, Barrar and Fung’s (2007) Best evidence synthesis is one such example. In relation to the conditions for learning, Timperley et al. (2007) describe how effective professional learning involves: the opportunity to engage in learning initiatives over extended periods of time; (often) external expertise to effect change; teachers’ engagement in learning during professional learning opportunities even if they did not volunteer from the outset; challenging problematic, dominant discourses (e.g. that some students cannot learn); engaging as a member of a community of practice, even as the location is not so important; approaches in keeping
with current research findings; and various forms of ‘active school leadership’ (p. xxvii). On this issue of leadership, ‘leaders’ were seen as enabling/providing the following conditions:

- Actively organised a supportive environment to promote professional learning opportunities and the implementation of new practices in classrooms;
- Focused on developing a learning culture within the school and were learners along with the teachers;
- Provided alternative visions and targets for student outcomes and monitored whether these were met;
- Created the conditions for distributing leadership by developing the leadership of others. (p. xxvii).

Similarly, in their account of ‘continuing professional development’, Cordingley, Bell, Isham, Evans and Firth’s (2007) account of specialists’ practice fostering professional learning opportunities for improved teacher and student learning reveals the importance of a range of factors including modelling, workshops, observations, coaching and analysing interviews with students:

- Specialists supported teachers through modelling, workshops, observation, feedback, coaching, and planned and informal meetings for discussion. Nearly all specialist support took place on school premises. More than half the CPD involved the specialists in observing teachers and providing feedback and debriefing. They discussed pupil needs, examined test results, reviewed the results of interviews conducted with and by pupils, and observed pupil interaction in the classroom. The quantity of formal ‘input’ was extensive and sustained (p. 1).

Tang and Choi (2009) also provide useful insights into the nature of teachers’ lives and learning in changing times. They reveal that at the same time as teachers were actively involved in their learning, and supportive conditions were in evidence to enhance their learning, work intensification, stress, strong competition between teachers and schools were also evident in the context of increasingly market-oriented and managerialist approaches to schooling. This intensification is exacerbated by more globalised, neoliberal conditions within which teachers’ work is unfolding (Ball, 2012), and which focuses attention on academic performance, particularly competitive testing, and numeric conceptions of that performance (Connell, 2013; Hardy, 2014; Hardy, 2015). The focus on testing also reflects broader processes of the globalising of educational accountabilities (Lingard, Martino, Rezai-Rashti & Sellar, 2016) to more effectively manage and monitor students’ learning.

2.2.1.1 The field of teacher learning as contested

As outlined in the Introduction, various researchers have gestured towards the contestation that attends current understandings of, and the conditions for, teacher learning. This contestation is explicit in what Hardy (2012) describes as the ‘politics of teacher professional development’.
Often, there is evidence of contestation between more traditional and more agentic approaches to teachers’ learning, and this is apparent in what Day and Sachs (2004) refer to as competing ‘managerial’ and democratic’ conceptions of professional practice in their understanding of what they describe as ‘continuing professional development’. More managerial conceptions of professional learning are associated with broader processes of audit and accountability (Power, 1997; Strathern, 2000), and of the need to carefully monitor all aspects of teachers’ practice. Such practices are also associated with government scrutiny of such practices, and a conception of teachers’ professionalism as intrinsically stunted. Such approaches involve increased bureaucratisation of education, and foster forms of standardisation.

In contrast, what Day and Sachs (2004) refer to as more ‘democratic’ approaches to teachers’ learning are construed as involving teachers exercising much more agency over the nature of their work, and engaging in productive, indeed ‘activist’ (Sachs, 2003) ways. Such an approach frames teachers as capable of effective change, and of possessing the individual and collaborative resources to effect such change. It involves forms of internal regulation on the part of teachers as they hold themselves and one another accountable for their practices. Such learning moves beyond formalised agendas, and is more actively responsive to the particular needs of students and teachers in context.

While there is support for fostering learning rather than ‘delivering’ content within the professions more generally (Webster-Wright, 2009), there is also a tendency for the continuation of what Zeichner (2003) refers to as the ‘training model’ in schooling settings. This ‘training model’ is reflected in the continued use of individualistic, disconnected workshop approaches, focused on particular foci deemed important at any given time. However, and in spite of the pressures that inhibit more active and agentic forms of teacher learning, there is also evidence of considerable efforts to foster more ongoing, research-informed and inquiry based approaches to teachers’ learning.

These efforts are evident in both policy and practice, even as tensions exist within both. Such tensions are evident, for example, in the ways in which teachers’ learning is often construed in relation to ‘performance’. In the Australian context, for example, Mockler (2015) refers to how national government frameworks (particularly the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITS) Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework) are characterised by multiple and potentially conflicting discourses and possibilities. These range from acting as tools for predominantly surveillance reasons through to mechanisms for the productive and ongoing development of teachers in contextually situated and authentic ways. The latter include more inquiry based stances that seek to develop teachers’ capacities to effect change in their own
school settings, and in open and collaborative ways that enhance the learning and development of their colleagues.

Consequently, and after Day and Sachs (2004) in particular, teacher professional learning practices are understood in this thesis as comprising a wide variety of competing and conflicting initiatives and events, some of which reflect more active, democratic conceptions of professionalism, and others of which reflect more managerial conceptions. Such practices may include more traditional ‘PD’/‘professional development’ events, such as individual workshops, or they may entail much more active and agentic practices focused upon observing teachers and providing detailed feedback (cf. Cordingley et al., 2007). They may also involve the expression of more problematic discourses as teachers seek to make sense of their work under current conditions (Tang & Choi, 2009), including in relation to neoliberalism in education more generally (Ball, 2012; Connell, 2013; Lingard et al., 2016).

In an effort to repatriate the term ‘professional development’ to include a much wider conception of practices beyond the more traditional, individualistic, one-off workshop-based approaches that have typically characterised the term, Hardy (2012) also advocates for a ‘redefining’ of the term ‘professional development’ to take in a much more broad-based approach to understanding notions of teachers’ learning. While I am sympathetic to such an approach, to help avoid confusion in the thesis, and in light of the literature on teachers’ learning presented in this section, I use the term ‘teacher learning’ to refer to all instances of teachers’ engaging in professional learning experiences – both more traditional (e.g. workshop) approaches, as well as more active teacher-centred approaches in which teachers take a more agentic role. However, I also try to specify whether the form of teacher learning in question is of a more traditional ilk (e.g. broad-based workshops, often sanctioned by governments), or whether it is an instance of more active/agentic learning on the part of teachers.

2.3 Leading-for-Teacher-Learning

The term teacher leadership refers to all staff engaged in supporting teaching and learning processes, including non-teaching and supporting staff. This view of leadership focuses on the relationships and the connections among individuals within a school (Harris & Muijs, 2005, p. 14). Lingard et al. (2003) state that leadership is recognised as exerting significant influence on all aspects of practice within schools.

Leaders and practices of leadership in schools, in our view, are thus not only associated with formal leadership positions, such as principal, deputy, head of department, year level coordinator, or whatever. Rather, our conceptualisation of leadership in schools includes
practices that are dispersed across the school and that are not explicitly associated with formal leadership roles. (Lingard et al., 2003, p. 53)

Such leadership needs to be exercised across the school and its communities in order for all to achieve the best outcomes in education; as a result, teacher leadership becomes integral to every school.

Teacher leadership is not a new concept. For a long time, teachers have played the role of objects of change instead of “leaders” who enact or initiate change (Angelle & M. Teague, 2014; Harris & Muijs, 2005; Hilty, 2011; Jones, 2007; Potter, 2001). They have been team leaders, association leaders, department heads and curriculum developers, but recent research on school development and change has recognised substantial changes in the roles for teachers, including increased leadership roles. It means it is necessary for teachers to exert their influence on not only the classroom but also leadership activities school-wide. This cross-school influence is seen as an important capacity of teachers because they have such a strong understanding of what is necessary at the classroom level, where so much of the learning of school occurs: “This advocacy for teacher professionalism and expanded leadership roles is premised on the belief that as they are closest to the classroom, teachers can implement changes that make a difference to learning and learners” (Harris & Muijs, 2005, p. 16).

Studies have shown that teachers do not subscribe to traditional definitions of leadership as “higher” or “superior” positions within the organisational hierarchy (Harris & Muijs, 2005, p. 17). Teachers see leadership as relating to sharing the tasks within a school, typically in a collaborative way and particularly to improve teachers’ learning. This form of leadership also gives all teachers the possibilities to become leaders in different contexts and places.

Leading and teaching are such relational concepts that every leader is a teacher, and every teacher can act as a leader (Potter, 2001). Harris and Muijs (2005) state that teachers are now working as research colleagues, advisor-mentors to new teachers, facilitating teacher learning activities and acting as members of school-based leadership teams and leaders of change. Collinson (2012) argues teachers support their colleagues by sharing ideas. According to Muijs and Harris (2003), “teacher leaders are important sources of expertise and information” (p. 439). They can get additional resources and expertise if required and seek external assistance.

Teacher leadership can also be understood as formal and informal. Informal teacher leadership is the exercise of leadership by teachers regardless of position or designation and, arguably, it should be called informal leadership (Harris & Muijs, 2005, p. 21). Such leadership is enacted in myriad ways:
Teachers exercise informal leadership...by sharing their expertise, volunteering for new projects and bringing new ideas to the school...by helping their colleagues to carry out their classroom duties, and by assisting in the improvement of classroom practice through the engagement of their colleagues in experimentation and the examination of more powerful instructional techniques. Teachers attribute leadership qualities, as well, to colleagues who accept responsibility for their own professional growth, promote the school’s mission, and work for the improvement of the school or school system. (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 117)

Harris and Muijs (2005, p. 26) summarise how teacher leadership is characterised by key features, including “the creation of collegial norms” ... “giving teachers opportunities to lead,” ...allowing teachers to “work together” ... and providing a “legitimate source of authority”. Importantly, Silins and Mulford (2002) draw the conclusion it is more likely for students to improve where leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community and where teachers are empowered in areas of importance to them. Giving teachers power in this way and providing them with opportunities to lead results from the idea that if schools get better at providing learning for students, then they must also become better at providing teachers with opportunities to innovate, develop and learn together (Harris & Muijs, 2005).

Besides the advantages of teacher leadership mentioned above, there are several challenges that need to be overcome for genuine teacher leadership activity to occur in schools (Harris & Muijs, 2005). One of the difficulties is the domination of the “top-down” leadership model in many schools. Little (2002) found that the possibility of teacher leadership in any school depends on whether the senior managers within the school give teachers real power, and the extent to which teachers accept the influence of colleagues who have been appointed as leaders in a particular area.

Moreover, Ash and Persall (2000) argue that heads will need to become leaders of leaders, trying to improve a relationship of trust with staff members, and encourage leadership and autonomy throughout the school. To develop teacher leadership, heads need to cultivate people’s capacity to practise their leadership, and to trust them to improve as they develop these skills and capacities. Wasley (1991) found that teachers need to participate in the process of deciding on what roles they wish to take over, and must then feel supported by the school’s managers in doing so. Gunter (2005) also indicates how teacher leadership can be challenging and how it is implicated with organisational goals and hierarchical practices: Teacher leadership is “the activity and actions that leaders in their role take in order to meet organisational goals. Teachers as leaders are positioned by hierarchy, and as organisational leaders they replicate that hierarchy” (p. 29). Some such practices may be antithetical to more productive teacher learning.

Finally, supporting staff through processes of labour- and time-intensive management by allocating time to devote to these processes is another factor of the principal’s vision related to the concept of
productive leadership (Niesche & Keddie, 2011). One of the characteristics of productive leadership is dispersing commitment within the school. This means productive leadership is exercised by many staff members in schools, not only run by the principal. In other words, staff members should be involved in making decisions democratically and given the opportunity to take a lead on what needs to be done to obtain the school’s specific goals, leading to school improvement.

### 2.3.1 Leadership-for-teacher-learning within and beyond schools: The role of teacher learning

Teacher leadership is most evident when teachers, or groups of teachers, have commitment to providing high quality education for students not only in their classrooms and their schools but also between schools, and even within the broader educational community (Lingard et al., 2003). Thus, increasing and cultivating teachers’ expertise and capacity of pedagogy both within and beyond individual schools to other school settings is a necessity – an integral part of education reform.

Such learning is sometimes conceptualised as teacher professional development or ‘PD’. In these instances, ‘PD’ is not just a program of activities, lectures or workshops implemented by teachers at the beginning of each semester, or at other specific times during the school year or just “an abstract, individualistic undertaking – something which happens inside teachers’ heads – in response to a variety of department, bureaucratic, school or teacher-instigated initiatives” (Hardy, 2012, p. 1). In seeking to ‘reclaim’ the term, Hardy (2012) argues that ‘PD’ is a multi-faceted, reflexive social practice related to the involvement of individuals and groups in making decisions actively within the specific social settings where they live and work. Day and Sachs (2004) have a broad understanding of what they describe as continuing professional development (CPD), and argue that “continuing professional development (CPD) is a term used to describe all the activities in which teachers engage during the course of a career which are designed to enhance their work” (p. 3).

Hardy (2012) affirms that teacher learning understood broadly is increasingly regarded as a vital task for the renewal and reform of national education systems in a global context of pressure for improved educational outcomes. Knight (2002) also identified the necessity of an expansive version of CPD, and explained that “continuing professional development is needed because initial teacher education cannot contain all of the propositional knowledge that is needed and certainly not that procedural, ‘how to’ knowledge which grows in practice” (p. 230). Hardy (2012) highlighted how national governments support teachers’ learning as a way of promoting quality teaching and subsequent student learning.

Hayes et al. (2004) have also argued that teacher learning which cultivates “teacher professional communities” and “learning organisations” are helpful in focusing on schools as learning places.
They affirm “productive leadership, then, supports the development of schools as communities focused on learning by mobilising professional learning communities and aligning their practices with the development and support of productive pedagogies” (p. 522). Indeed, the concept of “professional learning communities” enjoyed support in some of its earlier iterations, such as DuFour and Eaker (1998) characterisation of such communities as an environment fostering mutual cooperation, emotional support, personal growth, and collaboration. The concept of professional learning communities has continued to enjoy a privileged place in relation to teachers’ learning in recent times (Martin, Hargreaves, and Ebooks (2014); DuFour (2010); Wiseman, Arroyo, and Richter (2012); Stoll (2011); Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, and Thomas (2006); Stoll and Louis (2007); Roberta, Gina, and Kathryn (2012); Mulford (2007)).

Since the mid 1990s, however, the term professional learning community has been expressed by researchers and applied not only to professional groups within schools, usually referring to teachers, but to broader groups of members who learn from different schools (Hardy, 2012). While traditional conceptions of professional learning communities referred exclusively to teachers and school leaders in schools, later iterations broaden the term to involve support staff, the broader community, learning networks of schools and learning communities in the world of school leaders (Stoll, 2011; Stoll et al., 2006; Stoll & Louis, 2007). Similarly, Harris and Jones (2010) mention the impact of professional learning communities within, between and across schools.

However, it is also necessary to recognise that concepts such as these have the potential to operate as technologies of control; professional learning communities may also be easily adopted as a strategy for promoting management goals. Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009) reveal many of the tensions around how teacher learning (what they refer to as ‘professional development’) is currently undertaken, and how issues of accountability can challenge more learning-oriented logics. Mockler (2015) takes up some of these concerns about performance further in her critique of the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership Performance and Development Framework which sought to address multiple demands around development and teacher appraisal simultaneously. Whilst flagging how more performance-related discourses could threaten teacher professionalism and learning embedded within the enactment of such processes, because of the strong influence of accountability practices and processes, there is also evidence of how the approach constitutes a means for teacher professional learning. However, there is a need to remain vigilant about actual teacher professional learning, in practice, if such learning opportunities are to be maximised.
Consequently, more productive forms of leadership for teacher learning need to be open to the nature of the goals they seek to attain, and how they seek to do so. Such forms of leadership for teacher learning support teachers to promote productive pedagogies. These characteristics consist of:

- a commitment to leadership dispersal which supports the spread of leadership practices and collaborative decision-making processes in building common vision and purposes;
- supportive social relationships within the school, between staff (teachers and others) and students;
- “hands on knowledge” about how educational theory translates into strategic action and is aligned with community concerns and relationships outside of the school;
- a focus on pedagogy in which leadership in a school is focused on improving student learning outcomes and learning within the school as a whole;
- support for the development of a culture of care which encourages teacher professional risk taking; and
- a focus on structures and strategies in which leadership focuses on developing organisational processes that facilitate the smooth running of the school (Hayes et al., 2004, p. 524).

According to Muijs and Harris (2003), it is necessary for heads to foster teachers’ continuous learning by providing them with resources and time for such learning, and support to make the notion of teacher leadership relevant. It is these changes that make many heads become facilitators instead of top-down managers. It is argued that the level of formal and informal teacher leadership in a school proves teachers’ capacity as well as leadership (Silins & Mulford, 2002). Indeed, it is argued there are several dimensions of teacher leadership that are closely related to ongoing teacher learning that require support and development (Harris & Muijs, 2005, p. 65):

- continuing to teach and to improve individual teaching proficiency and skill;
- organising and leading peer review of teaching practices;
- providing curriculum development knowledge;
- participating in school-level decision-making;
- leading in-service training and staff development activities;
- engaging other teachers in collaborative action planning, reflection and research.

However, again, how such dimensions are actually enacted in practice, including in different cultural contexts, is an area for ongoing research.
2.4 English Language Learning

Given the importance of English language learning in the context of the leading-for-teacher-learning practices in the province and two schools in the research, it is necessary to provide insights into the nature of English language learning practices more broadly. This section elaborates the notion of English language learning, particularly in the context of post-colonial settings, such as Vietnam.

2.4.1 The Dominance and Complexity of English Language Learning

English occupies a privileged position within many educational discourses in Vietnam, but also in other developing country contexts. Such cultural and linguistic hegemony reflects broader concerns about the cultural politics of English language, and how this politics has a significant impact upon policy, as well as the teaching and learning of English more broadly, and its implementation as a medium of instruction. In broad terms, this focus on English as a lingua franca is a product of particular cultural practices including how various forms of historical, economic, social, political and cultural structures influence the language, and types of language, that come to dominate. Even as it is recognised that the academic movement around the notion of English as a lingua franca is contested (O’Reagan, 2014), in relation to English, it is also the case that there are multiple pressures and support for engagement with particular kinds of English, particularly idealised conceptions of English communication. The support for English is also expressed in endorsement of knowledge of dominant forms of cultural competence in English, achievement on systemic programs such as IELTS, opportunities to study abroad to cultivate forms of what are construed as ‘native-like’ ability, and forms of examinations that prioritise various forms of grammatical proficiency (Holmes & Dervin, 2016).

While English as an international language exists in a variety of formats, and while it might be considered to be a form that exists beyond some sort of ‘primary’ or principal form of English, there is also evidence of English acting as a form of language that has detrimental effects upon language and culture. That is, as Phan Le Ha (2005) indicates, ‘when the native speaker norms are in contact with the norms of other speakers of English, it is often the case that the former are used to make judgements against the latter’ (p. 34). The result is the dominance of some forms of English over others.

Tupas and Rubdy (2015) refer to ‘unequal Englishes’ to try to capture the plurality of forms of English that are not accorded the same status as more dominant conceptions. They argue that to foreground the positionality of speakers of English from particular ‘Inner Circle’ countries (especially the UK and US) is to marginalise the actual majority of speakers of the language. But
the danger has been that in the effort to better capture the actual multiplicity of forms of English, we are in danger of glossing over how some characterisations of English dominate others. The field of linguistic practices is a very unequal space. Even as more pluricentric versions of English have been advocated, as part of a process of recognising various ‘World Englishes’, conceptions of these World Englishes have also been critiqued for reinforcing hierarchical notions of English language, with unitary conceptions of World Englishes themselves serving to marginalise alternative conceptions arising through, for example, regional and class differences (Tupas & Rubdy, 2015). The multi/plural turn has also been challenged as feeding into more individualistic conceptions of language learning with its neoliberal overtones, and as not adequately contesting racism (Kubota, 2015).

Pennycook (1994) highlights this domination more broadly through describing how English threatens other languages by the way it marginalises other forms of communication. Even as it is the ‘language of opposition’ (p. 262), English is simultaneously part of broader processes of imperialism, particularly when ‘standard’ forms of English are considered superior to the multiplicity of forms of actually-existing Englishes. Indeed, English is intricately imbricated with processes and discourses of colonialism; as Pennycook (1998) put it in relation to the history of the teaching of English, ‘English is both the language that will apparently bestow civilisation, knowledge and wealth on people, and at the same time is the language in which they are racially defined’ (p. 4). English as a colonial language continues to exert influence even as its effects may not be readily recognised. Phillipson (1992; 2009) refers to ‘linguistic imperialism’ to foreground how these processes of domination are enacted, including how language and economic interests intersect:

Linguistic imperialism presupposes an overarching structure of asymmetrical, unequal exchange, where language dominance dovetails with economic, political and other types of dominance. It entails unequal resource allocation and communicative rights between people defined in terms of their competence in specific languages, with unequal benefits as a result, in a system that legitimates and naturalises such exploitation (Phillipson, 2009, p. 2).

This dominance of English is evident in how English education is intimately associated with the economy. This focus upon more economic logics is also evident in how the learning of English is construed within the university sector in dominant English speaking countries. English and English speaking courses (particularly TESOL) are projected outward as a vehicle for access to new forms of international engagement and understanding. However, as Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha (2014) reveal, English education is also a signifier of increased marketisation of education, as English language courses are constructed as a vehicle for cultivating a ‘desiring’ subject on the part of students – students who want to study English, including in English-speaking countries. In this way,
international education programs in particular are treated as vehicles for delivering economic outcomes, and this is particularly so in countries such as Australia where concerns about reduced funding to universities from government have been seen as being able to be addressed by attracting more international students. The result is the dominance of more economic logics over more fundamental educational outcomes, and of English language education as central to this process.

Also focusing upon the economisation of education, Widin (2015) expresses concern about who actually benefits from the spread of English language education in developing country contexts. Rather than the ‘recipients’ of English language education, it appears that there are a host of other beneficiaries around the provision of these services. This includes government departments, aid agencies and universities. Drawing upon Bourdieu’s concepts, Widin (2015) explores the way in which different actors benefit in different ways from the continued spread of English language education via various projects in developing country contexts. More broadly, Widin (2015) also elaborates how these beneficiaries include Australian universities, striving as they are to develop new markets within which to ‘export’ their educational ‘products’, both in relation to supporting various projects within specific countries, as well as seeking to further develop the market for international students studying in Australia.

2.5 Research in the Vietnamese Context

While there is an emergent literature relating to schooling in Vietnam, there seems to be limited research on the area of the intersection between leadership and teacher learning in the Vietnamese context. In one of the relatively few pieces of research on teacher learning in the Vietnamese context, Thanh Vo and Mai Nguyen (2009) discuss how a critical friends group for English as a Foreign Language was productive of enhanced learning. Their research, like much of the research in schools in Vietnamese contexts, pertained specifically to English as a Foreign Language.

There appears to be more of a focus upon language education policy in Vietnam (H. T. M. Nguyen, 2011), and language policy for foreign language teaching in Vietnam, particularly at the primary level (Hoa & Tuan, 2007; H. T. M. Nguyen, 2011; Tuan & Hoa, 2007). There is also a considerable body of research focused upon the higher education level (Harman, Hayden, & Pham, 2010; L. T. Tran, 2014; T. T. Tran, 2014; Trung & Swierczek, 2009), including Le Ha (2014) research into Humanities and TESOL teachers’ insights into how issues of equality are not central to how notions of learner-centred education are construed in Asian and western universities. The work by L. T. Tran (2014) is focused on higher education in Vietnam in the global knowledge economy. The authors of individual chapters discuss different issues, including higher and tertiary education in Vietnam, curriculum, pedagogy, or foreign language policy. Similarly, higher education in Vietnam
is also the focus in the book by Harman et al. (2010). There is also scholarly research related to the development of skills in higher education in Vietnam (Tran, 2013), the marketisation of higher education in Vietnam (Nguyen, Nilson, & MacKinnon, 2010), notions of “market socialism” (Itoh, 2012), and globalisation and higher education (T. K. Q. Nguyen, 2011). T. K. A. Dang, Nguyen, and Le (2013) took Vietnam as an example to argue the impacts of globalisation on EFL teacher education through English as a medium of instruction, while X. T. Dang, Nicholas, and Lewis (2012) report the factors impacting ubiquitous learning based on language teachers’ perspectives.

Given the significance of English language learning more broadly in Vietnam, and its cogency within the thesis in particular, the next section focuses specifically upon English language learning in Vietnam. While some of the discussion about English language learning pertains to university settings in Vietnam, many of the concerns about how to respond to English language learning in the Vietnamese context are common across educational contexts, and pertain to the place of English in Vietnam more broadly, including in secondary schooling settings.

2.5.1 English Language Learning in Vietnam

In the case of teaching English, and Vietnamese teachers’ efforts to teach foreign languages in Vietnamese classrooms, several issues of note are evident that have implications for the learning of teachers, and the leading of such learning. Pham Hoa Hiep (2007) refers to the nature and value of communicative language teaching in Vietnam, drawing upon university teachers’ beliefs about such learning in Vietnam. Pham Hoa Hiep (2007) reveals that ongoing discussion and debate with fellow teachers and also students, and also support of policy makers and various teacher education courses, can assist teachers to improve their capacity to teach. To learn a language effectively, learners need to develop ‘communicative competence’ – the capacity to utilise language effectively and appropriately within a particular social context. However, this is challenging in practice given that students outside western contexts, such as Vietnam, do not operate in an environment in which English is seen as immediately necessary. Also, as Pham Hoa Hiep (2007) notes, large class sizes, and the extent to which ‘authentic’ classroom activities are actually ‘authentic’ to a Vietnamese context, make it difficult to effect improved language learning. As with participants in Pham Hoa Hiep’s (2007) research, teachers in the schools presented in the research in this thesis found it difficult to apply techniques (such as group work, role play, collaborative dialogue focused on project work) to the learning of English. Teachers were hesitant about the extent to which they were genuinely encouraging communicative competence. The focus upon examinations was part of the challenge, particularly with their emphasis upon more technical rather than communicative competence. Teachers wanting to retain authority in the classroom, and perceptions of student motivation as low, also inhibited more engaged communicative practices in classrooms.
Challenges of recognition and valuing of Vietnamese teachers of English by other teacher in the Vietnamese context are also apparent. Again, within a tertiary context, but also arguably relevant to the teaching of English in schooling settings, Ngoc Ba Doan (2016) reveals how English language teachers have prejudicial views about non-native speaker English Language Teacher professionals, and the extent to which they believe they should employ them over native English speakers. Non-native speakers are seen as not as competent as teachers of English, even if they have undertaken relevant training, and possess relevant and officially recognised qualifications, and have knowledge and experience. The belief in the value of native speakers of English – the ‘native speaker mindset’ – is reinforced, as is a belief that non-native speakers’ ‘language stops progressing to the level of the NS [native speaker] proficiency and hence become ‘defective’ second language users’ (p. 2).

The potential colonising effects of English upon other cultural contexts is also recognised as a challenge in teaching English in Vietnam. Pham Hoa Hiep (2006b) highlights some of the ethical and pedagogic concerns for ESL/EFL teachers in cultural contexts where norms in relation to native speaking are dominant, including how English potentially displaces other languages, and contributes to class-based disparities. Dominant linguistic and cultural norms are established by native speakers, and there is an assumption that such norms should be held as the standard by which all other forms of English communication and interaction should be judged (Phan Le Ha, 2005). As Phan Le Ha (2005) argues, there are different forms of English within a broader ‘family of Englishes’; more significantly, ‘the Englishes in this family seem to enjoy a fiercely hierarchical relation, in which some members play the dominant role trying to “support” and at the same time “bullying” their weaker yet vulnerable “sisters” and “brothers”’ (p. 245).

There is also some research exploring Vietnamese students’ experiences as research higher degree students, including in Australia. Hannah Soong, Ly Thi Tran and Pham Hoa Hiep’s (2015) experiences of becoming doctoral students in Australian settings also resonated with my own experiences. Through processes of autobiography, Hannah Soong et al. (2015) flag the challenges and dynamics that attend learning in a western context (Australia), and becoming an intercultural doctoral student. The multiple identities generated through the doctoral research process reveal how such experiences cultivate flexible dispositions on the part of those involved, and the capacity to develop a reflexive sense of self as an intercultural learner. Such flexibilities are encouraged by the student-supervisory relationship, and the challenges that attend different expectations about how this should operate. I experienced these challenges through my own PhD studies, as my advisors and I worked to understand one another, and to overcome misunderstandings.
In relation to teacher learning more generally, Pham Hoa Hiep (2001) reveals how a lack of opportunity, and teachers’ work pressures, make it very difficult to engage in substantive professional learning practices in relation to English. On top of this, and reflecting Vietnam’s geopolitical history, older more experienced language teachers may be able and used to teaching Russian, but struggle to teach English.

In relation to teachers’ research as a vehicle for their own learning, Pham Hoa Hiep (2006a) also refers to how English language teachers relate to the need to conduct research. While on the one hand, they espouse the value in doing so as a vehicle to inform their own learning, Pham Hoa Hiep (2006a) also reveals how this is perceived as challenging. Teachers in tertiary settings describe themselves as interested in undertaking research, particularly research that relates to their everyday work as teachers. However, they struggle to do so because of perceptions that research is not necessarily valued within their institutions, a lack of training and research skills, lack of time to conduct research, and relatively few opportunities to disseminate findings.

Relatedly, Cham Thuy Ha’s (2013) research into a ‘community of practice professional development’ approach amongst EFL teachers at a teacher’s college in north-eastern Vietnam provides insights into what were perceived as the benefits of such an approach. This included the development of mutual engagement, a shared experience, and collective repertoire of practices as teachers engaged with one another over the 8 weeks of the program organised in the Foreign Language Department. Teachers, administrators and professional learning facilitators (teachers with facilitation skills within the Department) were all important in fostering and orchestrating teachers’ involvement in the community of practice. This included how both newer and older teachers were seen to learn from one another. As a predominantly English speaking environment (materials/resources were provided in English; discussions were in English; experiences were shared in English), there was also evidence of how teachers considered this community of practice as something akin to a more authentic language environment (even as, at times, participants mentioned that Vietnamese was also used if difficulties arose). At least in part, this seems to contrast with some of the challenges of teachers in tertiary settings revealed by Pham Hoa Hiep (2007), such as concerns about the opportunity to engage in more ‘authentic’ English speaking environments. Through its consistent application and encouragement of the use of English in written and oral communication, the community of practice in Cham Thuy Ha’s (2013) research was at least partially responsive to the development of such environments.

It is also important to acknowledge the multiple ways in which English is actually spoken in different contexts, and how there is an increased push towards more English as an International
Language (EIL). In the Vietnamese context, this is evident in the recognition of the need for greater awareness of the multiplicity of cultures within which English is spoken, and how understandings of English should not be simply limited to dominant cultural contexts in which English is spoken (particularly British and American cultural contexts). Ngoc Ba Doan (2014) revealed how lecturers working with students studying to become teachers encouraged not simply British and/or American cultural knowledge in relation to English, but also how English is spoken in other Asian cultural contexts, and the different ‘ways of thinking’ associated with that use. The learning focused upon was much more hybridised in orientation.

The tensions but also opportunities around English language learning and different forms of English are also captured by Phan Le Ha’s (2005) analysis of the complexity of identity formation amongst Vietnamese teachers of English. Drawing upon the metaphor of ‘daughter-in-law-of-a-hundred-families’, Phan Le Ha (2005) tries to capture how teachers of English seek to be responsive to multiple audiences and pressures, and how the subsequent tensions play out in the complex and conflicted identity positions of teachers as they do so. This includes a sense of teachers as desirable because of their capacity to teach English, and particularly if they have had exposure to western opportunities to learn English in western countries, such as Australia. At the same time, there are also pressures upon teachers in Vietnam to uphold traditions of morality, but also a recognition that learning in other contexts opens up new understandings about such ‘right living’. Learning English was also valued for what were perceived as the economic benefits of doing so, even as some teachers were suspicious of English as part of a broader set of western influences.

In this way, it is clear how English occupies an ambivalent position within the Vietnamese context, and how different conceptions of the nature and value of English are promoted. There is also evidence of how English can serve as a language of domination, even as it is construed as a valued form of capital. The field of English language learning is very much contested – both more broadly, and in relation to the Vietnamese context.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided insights into the nature of leadership and teacher learning practices more generally, and how these are practised in complex ways in relation to one another, within and beyond individual school settings. The chapter commenced with an overview of different conceptions of leadership, highlighting the nature of various trait, situational, transformational, and distributed forms of leadership. This formed the foundation for an account of more “instructional” and “productive” leadership practices as these pertained to students’ learning. This, in turn, led into consideration of the importance of teachers’ learning more generally, and as an important part of the
leadership practices to be enacted to help support such student learning. Given the significance of English language learning in Vietnam, the chapter concluded with a brief account of the nature of English language learning in postcolonial contexts more broadly, and in relation to Vietnam in particular. While there is a relative lack of research into leadership for teacher learning practices in the Vietnamese schooling context, the research into educational settings (including higher education settings) in Vietnam, and relating to English language learning, is pertinent to the nature of the leading-for-teacher learning practices more broadly, as described in the thesis. The next chapter, Chapter 3 provides an overview of the theoretical resources informing the research.
Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework: Using Bourdieu to Understand Practice

3.0 Introduction

This research explores leadership practices in relation to teachers’ learning, as a part of teachers’ work in Thao Anh Province, Vietnam, and particularly two ‘exemplary’ school sites within the province. The work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu provides very useful thinking tools for theorising leading-for-teacher-learning practices (Lingard & Christie, 2003), specifically his work on field, habitus and capital. This thesis extends this theorising to consider leadership practices in relation to teachers’ learning in the Vietnamese context, including in relation to English language learning.

Bourdieu’s key concepts are closely interrelated, and their meanings are only completely realised in relation to each other (Lingard et al., 2003). In their research on leadership practices, Lingard and Christie (2003) highlight how habitus refers to the person of the leader in terms of not only traits, character and personal influence, but also specific social structures and embodied dispositions, while field refers to the context of leadership, as a structured social space with its own properties and power relations. These overlap and interrelate with economic, power, political and other fields. However, while these concepts do not exist in isolation in practice, it is heuristically useful to delineate them separately, so as to better understand their inter-related nature. The next sections focus upon Bourdieu’s key concepts of field, habitus and capital.

3.1 Bourdieu’s Thinking Tools

3.1.1 Fields

Central to Bourdieu’s theory of the social and of social practices is the inter-relation between his concepts of fields, habitus, and forms of capital. Field is defined by Bourdieu (1998a) as follows:

A field is a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies. (Bourdieu, 1998a, pp. 40-41)

For Bourdieu, activities occurring in society help to constitute fields (Lingard et al., 2003, p. 64). The social spaces within which activities and practices take place are considered as fields. There are various fields such as the economic field, the political field, the fields of cultural production (the
artistic field, literary field, scientific field, etc.), and the educational field. Fields have similarities, but also differences, namely autonomy as Lingard and Christie (2003) remark:

Fields have their own structures, interests and preferences; their own “rules of the game”; their own agents, differentially constituted; their own power struggles. It is in relation to particular fields that the habitus becomes active. Socially marked interests, agents and power relationships constitute fields, and an individual’s habitus may be more or less well adapted to the demands of a particular field. There is a plurality of fields, thus a plurality of logics, a plurality of commonplace ideas, and a plurality of habitus. (p. 324)

Thomson (2008, 2014) explains, according to Bourdieu’s point of view, that the game that occurs in social spaces or fields is competitive and the participants are various social agents who apply different strategies to maintain or improve their position in fields. However, different from a carefully prepared football field, a social field is not standardised, and players who begin with particular forms of capital can derive more benefits from the beginning than others, thanks to the field in which they operate. Then they take their capital advantage to accumulate more and advance further. In other words, fields are differently constituted according to the circumstances of actors within them, and fields have their own characteristics and rules.

Bourdieu (1990a) argues that fields are social sites in which actors – influenced by particular social dispositions developed over time, the habitus – are involved with one another in a process of contest over capital forms which collectively shape the field. Lingard et al. (2003, p. 63) argue habitus changes from time to time and place to place. It can change endlessly according to changes in social trajectories which influence individuals and developments and changes in various fields. A certain habitus may not fit a field as fields change or agents can change fields. Habitus and field have a complex relationship and there are considerable debates about its adequacy as a conceptual response to the structure/agency conundrum (Thomson, 2010).

Social fields never remain static because of the individual and collective habitus which constitute and are constituted by them, and which, in turn, are constructed through agents’ positions within particular fields (Hardy & Lingard, 2008). Hardy and Lingard (2008) define habitus as “a social product, a specific embodiment and set of dispositions, dependent upon particular cultural characteristics and modes of transmission” (p. 64). Similarly, Thomson (2008, p. 70) states that “a social field is not fixed, and it is possible to trace the history of its specific shape, operations and the range of knowledge required to maintain it and adapt it. To do so is to understand how change happens within a field.”
3.1.2 Habitus

Habitus “is central to Bourdieu’s distinctive sociological approach, “field theory”, and philosophy of practice, and key to his originality and his contribution to social science” (Maton, 2008, p. 49). Bourdieu utilises his thinking tool of habitus to explain entry into, and “playing” within the game. He defines habitus as a set of common patterns of behaviour and ways of seeing the world, planning ahead, considered outcomes or consequences, directing and regulating individuals’ activities in different situations:

The habitus, as the system of dispositions to a certain practice, is an objective basis for regular modes of behaviour, and thus for the regularity of modes of practice, and if practices can be predicted (here, the punishment that follows a certain crime), this is because the effects of the habitus is that agents who are equipped with it will behave in a certain way in certain circumstances. (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 77)

The habitus is influenced by the conditions within which it develops. Bourdieu (1990b) states “as an acquired system of generative schemes, the habitus makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production—and only those” (p. 55). Similarly, Maton (2008, p. 50) describes habitus as follows:

Habitus is a concept that orients our ways of constructing objects of study, highlighting issues of significance and providing a means of thinking relationally about those issues. Its principal contribution is thus to shape our habitus, to produce a sociological gaze by helping to transform our ways of seeing the social world. [Emphasis in original]

Habitus involves attitudes and dispositions, so it does not have a material existence in itself in the real world (Moore, 2008, 2014). It does, however, have very real effects, and is very much a product of influence of particular circumstances.

Maton (2008, 2014) makes it clear that habitus is structured by one’s past and present contexts; for instance, family upbringing and educational experiences. It is also structuring, which means one’s habitus helps to shape one’s present and future practices. It is a structuring structure as it helps to shape practices and perceptions of practices, and it is also already structured by the particular experiences which people have already had. As Bourdieu (1984) argues:

The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organises practices and perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organises the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalisation of the division into social classes. Each class condition is defined, simultaneously, by its intrinsic properties and by the relational properties, which it derives from its position in the system of class conditions, which is also a system of differences, differential positions, i.e., by everything which distinguishes it from what it is not and especially from everything it is opposed to; social identity is defined and asserted through difference. (1984, pp. 170-172)
Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) also explain habitus as a structuring and structured structure and clarify it in the following definition.

It is a *structure* in that it is systematically ordered rather than random or unpatterned. And it is *structuring* in that it simultaneously produces the effects of such a structure. This structure is composed of a system of dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 53). Therefore, the habitus is structured by conditions of existence and generates practices, beliefs, perceptions, feelings and so on appropriate with its own structure:

This is Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, which addresses how social agents operate in ways that are compatible with their social situations. Habitus thus refers to the acquired, socially-constituted dispositions of social agents, to the classificatory principles they use, and the organising principles of the actions that they undertake without conscious planning. Habitus, then, as the subjective incorporation or internalisation of social structure, has the effect of making the social world seem natural and its practices “taken for granted”. (Lingard & Christie, 2003, p. 320)

In *Practical reason: On the theory of action*, Bourdieu (1998b) takes a worker as an example to illustrate habitus. The worker’s habitus is different from his boss’s habitus in terms of daily activities (what and how to eat and to play in their free time) and points of view, for example, how they think and how they express their opinions.

Simply put, habitus indicates how we think, feel, treat, do, and act (Maton, 2008, 2014). It impacts our ways of embodying our history, bringing this history into our present contexts, and how we select certain ways to carry out actions instead of others. This is a dynamic and ongoing process that we are engaged in to make history, influenced by our conditions and experiences. In *Outline of a theory of practice*, Bourdieu (1977) argues for the importance of understanding history as influencing habitus:

> In short, the habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history. The system of dispositions – a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles, an internal law relaying the continuous exercise of the law of external necessities (irreducible to immediate conjunctural constraints) – is the principle of the continuity and regularity which objectivism discern in the social world without being able to give them a rational basis. (1977, p. 82)

The habitus is constitutive of the broader social circumstances, the field, within which it is developed, and which it reflects. Such experiences are misrecognised as inherently socially arbitrary practices that are a ‘natural’ part of what is considered the norm in specific contexts (Bourdieu, 1977; Deer, 2008). These ‘doxic’ practices are part of the ‘practical reasoning’ as expressed by particular groups and individuals in relation to their understanding of the world (Bourdieu, 1990b).
Such doxa are a reflection of the cultivation of the habitus within specific fields, of the cogency of the influence of the field upon the habitus.

Nevertheless, and at the same time, habitus is also subject to change. On one hand, it is transformed by reinforcing embodied structures of expectation. On the other hand, change occurs as the habitus finds itself in circumstances that challenge taken-for-granted assumptions. This includes fields in which it is not readily recognised, or in which it does not recognise the logics of practice at play. The habitus can be shaped by contradiction, pressure and various forms of instability. Under such circumstances, those experiences that are simply ‘taken for granted’, as reflecting the doxa, come into question.

3.1.3 Capital

Capital can be understood as the *energy*, or the impetus of the development of a field through time. Bourdieu (1986) remarks “capital is accumulated labour in its materialised form or its incorporated, embodied form, which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour” (p. 241).

Bourdieu (1990b) argues that capital is a kind of “energy of social physics” that can exist in various forms and under certain conditions and that can be converted from one form into another (p. 122). Capital in action is the enactment of the principle of the field. It is the realisation of specific forms of power in general.

Capital can present itself in three basic forms: economic, cultural and social. Economic capital is what is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights. Cultural capital constitutes particular forms of knowledge, preferences, language, and may exist in the form of educational qualifications. Social capital refers to the variety of associations and relationships that people have, and that constitute the particular places and spaces in which they live and work (Bourdieu, 1986).

Cultural capital can exist in three states: the *embodied* state, the *objectified* state, and the *institutionalised* state (Bourdieu, 1986). First, an *embodied* state refers to the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body. The ensemble of nourished dispositions are internalised by the individual through socialisation and make schemes of appreciation and understanding (Swartz, 1997). Swartz explains the accrual of cultural capital of this state is necessary to start in early childhood and requires “pedagogical action”, which means the investment of time by family members, or hired professionals to sensitise the child to cultural distinctions (1997, p. 76). Second, cultural capital exists in an *objectified* form which refers to cultural goods or objects such as books,
instruments, machinery, and so on, that require specialised cultural abilities to use or understand. Third, cultural capital exists in the *institutionalised* state referring to a form of objectification. By this Bourdieu means the educational credential system. Bourdieu highlights the importance and the necessity of development of education systems in advanced societies. The institutionalised state is seen through academic or educational qualifications and credentials. “It confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243).

When capital is recognised as powerful and legitimate, it becomes symbolic. Different fields also have different symbolic capital and social agents (whether individuals, groups or institutions) possess various amounts of capital, and also capital of different structures or values (Lingard & Christie, 2003, p. 66).

Symbolic capital is a form of honour, esteem and reputation – the most precious form of accumulation in a society. In its traditional form, it may relate to familial structures and relations. This enables people to take advantage of their circumstances to reproduce their place in society:

> Thus we see that symbolic capital, which in the form of the prestige and renown attached to a family and a name is readily convertible back into economic capital, is perhaps the most valuable form of accumulation in a society in which the severity of the climate (the major work – ploughing and harvesting – having to be done in a very short space of time) and the limited technical resources (harvesting is done with the sickle) demand collective labour. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 179)

However, Bourdieu also emphasised that “symbolic capital is any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognise it, to give it value” (2010, p. 47). That is, symbolic capital refers to things which stand for all of the other forms of capital and can be “exchanged” in other fields.

### 3.2 Applications of Pierre Bourdieu’s Theory, including to this Research

This thesis will explore the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning by drawing upon these concepts. The thesis seeks to reveal the nature of these practices, the habitus of teachers and formal school leaders involved, and related District and Ministry personnel, the capitals accrued as part of this process, and whether and how these capitals contribute towards improved teacher learning. Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts of field, habitus and capitals will be applied to better understand the nature of these practices.

Field and habitus are relational structures. Both fields and habitus change and develop through time, so their relations are also ongoing and dynamic. This research explores efforts to meet the
requirements of education reform as it pertains to modern-day Vietnam. One of the most critical factors to give impetus to school improvement is how the habitus shifts in relation to the fields and subfields with which it is associated. This means changes in teachers’ ways of thinking, working, teaching, testing and assessing students, and their ways of learning as well. For example, to participate in the game of educational practices, an examination aimed at evaluating teachers’ capacity for English language teaching, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), was organised by the end of October 2012 by Thao Anh Department of Education and Training (DOET) and Da Nang University of Foreign Languages. The purpose of these tests is to ensure teachers of English have a plan to update and improve their knowledge, meeting the requirements of CEFR. Teachers have to spend much time learning on their own, seeking and reading materials, new and appropriate methods of learning, and preparing well for the examination. Teaching and learning is a dynamic and developing process. Therefore, to satisfy the demands of the society, teachers always try to innovate their methods of teaching, taking the initiative, doing research on their subjects and exchanging ideas, experiences, learning and working together, deriving benefits from colleagues and experienced teachers, and so on. Teachers undertake self-study topics and train on their own continuously by seeking and reading a variety of material sources, then doing research on a specific topic, presenting it in front of the group or department to learn from each other. Working out the problems faced in the teaching process, sharing experiences, observing colleagues’ lectures, learning and working together are effective ways of developing expertise continuously. Through such practices, and over time, what could be understood as schooling as a field “creates” new dispositions amongst teachers, just as it is simultaneously created by these teachers. In other words, the particular social circumstances within which teachers are located, fields, constitute teachers’ habitus, and vice versa. And teachers’ changed dispositions contribute to field development. They contribute their part to improving student outcomes and building their schools to be high quality schools.

More broadly, and in relation to the educational leadership literature that draws upon Bourdieu and pertains to schools, Lingard et al. (2003) have commented: “There is very little work in the educational leadership literature that utilises Bourdieu as a theoretical resource” (p. 60). Nevertheless, there have been some efforts to engage with Bourdieu’s theorising in this field. In broad terms, and referring to what he describes as ‘a theory of school leadership practice’, Eacott (2013) draws upon Bourdieu to argue for a conception of educational leadership as a social construct within a field of contested practices. From a normative position, Eacott (2013) also argues leadership is rare and is itself a marker of distinction. However, more significantly in relation to the research presented here, he does not undertake empirical research in making his case, referring
primarily to educational leadership as a research enterprise. In the UK context, Thomson (2005) sets the scene for the contestation that attends practices within what she describes as the education field. This includes how policies during the Thatcher era were able to disrupt more dominant bureaucratic relations by simultaneously decentralising responsibility to schools (e.g. for staffing and finances), and recentralising (overall power) to the state itself. This in turn led to increased emphasis upon testing, school hierarchies and increased uniformity around accountability. Most significantly in relation to leadership studies, Thomson’s (2010) application of these knowledges about different position-taking on the part of principals in relation to policy pressures for increased devolution of responsibility but without the sort of overall power over decision-making they desire, reveals a complex field of relations in which principals seek out autonomy at the same time as this autonomy is contained. The strengths of Thomson’s work (2010) is that she provides important insights into the contested logics that characterise the field of schooling practices, and the dispositions of headteachers/principals so disposed to work in this field. However, her work is largely limited to more positional conceptions of leadership, with a strong emphasis upon the principalship itself. Also, while some of Thomson’s (2008, 2014) reflections on fields more generally might be expected to provide some insights into leadership practices, given her considerable work in the area of leadership, this is not the case, as she reflects upon the nature of fields more broadly, various metaphors to understand the concept of fields (football field, force fields in science), research into the education field, and limitations of field theory.

In spite of the lack of application of Bourdieu’s concepts to the relations between leadership and teacher learning, leading-for-teacher-learning can provide important resources in relation to teachers’ learning within schools. Such practices may contribute to facilitating whole school plans for change, participation in a broad range of educational activities outside the school, such as membership in professional activities or workshops, teacher union committees, research projects, studying for higher degrees, and so on. However, reflecting processes of contestation in practice, they may also be problematic in their intent, and the research presented here seeks to explore some of these complexities.

3.2.1 Analytical Approach: Applying Bourdieu to the Research

As a theoretically-informed empirical approach, the research involves analysing the nature of practices of leading-for-teacher-learning practices by drawing upon Bourdieu’s ‘thinking tools’ (Bourdieu in Wacquant, 1989) of field, habitus and capital to help make sense of specific practices. In very broad terms, this entails elaborating the nature of the relations between individual actions and broader social structures. More specifically, it involves outlining the nature of the particular social spaces – ‘fields’ – within which individuals and groups enact practices, and the nature of the
dominant characteristics – ‘habitus’ – developed as a result of exposure to particular fields. At the same time, it also involves identifying the dominant resources – ‘capitals’ (Bourdieu, 1986) – that come to dominate specific fields, and which those who occupy fields seek to accumulate for ‘distinctive’ advantage (Bourdieu, 1984).

In relation to the research presented, this involves delineating the nature of various practices of facilitating/leading teachers’ learning. This includes identifying and elaborating what is described as the ‘field of leading-for-teacher-learning’. This field is characterised by specific practices, which are influenced by the policy push (from what might be understood as the ‘field of policy and politics’) for particular kinds of teacher learning in schools (the ‘schooling field’), including in relation to English language learning. An outline and analysis of key policies is also undertaken (see Chapter 5) as part of the process of identifying the principal practices – the ‘logics’ – that come to characterise the field of leading-for-teacher-learning. And the push for English language learning is itself a product of the influence of a broader economic field within which English is a particularly valued capital, as a means of international communication. This analytical process also involves identifying those practices that dominate the field, and those that are less evident.

This process also necessarily entails identifying the propensity to behave in particular ways – the ‘habitus’ – of those who occupy the field of leading-for-teacher-learning, and the nature of the dispositions people develop as part of enacting these behaviours. In order to overcome simplistic dualities of structure and agency, this process also entails recognising the simultaneous influence of the field of leading-for-teacher-learning upon the development of particular proclivities, or ‘dispositions’ of those involved, and how the habitus is itself also capable of change. Such an approach recognises the habitus as ‘habituated’, even as it simultaneously shifts and changes. The latter occurs as individuals adopt a more reflexive stance as they seek to recognise and perhaps confront their particular circumstances (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Such recognition provides resources for potentially contesting more dominant logics within the field.

The field of leading-for-teacher-learning is clearly heavily influenced by the particular resources – ‘capitals’ – associated with English language learning. English is construed as a valued and valuable capital for enabling Vietnamese business and government personnel to interact in a context in which broader ‘global’ processes of neoliberal economic growth and development are becoming more dominant. English is constituted as the currency/capital of exchange for such interactions, and education is seen as a particularly important vehicle for cultivating students/future citizens’ ability to learn English in order to participate in these broader economic relations, including on a global scale/beyond Vietnam. Consequently, the research seeks to make sense of how the various capitals
– particularly English, and English language learning – are made sense of amongst both those who seek to facilitate/lead teachers’ learning, and those to whom such efforts are directed, all within what is described as the field of leading-for-teacher-learning.

The following diagram serves as a heuristic to summarise the analytical approach. The diagram reveals how the field of leading-for-teacher-learning lies at the intersection of the economic field, the broader field of power (policy and politics), and the schooling field, and how key logics are associated with English language learning.

**Figure 3.1. The field of Leading-for-Teacher-Learning – a space of relations between the schooling field, the economic field, and the field of policy and politics.**

### 3.3 Limitations of Bourdieu’s Theory

Even as Bourdieu’s concepts are rich, and have been developed over an extended period of time, and in relation to deep empirical research in multiple contexts, it is also recognised that there are several limitations to Bourdieu’s theory that should be acknowledged.

In his overview of various critiques of Bourdieu’s work, Robbins (2005) refers to how Bourdieu’s concepts (e.g. habitus, cultural capital) have been criticised since their inception, and since the earliest readings of his work. This includes what Robbins (2005) refers to as ‘the imprecise formulation of concepts’ (p. 181), and the extent to which they have been developed without
adequate reference to the empirical data to which they relate. As a result, they are construed as ‘empirically untestable’ (p. 181). In relation to the notion of the habitus, for example, Jenkins (2002) asks ‘[w]hat exactly is the habitus? … How can individuals, social classes (groups) and fields all, in some way, “have” distinctive and characteristic habituses’ (p. 93). Jenkins (2002) concedes that notions of the habitus might have some currency in relation to individual characteristics, but he sees it as ‘a wholly implausible attribute of collective or abstract social entities’ (p. 93). Similarly, and even as he advocates a more ‘dispositional’ reading of Bourdieu’s work, Brubaker (2005), drawing upon his earlier critiques (Brubaker, 1985) critiques what he sees as the impreciseness of Bourdieu’s theorising. This includes how habitus is productive of a certain taken-for-grantedness about practice amongst those engaged in it. However, he asks, how is it possible to manage the tension between the accumulation of understanding enabled by a shared habitus, and to simultaneously critique this habitus, given the automaticity that attends its development? Foregrounding the ‘slipperiness’ of Bourdieu’s synthesis across the structural and the agentic, Alexander (2005) refers to the ‘oxymoron of “unconscious strategy”’ (p. 235) to capture his unease at Bourdieu’s efforts to come up with a theory of practical action that is understood as both a product of an objectively understood habitus (as conditioned by its circumstances), and as the product of a rational thought. Somehow Alexander (2005) argues, ‘strategisation, which is omnipresent, proceeds largely in an unconscious way’ (p. 237).

Similarly, in what he describes as ‘the failed synthesis of Pierre Bourdieu’ (p. 233), Alexander (2005) is also critical of how Bourdieu’s key concepts do not admit of alternative approaches and foci, always and everywhere reducing practice to various forms of economic exchanges. In relation to concepts of habitus and strategy (and field), Alexander (2005) claims Bourdieu not only construes practice from a more structuralist standpoint, whilst denying doing so, but also deploys notions of ‘strategy’ as a form of rational calculation, even as he argues such strategising as ‘unconscious’. Connell (2007) is similarly critical of Bourdieu’s attempts to develop all-encompassing concepts to try to explain the social world. He argues that in his efforts to move beyond various forms of ‘objectivist’ and ‘subjectivist’ reasoning, Bourdieu sought to develop a conceptual apparatus that could account for both individual actions and the broader social structures that exert influence on actions, without reifying either position. The development of such ‘encompassing’ approaches has also led to critiques of him as introducing various ‘tensions’ into his work. For example, through Bourdieu’s efforts to elaborate a notion of habitus as focused on the universal goal of accumulating various forms of capital, he actually seeks to adopt a more objectivist approach than he is admitting, given that, as Dreyfus and Rabinow (1993) argue, such understanding can only be accessed via more interpretivist approaches. Such a stance reflects a
long-standing criticism of Bourdieu’s approach, including in relation to education, that there remains a deeply deterministic aspect to the nature of social practice, that practices are largely reproductive of the broader structures within which they are enacted. This was the criticism levelled at Reproduction and Education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), and The Inheritors (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) with what were seen as their deeply deterministic overtones. This is also a reflection of what Rawolle and Lingard (2013) describe as the way educational theories at this time (1970s) also construed education ‘as a major site of change and reform of broader social institutions’ (p. 120).

Jenkins (2002) also provides summaries of different researchers’ objections to the applicability of Bourdieu’s research in other cultural contexts (e.g. Gorder (1980) in relation to research on schooling in French and Anglo settings). Connell (2007) argues that in spite of his critique of such ‘universal’ social laws, Bourdieu still seeks to develop a conceptual apparatus that lays claim to being applicable across contexts: ‘His theoretical toolkit is intended to work anywhere and everywhere’ (Connell, 2007, p. 40). Bourdieu’s work also attracts criticism because of issues of reception in new contexts. Postone, Li Puma and Calhoun (1993) gesture to how the process of translation across time and in different cultural contexts to where the work was originally undertaken, has also led to a fragmented understanding of Bourdieu’s work. Unlike in the French context where his work was unified under a broad umbrella described as the ‘human sciences’, the tendency to treat some aspects of his work as relevant to specific fields of anthropology, sociology, philosophy and education in other cultural (especially Anglo-American) contexts, has led to a diminution of application of his ideas understood more holistically.

At the same time, there have also been criticisms of Bourdieu’s applicability in relation to time. Such criticisms of time are most obvious in relation to the extent to which Bourdieu’s theorising accounts adequately for processes of social change. Lash (1993), for example, refers to the need to ‘rework’ Bourdieu’s cultural economic model to take account of broader processes of social change, and how such a stance challenges criticisms of ‘idealism, relativism and elitism’ (p. 194) of Bourdieu’s approach in this regard.

Even as these limitations are evident, it is also important to note how many of the criticisms that attend Bourdieu’s work are also a product of different rates of translation of his work into English. Even as he was being criticised, for example, for how his research into education focused too narrowly on the reproductive aspects of schooling, he was already undertaking further research in
response to potential criticisms that he himself recognised and acknowledged in earlier work (Robbins, 2005).

### 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided insights into Bourdieu’s key thinking tools of field, habitus and capital, as a precursor to using these concepts to better understand teachers’ and other educators’ practices of leading-for-teacher-learning – the focus of the analysis chapters. The chapter argues that these concepts are closely interrelated and that their meanings can only be completely realised in relation to each other. The chapter has also provided insights into how Bourdieu’s concepts will be applied to the research presented in the thesis, including details about the analytical approach to be undertaken. An account of the criticisms and limitations of Bourdieu’s theorising is also provided. The next chapter outlines the methods and methodology, and includes the research design, research sites, participants, data collection instruments, data management and analysis, limitations of the research, ethical clearance, and concludes with the experiences and challenges during the researcher’s experiences of leading-for-teacher-learning as a teacher of English and then a PhD student.
Chapter 4. Research Methods and Methodology

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I explain the methods and methodological considerations informing the research. The chapter provides an overview of the methods used, and the methodological approach taken to analyse the data using Bourdieu’s concepts of field, habitus and capital, and a discussion of the limitations and insights arising from the process of collecting data. It also includes an account of applications of Bourdieu’s theorising in ‘southern’ contexts (Connell, 2007), such as Vietnam. The chapter concludes with my own challenges and experiences of leading-for-teacher-learning as a teacher of English and then as a PhD student.

4.1 Research Design

The research design used in this project was based on qualitative methods and involved using interviews, observations and document analysis to collect data. A broad, case study approach was adopted to develop understanding of individual, group, organisational, political, social and relevant phenomena (Yin, 2009) – in this case, in relation to facilitating teachers’ learning. Yin (2014) summarises that this method permits researchers to identify meaningful characteristics of real-life issues, such as a series of occurrences in life, small group ways of behaving, organisational and managerial processes; in the data presented, this relates to specific practices of leading-for-teacher-learning. The case study enables researchers to access a number of complex social units including multiple variables of potential significance in getting to know the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). Exploring real-life contexts and choosing information-rich cases for in depth research helps to identify a great deal about important issues. Case studies can involve single-case approaches, multiple-case studies, cross-cases, comparative case studies, or multisite or multiscase studies, which are conducted using more than one case (Merriam, 1998); in relation to the latter, Merriam (1998) explains “this type of study involves collecting and analysing data from several cases and can be distinguished from the single case study that may have subunits or subcases embedded within (such as students within a school)” (p. 40).

The research presented in the thesis involves investigating the ways in which teachers’ learning was facilitated in a single district in central Vietnam, and particularly in two specific academically-oriented school sites. The research included investigating facilitation practices undertaken by district personnel, as such practices were important for making sense of the practices of ‘leading-for-teacher-learning’ that occurred in the two schools. The two schools were accountable to the
district office, and the district office was responsible for supporting educational and administrative practices within the two schools.

To this end, after Yin (2014), the research adopts a single case study design, focused on the nature of the leading-for-teacher-learning practices associated with these schools, and in relation to leading-for-teacher-learning practices pertinent to the schools at the province level. It is also recognised that the ‘unit of analysis’, and the boundaries of the case may be difficult to define (Yin, 2014); this is certainly the case in relation to practices of leading-for-teacher-learning, with its multiple manifestations across different schools, and how provincial practices also constitute important influences within schools. Consequently, to keep the project manageable, the research focuses most attention upon two school sites construed as academically ‘exemplary’. In the Vietnamese context, this relates to schools in which there are: consistently high proportions of students achieving high academic results in more ‘academic’ subjects (with a strong emphasis upon mathematics, science and foreign languages (particularly English)); high proportions of students achieving access to university upon graduation, and; a high proportion of students and teachers achieving excellent results in competitive national and regional assessments in academic subjects. This focus on exemplary schooling practices in the province (as expressed in these two schools) represents ‘a specific, real-life ‘case’ to be a concrete manifestation of the abstract’ (Yin, 2014, p. 34), where the abstract is the nature of practices of leading-for-teacher-learning.

Consequently, the research entails a single case study of practices of leading-for-teacher-learning in relation to exemplary schooling practices as these transpired in the province, and particularly in relation to these two schools. Informed by Bourdieu’s theory of practice, the research seeks to reveal the nature of these leadership practices, the habitus of teachers and formal school leaders involved, the capitals accrued as part of this process, and the nature of the teacher learning practices that resulted.

### 4.2 Research Sites

The research seeks to investigate, in detail, the nature of leading-for-teacher-learning practices in one Vietnamese province, focused upon these practices in exemplary schooling settings in the province, under current policy conditions. This required close analysis of a small number of instances of such practices, in relation to two ‘exemplary’ schooling sites. To this end, the analysis focused largely upon the leading-for-teacher-learning practices associated with one district in central Vietnam, and, in particular, two exemplary schools within this district. These schools were identified as displaying particular kinds of leading-for-teacher-learning practices, and several of these practices involved district staff. Both schools were public high schools, but ‘School A’ was a
high school for mainstream students and ‘School B’ a high school for ‘gifted’ students. ‘Gifted’ students are recognised as such for their success on academic performance in the curriculum, the very high proportion of their students who excel on university entrance exams, and for their ability to succeed in attaining prizes for academic performance in the region, province and country. These prizes are very prestigious in Vietnamese schooling settings, and a source of great pride. Such ‘gifted’ students must maintain their results over time, if they are to retain a place in their school.

These two schools were also selected because as schools that were recognised as ‘successful’ (on students’ examination scores, the high proportion of students who were successful on university entrance exams, and the allocation of various academic ‘prizes’ – awards for academic excellence in each subject area – to students, and teachers), they were considered to be sites in which it might be anticipated that various practices of leading-for-teacher-learning might be able to be recognised more readily than in schools not exhibiting such characteristics. They were also chosen because of their distinctive nature, and for what this distinctiveness might reveal about the nature of such practices in such sites. These were not ‘ordinary’ schools (see Maguire, Perryman, Ball & Braun, 2011), and so it was thought that they would provide interesting insights into the nature of practices of leading-for-teacher-learning, given Vietnam’s attention to improving its social, economic and political positioning vis-à-vis other countries in the world, and its support for education as key to this success (Government of Vietnam, 2012c). These schools could be construed as central to that vision.

The schools were located in a single province in the central regions of Vietnam, and the schools were located in two distinct wards/sub-districts. The way in which many of the leading-for-teacher-learning practices in the schools involved interactions with personnel from the district office also meant that it quickly became apparent that it was also necessary to seek insights of personnel from the district office as part of any exploration of such leading-for-teacher-learning practices.

Also, because some of the teachers in the schools were also members of various on-line forums which informed their practice, information from these forums, where relevant to the leading-for-teacher-learning practices being discussed, were also drawn upon.

4.2.1 Contextual Factors Informing the Research: Policy and Practice

These leading-for-teacher-learning practices were also heavily influenced by the contextual circumstances in which they were enacted – particularly specific educational policy initiatives, including in relation to teaching English, and particular schooling settings. The next section firstly
focuses upon the policy context in which such practices unfolded, and then the two schooling settings in which more ‘exemplary’ practices were considered to occur within the province.

4.2.1.1 The place of English, The Pilot English 10 Program, and other significant policies

A significant policy focus within Vietnam is centred around the teaching of English. English is seen as an international language of communication, playing a very important role in every field, including the economy, politics, tourism, and education. However, there are concerns that many high school graduates have not been able to use English effectively in communication and their further study. Therefore, English language learning has attracted much attention, and there are calls to reform the teaching and learning of English in Vietnam.

One of these reforms is the ‘Pilot English 10 Program’ for all levels in general education (from Grade 3 up to Grade 12). According to the policy 5209/ QĐ-BGDĐT: General education curriculum of pilot English at high school level (MOET, 2012c), this program provides students with skills to present their ideas and thoughts independently, confidently, and creatively in English. The program also aims to help students improve their thinking capacity in relation to global issues via English, and to apply the capital they acquire in other cultural and social settings. The Pilot English 10 Program was undertaken based on the teaching and learning foreign languages plan of National Foreign Languages Project 2020 (in the period 2008-2020) with various themes (topics) such as ‘Our lives’ (Family life, Healthy lifestyles, Entertainment), ‘Our society’ (Serving our communities, Inventions that have changed our lives, Gender and equality), ‘Our environment’ (Cultural diversity), ‘Our future’ (New ways to learn, Preserving the environment, Eco-tourism).

This Pilot Program seeks to enable students to enrich their vocabulary and develop their language skills and knowledge of other cultures in the world. The following chapters reveal how this initiative influenced the work of teachers and students in the two schools focused on in the research, and the province within which they were located.

In addition, the broader policy context within which the schools and province were undertaking their work also influenced educational practices. Five major policies had a significant impact upon teachers in the research. These policies also included explicit attention to the nature of foreign languages – particularly English. These are explained in more detail in the next chapter, and are referred to only briefly here to contextualise the data collection processes:

1. Curriculum reform 2000
2. National foreign language project 2020
3. Project to develop a system of high schools for gifted students in the period 2010-2020
4. **Strategy for educational development in the period 2011-2020**

5. **Resolution on fundamental and comprehensive reform in education and training (issued 4 November 2013)**

The first policy, *Curriculum reform 2000* refers to the reform in general education curriculum. It also involved reforming teaching and learning foreign languages, ICTs as well as education more broadly (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2000, p. 2).

The second policy, *National foreign language project 2020*, is about the comprehensive reform of the teaching and learning of foreign languages within the national education system in the period 2008-2020. In the context of opening up the economy to external businesses and countries to stimulate a more vibrant economy, foreign languages are seen as significant part of this process. As mentioned above, the Pilot English 10 Project was an important part of this initiative, and a key part of the enactment of the *National foreign language project 2020*.

The third policy is *Project to develop a system of high schools for gifted students in the period 2010-2020* (Decision 959/QD-TTg enacted by the Government on 24 June, 2010). This policy is seen as enabling ‘model’ schools that can be used by other ‘mainstream’ schools to develop and improve their teaching practices, including learning ‘best practices’ to improve students’ academic performance. As a school for ‘gifted’ students, one of the schools reported in the research, ‘School B’, was seen as an important stimulus for this policy initiative.

The fourth policy is *Strategy for educational development in period 2011-2020* (Decision 711/QD-TTg enacted by the Government on 13 June, 2012 – Decision on the approval of “The strategy for educational development in period 2011-2020”). This policy was designed to ensure Vietnam’s education system was contributing to the broader national goals of modernisation, industrialisation and international integration.

The fifth policy is the *Resolution on fundamental and comprehensive reform in education and training issued 2013*. The Resolution was a reflection of broader concerns about the quality and efficiency of the educational system more generally in Vietnam. This included concerns about transitions between educational phases (primary, secondary, tertiary), as well as the quality and number of teaching staff. This policy also gave voice to concerns about expenditure of funds in education as not fulfilling broader expectations and national goals.

In their entirety, these policies pointed to schooling as an arena for close scrutiny by the Vietnamese government, and that governments anticipated would act as a significant contributor to future economic growth and development. Schools for more ‘gifted’ students were seen as an important
part of this narrative. Furthermore, English language learning was recognised as an important contributor to this development, and schools as key to the improvement of students-as-future-citizens’ capacities in English.

4.2.2 The Two Schools’ Contexts

The two schools, School A and School B were selected specifically because they are exemplary schools. The former is a school for mainstream students and the latter is for gifted students. They are two of the most prestigious academic schools in the province of Thao Anh. This is according to results on the general academic curriculum, the proportion of students accepted to university, and attainment of competitive academic prizes in curriculum areas in the region, province and country. While undertaking a process of building and development, both schools have gained a reputation for their strong traditions of learning, the quality of education delivery, their administrative teams, the expertise and skills of teaching staff, student outcomes, and overall rankings. They have both been awarded a wide range of substantial titles by the State and the province. They both have a proud tradition, and have gained the Thao Anh people’s trust and respect. In this sense, they represent forms of ‘exemplary’ sites advocated by the Vietnamese government.

There are currently 51 high schools in the province, eight of which meet the national standard according to the Circular No 47/2012/TT-BGDDT (MOET, 2012a), and which focuses particularly on university entrance exam scores. It should be noted that the two schools selected are the first two out of these 51 high schools: School B was the first to achieve this title in 2007 and School A was the second in 2008. In 2012, School B was recognised and awarded this title again after a 5-year period, and in 2013, this title was awarded to School A for the second 5-year period. According to the rankings of the ICT Department of the Ministry of Education and Training in 2010, both schools were ranked in the top 200 high schools out of about 2,700 high schools in the country on the outcomes performed in university entrance exams.

Specifically, School A ranked in the top 200 schools in Vietnam on university entrance exam outcomes since 2008 (Principal, 2013a). School B was ranked one of the 30 best high schools in Vietnam (Principal, 2013b). In the years of 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013, School B ranked the 20th, 26th, 5th, and 10th respectively nationally on the outcomes performed in university entrance exams, and the rankings of the outcomes of the contests for gifted students at a national level in three years of 2008, 2009, and 2010 were 21, 11, and 26 respectively (Principal, 2013b). In addition, recently School A and School B were two out of three high schools that were selected by the provincial authorities as examples of high quality schools in the province, to serve as models for other schools.
in the province. As a result, they have become places where delegates visit and many schools come to for experience.

4.3 Participant Recruitment

The total number of participants in this project was 55, including two Principals, 12 administrative staff (i.e., four Deputy-Principals and eight Department Heads), 32 key teachers and teachers including 18 teachers at School A (6 teachers of English) and 14 teachers (6 teachers of English) at School B, nine officials from Thao Anh Department of Education and Training (Deputy-Director, General Education Division Manager, General Education Division Vice-Manager and an ELT Specialist, and six other subject specialists). Some (key) teachers and/or Department Heads from other high schools in the province who have been undertaking Pilot English 10 Program were also participants of this project by sharing their experiences via email system and publicly accessible forums, of which teachers at each of the schools were also members.

The insights of the participants outside the schools were also included where they helped to further contextualise and make sense of the leading-for-teacher-learning practices in relation to the two schools. Furthermore, because these teachers were all English language teachers, their insights helped to further contextualise leading-for-teacher-learning practices pertaining particularly to English language learning – an area of strong significance in relation to leading-for-teacher-learning practices more broadly.

The teachers outside the schools were recruited via the email system of teachers of English in the province. The English Specialist and General Education Division Vice-manager within the province wrote the initial email. In his email, he asked teachers of English who are undertaking the Pilot English 10 Program – as part of the teaching and learning foreign languages plan of National Foreign Languages Project 2020 – to give comments on their undertaking of this new program, especially difficulties/problems and solutions. These teachers were also asked to ask the other teachers of English in the province to participate in this forum/discussions by giving their opinions/suggestions/ways of handling situations arising in classes. Teachers were encouraged to share experiences through those exchanges. The purpose was to see how the teachers led their own teaching, led students to learn the new program, and led themselves and their colleagues for learning through such a challenging task. Data was collected from all of these teachers via email exchanges.

Table 4.1 The overview of participants
4.4 Data Collection Instruments

4.4.1 Interviews

Interviewing is the most common form of data collection in educational qualitative research (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2014). Flick (2007) recognises one of the dominant methods in qualitative research is interviews. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009), interviewing is a purposeful interaction which helps one person get information from another and is also a valuable way to allow researchers to find out important data they cannot obtain only by observation. Similarly, Perakyla and Ruusuvuori (2011, p. 529) remark that most qualitative research is based on interviews for a number of reasons. By using interviews, the researcher can access areas of real events and dispositions. Also, it is a very convenient way of overcoming distances both in time and in space; past events or faraway experiences can be studied by conducting interviews with those who participated in them.

In qualitative research, the samples are likely to be chosen deliberately; this is known as purposive sampling (Yin, 2011). The sample in this project was selected to provide insights into an instance of leading-for-teacher-learning associated with two schools which have been purposively selected (Yin, 2011), as well as associated district personnel whose work influenced the work and learning of teachers in these schools. The researcher studied the ‘leading-for-teacher-learning’ practices of DOET and school administrators, and teachers at two schools as they sought to develop teachers’ learning. Bourdieu’s key concepts of fields, habitus and capital were adopted to help make sense of these practices of leading-for-teacher-learning.

Semi-structured interviews with the administrative staff and teachers were undertaken to give insights into their understanding, levels, experience, professional learning and training, and leadership-for-teacher-learning. They were conducted in Vietnamese. An interview question guide was used as a prompt to direct the conversations towards the focus of the research inquiry. This kind of interview is a less structured alternative in which “either all of the questions are more
flexibly worded, or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions” (Merriam, 1998, p. 74).

### 4.4.2 Observations

Observations are a valuable way of collecting data; this is because what the researchers themselves witness and perceive is not influenced by what participants have said to them or what the writers of some documents might have expressed (Yin, 2011). Creswell (2012, p. 213) states “observation is the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site. As a form of data collection, observation has both advantages and disadvantages”. It gives the opportunity to record information as it takes place in a setting, to study real behaviour, and to study individuals who have difficulty expressing their ideas in their own words (e.g., preschool children). Regarding the disadvantages of observations, researchers will be restricted to the sites and contexts they can access easily and they may have difficulty developing rapport with individuals there. This takes place if the individuals are not used to formal research. Undertaking observations requires researchers to have good listening skills and the ability to pay careful attention to visual detail.

In this research, I mostly played the role of a non-participant observer. I visited the sites and took notes without becoming engaged in the activities of the participants, watching and recording the phenomenon under research. This role required less invasive access than a participant role, and the gatekeepers and individuals at the school sites were more comfortable with this situation. However, it is disadvantageous that researchers do not have a chance to expose themselves to experiences by participating actively, and the observations made might not be as richly understood as if researchers had participated in the activities.

Observations were conducted in schools. This included teachers working together, teacher workshops, more traditional ‘PD’ sessions, and professional activities and staff meetings. Also, field notes which consisted of shorthand notes during and immediately after the interviews were used to record what participants were expressing and had expressed through their non-verbal gestures. At the schools, I observed how teachers sought to improve their practice, and were helped to facilitate their learning and professional development through relevant staff or department/group meetings or activities held by the heads of the schools or departments/ groups. This included observations of mathematics teachers, who were being assisted by colleagues in the Foreign Languages Department to improve their English capacity, and ability to teach through English as a Medium of Instruction. Normally, professional issues and concerns were presented, discussed, exchanged and/or worked out. Teachers’ teaching performance was also observed. Specific skills
and teaching demonstrations in relation to behaviour, English as a Medium of Instruction, and techniques/ways/sources of teaching, were all observed to develop a better sense of the nature of teachers’ work, and how their learning was being facilitated/‘led’ by themselves and others.

In addition, I observed and was engaged in workshops organised by DOET. For example, one of those workshops was entitled ‘Making/composing tests for the Pilot English 10 Program according to Foreign Language Project 2020’. This workshop was considered important as a new program framework for English language learning was being introduced, which included different ways of testing students. Teachers felt they needed to improve their understanding of this framework. This workshop was held for about 48-50 teachers with the advanced English certificate (‘C1’ certificate). There, I observed that “teacher leaders are important sources of expertise and information” (Muijs & Harris, 2003, p. 439). Together with the English Language Teacher (ELT) Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager at DOET, the Foreign Languages Department Head from School B encouraged teachers to discuss and present their opinions, and assured the teachers if they had hesitations. Therefore, the participants felt better able to compose the tests for the Pilot English 10 Program through this workshop. During these observations, it was evident that the ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager at DOET and the Foreign Languages Department Head at School B both worked together, supporting teachers to discuss and share their ideas and experiences with one another to prepare for the pilot English program, specifically aspects relating to testing.

I also observed the exchanges between national and international dignitaries organised by DOET and School B at a local city hall. The participants were a number of teachers and students from School A, School B, and some other schools in the city. The interaction between teachers and a prominent maths professor as part of this process were considered significant vehicles for teachers’ learning by those involved.

In keeping with the need to ensure a reflexive position as a researcher (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), I acknowledge that I also worked previously as a teacher of English in a number of contexts in which these teachers worked – including both schools – and was also briefly involved in oral tests for the preliminary exam for Grade 10 students, and observed colleagues in a variety of contexts as their students undertook these tests. My colleagues and I played the role of examiners for two days. (In this oral test, students randomly selected a topic by chance. After preparing in a few minutes, they presented and were asked some situational questions.) Then I learnt my colleagues had undertaken the pilot English program when the Grade 10 curriculum started in School year 2013-2014. As I pondered about their teaching pilot program, I was very sympathetic.
to these teachers and their students who were experiencing difficulties because I had also experienced the undertaking of a number of pilot English programs. This involved the implementation of nine sets of new textbooks (for both the program for Natural Sciences and the program for Social Sciences), which were designed for three grades – 10, 11, and 12 – at high school level, plus other new sets of textbooks for the secondary program from Grades 6 to 9. I also faced a great number of challenges and invested much time and effort into these pilot programs. Fortunately, as one of the key teachers of English in the province, I was given good opportunities to develop social capital and embodied capital in the form of English capacity by engaging in, and learning from, foreign specialists and lecturers in English language in some programs such as the program to develop teachers of New Zealand (via the cooperation between Thao Anh Provincial People’s Committee and New Zealand); the project of Association of American businesses for the progress of Vietnamese education (BAVE); the Vietnam English teacher and trainer network project (VTTN) supported by Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training and British Council. I also attended many workshops organised by DOET and MOET, and others. I have derived many benefits and experiences from those various projects, so I gave feedback and advice to my colleagues of English.

Again teacher learning was construed as beneficial. I learnt much from my colleagues and various sources. My experiences during 15 years of teaching different programs of English, meant that I experienced and made considerable achievements. This habitus which had been formed over my teaching time created hesitations, worries, anxiety, concerns, and even discouragement and tiredness. This set of negative dispositions resulted from the pressures of experimenting with a new program. I had to invest much time and effort in my preparation for each of lesson plans, for each teaching procedure in class. I had to find out and perform creative teaching practices. I was not only hard-working, tired, and tense but also anxious about students’ outcomes as well as facing their parents’ doubts about the new programs. In this way, some of the challenges outlined in the research were similar to those I had experienced.

4.4.3 Documents

As well as interviews and observation, document analysis is a valuable source of information in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). This is the third major source of data in this kind of research (Merriam, 2009). This included documents concerning Vietnam’s education system and its development in general and teaching and administrative staff’s expertise and capacity for improvements. These documents included Law on Education, Resolutions of the National Party Congresses, Decisions, Circulars, Directions and Guidelines, Projects, Reports, School Regulations enacted by the National Assembly, the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Government of Vietnam,
MOET, Provincial authorities, DOET, and principals, or minutes from school staff meetings, professional meetings, teacher workshops, and other professional learning sessions.

In addition to the notes of decisions, circulars, strategies, projects and reports made by the Party, the government, and the Province, minutes from school staff meetings, professional meetings, workshops, and professional development sessions were also important sources of information about the nature of teachers’ learning practices, and how these were fostered/led. The minutes from each of these meetings/sessions recorded the main content of and opinions/ideas of participants during these events, and were often taken by teaching staff members acting as secretaries; this included for whole school meetings and department or smaller group (sub-department) meetings. The minutes were also kept as evidence of teachers working together, sharing experiences and discussing professional issues collaboratively. Therefore, I was able to develop an understanding of some of the key content of the meetings, workshops, and conference preparations without being there. I could not attend all meetings taking place at the same time, so made use of the minutes of subject departments discussing the new way of working in groups of teachers to prepare for and present their lesson performance. These kinds of documents also helped inform the observation instrument by providing an overview of some of the teacher learning activities in which teachers were involved.

There were also five key policies selected for analysis because they had a significant impact upon the nature of schooling practices in Vietnam at the time. This included teachers’ daily work, leadership practices, and learning, and also related to the place of English in education in Vietnam – an important priority area. These policies, therefore, helped constitute the field of leading-for-teacher-learning referred to in the analysis. Specifically, these policy documents were *Curriculum reform 2000; National foreign language project 2020; Project to develop a system of high schools for gifted students in the period 2010-2020; Strategy for educational development in the period 2011-2020; Resolution on fundamental and comprehensive reform in education and training (issued 4 November 2013).*

The policy *Curriculum reform 2000* was about the reform in general education curriculum, and affected all aspects of the curriculum in schools in Vietnam today. This policy also foregrounded foreign language learning in its support for “reforming the program for teaching and learning foreign languages… in general education schools” (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2000, p. 2).

The second policy, *National foreign language project 2020*, mentioned the comprehensive reform of the teaching and learning of foreign languages within the national education system in the period 2008-2020. This policy was chosen because it was particularly important for understanding the
place of English in relation to Vietnam’s education system, and because English language learning was a key priority of teachers in the research.

The third policy is *Project to develop a system of high schools for gifted students in the period 2010-2020* (Decision 959/QD-TTg enacted by the Government on 24 June, 2010). This document emphasised the importance of building and developing high schools for gifted students which will become a system of high quality institutions to meet national aspirations for educational excellence, and to enable this kind of high school to serve as a model of facilities, teaching staff and the organisation of education activities for other high schools for mainstream students. Consequently, this policy was seen as important because of the focus on the two ‘exemplary’ schools in the research, including one ‘gifted’ school. These gifted schools are seen as acting as potential models for all other schools, serving as a major stimulus for reform for schooling throughout Vietnam. Also, within this policy, teachers’ learning was seen as a necessity to achieve improved student outcomes.

The fourth policy is *Strategy for educational development in period 2011-2020* (Decision 711/QD-TTg enacted by the Government on 13 June, 2012 – Decision on the approval of “The Strategy for educational development in period 2011-2020”). This policy was also a broad-based initiative designed to foster educational improvement for the decade up to the end of 2020. Again, there was strong mention of the importance of foreign language learning (English), but also of the need for education to contribute to human resource development within the broader economy. This document was also important because it encouraged primary education for all, and education to the end of lower secondary for all students.

The fifth policy is the *Resolution on fundamental and comprehensive reform in education and training issued in November 2013*. This policy was the latest influential policy focused on Vietnam’s education system, from which other guidelines, plans and decisions (such as the other policy initiatives outlined above) were developed.

The policies and other documents mentioned above all formed an important part of the broader field of schooling practices within which leading-for-teacher learning was undertaken in the province, and specifically in the two schools mentioned in the research.

### 4.5 Data Management and Analysis

This section presents how the collected data was stored and analysed.
4.5.1 Data Management

This section is about how the interview audio files, interview transcripts, interview protocols, observation audio files, observation protocols, and documents were stored and kept confidentially. The audio and text records of the data collected from the two schools and DOET were stored in a confidential and systematic manner. For confidentiality, all the protocols, transcripts, computer files and folders, and paper folders were labelled with anonymised versions of names of the teachers, department heads, principals, subject specialists and other administrative officials to which they pertained.

Each source of data was noted, and the principal themes evident in each identified, so that they could be accessed easily when needed in both analysis and the write-up of the findings (Merriam, 2009). Materials were firstly organised by type; all interviews, all observations, all documents were collected together. Within each of these sources, and in light of the theorising and literature informing the analysis - Bourdieu’s theory of practice, and relevant literature on teacher leading, teacher learning and English language learning – key themes were identified within each source. From this point, different data snippets (from documents/policies, interview transcripts, observation notes) were then collated together in light of this theoretical and conceptual literature, and in light of the emerging key themes. These different themes were then further refined in light of further reviews of the different sources of data. In this way, the data management and analysis were iterative processes, involving going to and fro between the original data and analyses of the data. Finally, these refined themes were organised into the relevant analysis chapters, as presented in the thesis.

4.5.2 Data Analysis

The research focuses on leading-for-teacher-learning. The purpose is to outline the nature of leadership practices of teachers and administrators in relation to teacher learning, the habitus developed, the capitals accrued as part of this process, and whether and how these capitals contributed towards improved teacher learning. Thus, when dealing with the data, and after Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), the researcher implemented several necessary steps. Firstly, the researcher analysed the position of the field of leading-for-teacher-learning within and outside the individual school sites, in a broader context, connecting the field as a whole to the broader field of power, as evidenced particularly in relation to the government (including via various educational policies) and the economy. Secondly, the researcher analysed relations (differences) of practices of leading-for-teacher-learning within the field – and particularly in relation to subject departments and within, between, and outside these schools more broadly. Within schools, this was undertaken
by closely observing the practices that occurred in various meetings within subject departments and schools, and interviewing personnel involved about these practices to gain further insights into their practices. It also involved interviewing personnel outside schools, particularly district personnel from the district office, to gain a better understanding about how the work of personnel external to the schools contributed to the nature of the leading-for-teacher-learning practices that transpired in schools. Finally, the researcher analysed how habitus, or different systems of dispositions teachers have acquired by operating, functioning and regulating their activities, were adapted and related to the field of leading-for-teacher-learning. As part of this process, the researcher sought details of the nature of individual teachers’ leadership practices and those of principals and school administrators in relation to the nature of teacher learning, finding out similarities, differences, potentialities as well as problems teachers and administrators faced during the performance of leadership roles in relation to teacher learning. Also the research has revealed different forms of capitals considered to be valued resources to develop teachers’ skills and expertise, and their leadership role during this process of data analysis.

As outlined in Chapter 3 (see section 3.2.1 – ‘Analytical Approach: Applying Bourdieu to the Research’), the analysis of the data involved identifying the dominant logics that characterised what is described as the field of leading-for-teacher-learning. This involved identifying the nature of the logics of practice that characterised this field, and understanding these logics in light of relevant literature into the nature of leadership practices more generally, teachers’ learning, and English language learning. In relation to the field of leading-for-teacher-learning, this included how the broader economic field, and the field of power (in the form of various policies and politics) exerted influence. The influence of the economic field was evident in how broader processes of neoliberal governance have had an impact upon the field of schooling practices, including the facilitation/leading of teachers’ learning. This was evident in the way that schools were exhorted in national policies (see next Chapter for an elaboration of these specific policies) to understand schooling as establishing the foundations for continued and expanded economic growth, and of teachers’ learning as contributing to this. That is, the field of schooling practices was heavily influenced by more economic logics and more administrative/bureaucratic logics through the broader field of power (policy and politics). As part of this process, English language learning was identified in the research as being a particularly important area of interest.

Within a largely human capital approach to education, such identification construed English as a particularly valued capital. For this reason, the nature of English language learning was given considerable attention within the analysis, and identified as a particularly significant domain within which the leading/facilitation of teachers’ learning was fostered. The nature of the habitus of
teachers, school administrators and other educators involved in leading-for-teacher-learning was also elaborated to help make sense of the logics that characterised the field. This included more dominant logics, and how these came to exert strong influence upon the habitus. Such logics were not only evident in educators’ acceptance of such approaches and foci in relation to leading teachers’ learning, but also in those instances of resistance to more dominant logics within the field. Consequently, the analysis involved identifying processes of more overt contestation – in keeping with Bourdieu’s (1977; 1990b) theory of practice more broadly – even as there was also evidence of compliance on the part of teachers and other educators to the dominant logics within the field.

4.6 Limitations of the Research

The proposed research has several limitations. Theoretically, the research is potentially limited by its strong focus on a Bourdieuan analysis. Bourdieu’s thinking tools (Bourdieu in Wacquant (1989)) of field, habitus and capital are powerful resources for understanding the nature of the power relations that attend the leading-for-teacher-learning practices in the schools, region and province in the thesis. However, these concepts cannot make sense of the complexity of practice in all its variability.

Methodologically, the research presented here seeks to challenge this perspective by putting his concepts “to work” – to reveal the affordances and constraints of this approach – but it also does so in the knowledge that this work can also only reveal some of the intricacies of the power relations that characterise practices of leading-for-teacher-learning in Vietnam.

Furthermore, and in keeping with Bourdieu’s call to analyse the circumstances of the researcher as part of this process, my own position as a teacher in one of the schools means that I at times had difficulty accessing and conducting interviews with more senior officials. Besides, utilising information from the people in the two research sites with which I am familiar also has its disadvantages. I have certain detailed knowledge of the schools already, which probably makes participants, both Principals, Deputy-Principals and teachers, feel hesitant to elaborate information. They may assume that I know the answers to those ‘obvious’ questions (Bourdieu, 1999). A further consideration is collecting the data in one visit because of the cost of travelling to Vietnam from Australia. It was difficult due to the big holiday break of three months in the middle of the year in which it was conducted. This was because teachers were not present in the schools during the holiday period, and so had to be approached individually during their holidays for their perspectives. Some teachers could not be located during this time, and this limited the number of respondents in the research.
The research project utilised a case study design drawing upon insights from two schools, and associated district personnel. The total of 55 participants means the results will not reflect a broad picture of the role of leading-for-teacher-learning in improving teaching and learning in high schools in Vietnam. However, the research has revealed in-depth insights into teachers’ and administrators’ practices which complement more large-scale research approaches.

Bourdieu did not describe everything in the amount of detail it deserves. For example, while notions of patriarchy (*Masculine domination*) were embedded in Bourdieu’s ideas, this was not the principal focus of his attention. As in other contexts, in education in Vietnam nowadays, women comprise the larger proportion of the workforce of teachers, while men tend to dominate in the highest institutional positions. Lingard et al. (2003) argue that “Bourdieu regards the habitus itself as gendered… Since the habitus is itself formed in relation to masculine social order, Bourdieu argues, the habitus is itself sexually characterised” (p. 63). In addition, Connell (2007, p. 42) stated: “In a vivid passage, where Bourdieu is explaining how the *habitus* is built into the body, he describes the stances of the manly man (upright, alert, etc.) and the well-brought-up woman (stooped, eyes downcast, etc.)”. However, this does not capture the broader argument about education as a deeply gendered profession in Vietnam, as in many other countries. This is important, given the Vietnamese teaching workforce is highly feminised, with, for example, 77% of primary/elementary teachers in Vietnam being female (World Bank, 2016). This is also an issue in other countries, such as the United States, where 90% of elementary teachers are female (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010), but where gender is also described as a ‘disappearing focus’ in such settings (Galman & Mallozzi, 2012). That is, even as Bourdieu (2001) considered *Masculine domination* as a response to criticisms of his neglect of gender (Jenkins, 2002), other researchers have continued to find a need to augment Bourdieu’s concepts, which were not seen as addressing women’s lived experiences. For example, McCall (1992) makes the case for gender as a form of cultural capital – gendered capital – and how the case for a gendered habitus extends Bourdieu’s concept of capital. Similarly, Skeggs (1997) makes the case for ‘feminine cultural capital’ in her research into working class women’s experiences. In the Australian context, Huppatz and Goodwin (2013) explore how ‘horizontal’ (between occupations) and ‘vertical’ (within occupations) gender segregation plays out in the Australian workforce more generally.

It is also important to note the significance of context. There are important cultural differences between Western ideas around leadership and how it is perceived in schools in Vietnam. For example, most participants in my province think leadership is related to managers rather than teachers. In actual fact, there are different approaches to understanding leadership in Vietnam, but the kind of research I am looking at seems to be new. That is why I consciously took the time to
clearly explain the research to the participants before conducting the interviews, even as I acknowledge that such clarification is an important part of all good research. Explicitly acknowledging these differences is an important part of the research process.

Bourdieu’s concepts of field, habitus and capital are necessary to try to understand the broader field in which these practices are exercised, to understand the practices, the nature of teachers and administrators, their experiences, dispositions to behave in particular ways, and how the broader field influences what they are doing. The deployment of Bourdieu’s concepts is significant for trying to understand some of the complexities of teacher leadership for learning practices. It is understood, however, that the Vietnamese context is very different from the research sites within which Bourdieu’s work was undertaken. For example, in Vietnam there is not a strong tradition of critical scholarship – critique of policy and practice are relatively new areas of inquiry. Researchers apply approaches such as goal approaches, system approaches, historical approaches, capacity approaches, functional approaches, and so on. While it is useful to engage with Western models to understand and address concerns and issues in a Vietnamese context, it is also recognised that these ideas cannot encompass all aspects of Vietnamese culture and context. We can see how some of the concepts can be usefully applied, but also where there are limitations. In other words, my research is seeking to supplement current insights from a different perspective from a different cultural setting.

4.7 Bourdieu, Dominant Theory, and ‘Southern Contexts’

It is also recognised that northern theory (Connell, 2007) is dominant in social scientific research contexts, and that these northern theories are typically developed in the dominant universities in European and North American settings. These ideas are then “imported” into southern contexts, often developing nations of the south, and “applied” unproblematically. Again, in terms of the limitations of Bourdieu’s theory, I recognise that Bourdieu’s approach does not account for all aspects of practice. The Vietnamese schools, region and nation-state are a very different context from the French and Algerian villages, towns and cities where Bourdieu (1977; 1990b) undertook his empirical research.

As an example, Itoh (2012) refers to the significance of “market socialism” in socialist contexts. By this he means that the market is incorporated into a socialist economy, and ‘in contrast to a model of a totally planned socialist economy which seeks to eliminate the market’ (p. 200). Such an approach is notable for the way in which the market is explicitly incorporated into a more socialist economy. This is an active process, and not simply one left to chance, characterised by a more laissez faire approach, as is typical of more traditional liberal approaches to economic development. Such
concepts are not dealt with by Bourdieu, even as he does focus much attention upon the economic field (Bourdieu, 2005). Consequently, these ideas, for example, also need to be drawn upon to help make sense of the Vietnamese context, and particularly the local region and communities within which the schools are located.

Nevertheless, and at the same time, Bourdieu’s ideas have been taken up in other southern contexts, in a variety of ways. This section provides insights into the nature of applications of Bourdieu’s work in more southern contexts around the world (including various African states, Oceanic and Asian settings), and in relation to a variety of different academic disciplines. Analysis of varied empirical research in education and other fields and disciplines (e.g. sociology; art; urban and regional studies; education) reveal advantages of his approach, as well as shortcomings, and the need to draw upon other analytical resources (e.g. ethnography; grounded theory) in different contexts.

Cole and Lukose’ (2011) exploration of research into pan-African youths’ struggles to attain adulthood under constrained economic circumstances draws upon Karl Mannheim’s research into the adoptive, rejecting and transformational nature of generations, and Bourdieu’s understanding of practice as reflective of the interplay between actors as social agents, and the broader social, economic and cultural conditions that influence their actions. In negotiating economic uncertainty, civil unrest and consumer culture, Cole and Lukose (2011) provide insights into a range of different ways in which African youth accumulate and trade economic, cultural and social capital for different forms of products and experiences to acquire the symbolic capital of prestige associated with, particularly, European culture. The way in which young men and women use their bodies for warfare and sex in settings characterised by ongoing civil unrest also gestures towards the precariousness of life in these environments as these young people seek to ‘capitalise’ on their bodies. The result is a mix of old and new, as young people engage in various forms of cultural practices of exchange but in often complex and varied ways from the more traditional economic and conjugal (marital) relations than existed in the past.

In a Nigerian higher education context, Olakulehin and Singh (2013) explore how processes of institutionalising increased openness to increased access to the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) was limited by the National University Commission’s demands for the application of minimum academic requirements for entry to NOUN, even as the latter sought to enact a much more open and genuinely inclusive admissions policy, supported by the National government. In this way, as a new and non-traditional higher education institution seeking to increase higher education opportunities for all, NOUN possessed few economic resources and was operating in a
more marginal position within the field of higher education, and therefore unable to exercise increased agency vis-à-vis its stated admissions policy. The researchers flag the importance of increased tensions between logics of openness and access, as the inherent tensions within the field, as reflected in the higher education institute of NOUN, become more pronounced. Reflecting the value of a Bourdieuan approach, Olakulehin and Singh (2013) argue ‘Bourdieu’s social theoretical framework is suitable for analysis and design compared to extant theories of open and distance learning used to widen access’ (p. 37).

In the areas of health and education studies in Ethiopia, Fetene and Dimitriadis (2010) draw upon Bourdieu to understand the sexual health practices of Ethiopian youth, and how even though they have knowledge and understanding about AIDS/HIV, this does not necessarily lead to healthier decision-making. They reveal how decision-making is not so much associated with how people are encouraged to act in policy, but instead highlight the way in which young people actually make sense of their sexual health experiences, and how they are constructed in policy seeking to intervene in their practices. The researchers reveal how the policy field with its focus on increased education about AIDS/HIV is only sometimes congruent with the lived experiences, the habitus, of Ethiopian youth, and how the disconnect between the two presents a problem for policies seeking to actually intervene in Ethiopian youth’s sexual practices. Issues of gender inequality and cultural taboos around condom use constituted a habitus in discord with a policy field constituted by broader global discourses about the benefits of protective sexual practices. Bourdieu’s ‘thinking tools’ are construed as useful vehicles for challenging structure/agency binaries that do not attend adequately to how practices are actually constituted in the interplay between broader policy discourses and local practices.

Also in relation to the intersection between health and education studies, Kwenda’s (2009) research explores how AIDS-orphaned children in Zimbabwe constructed their sense of self in relation to recomposed family relations, and their schools and communities. Kwenda (2009) also deploys critical ethnographic approaches in conjunction with Bourdieu’s theorising of practice to reveal how AIDS-orphaned children navigate their changed circumstances. These children are revealed as deploying various strategies, such as seeking protection and accommodation in various Apostolic sect churches as a means of contesting the logics of witchcraft and supernatural evil that were seen to constitute the broader field of community and family relations. Kwenda (2009) revealed the mismatch of logics between the field of the home and the field of the school, with the latter associated with much greater criticism and judgement of these students, and a relative inability to contest the power dynamics at play within this field.
In a South African context, and in relation to the importance of ‘lived experience’ for anti-racist teaching practice/pedagogy, Cross and Naidoo (2012) draw upon Bourdieu to elaborate how what they describe as a ‘racist habitus’ might be challenged via particular kinds of ‘lived’ experiences. Such experiences are construed as necessary and capable of cultivating a ‘metanoia’ – transformation in understanding of the social world – that characterises a rupture/disequilibria that enables a critique/review of habitus. To assist with this work, Cross and Naidoo (2012) also draw upon Feuerstein’s theory of mediated learning experience to make sense of people’s experiences (Feuerstein and Feuerstein, 1991).

In the context of post-apartheid South Africa in more geographically grounded research into the area of urban and rural research, Bénit-Gbaffou and Katsaura (2014), draw upon Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘political capital’ and ‘double dealings’, finding the concepts useful for making sense of the work of community leaders as intervening between political and state institutions and local people in post-apartheid South Africa. The way in which such leaders are conflicted between addressing needs as perceived by their constituencies (local level), and broader political and party and state leaders (‘the top’), and the contradictory pressures between the two is usefully understood through Bourdieu’s notion of ‘double dealings’ (which necessitates fighting in both the political and social fields for their political survival in relation to other political representatives (political field) and in relation to maintaining their ability to remain as representatives in relation to those who have given their support within broader society).

Bourdieu has also been applied to language studies to understand the language and cultural practices of those from southern contexts working and living in both West African contexts and more dominant settings (Europe), and how the cultural interplay which results is imbricated with power relations. Adejunmobi (2004) provides insights into how language is key to these power relations, drawing upon Bourdieu’s (1991) insights into the nature of linguistic exchanges, including how such exchanges are ‘also economic exchange[s]’ (p. 66). However, in the context of Senegalese migrants working in other national contexts, Adejunmobi (2004) also reveals how Bourdieu’s (1984) sense of ‘distinction’ as associated with dominant cultural capital does not apply to such migrants, but how the ‘distinctiveness’ that characterises their practice may simply be indicative of a more mundane conception of ‘difference’. He also draws upon Michael Byram’s notion of intercultural communicative competence to make sense of these migrants’ understandings of their experiences, rather than relying upon Bourdieu alone. Even as Bourdieu provides a set of ideas and research experiences with which to think, these are not necessarily applicable in some sort of ‘direct’ manner in southern contexts, or on their own.
Moving to more Asian and Oceanic settings, in a Pasifika and Māori context, Fitzpatrick (2011) draws upon Bourdieu’s notions of capital and field in educational studies to reveal how Pasifika and Māori students’ decision to take Health and Physical Education (HPE) courses in New Zealand are influenced by the intersection of class, ethnicity, physicality and other social markers. Even as these students achieved sufficiently high results in HPE to gain access to university courses, they continue to be underrepresented in such courses. Furthermore, in the competition to maintain status amongst more elite institutions, these students are also disadvantaged by more elite schools’ promotion of the Cambridge International Exams rather than the National Certificate of Educational Achievement. The traditionally low status of these subjects in the field of education and schooling in New Zealand (and elsewhere), together with the way the Cambridge International Exams have been taken up by more elite institutions, ensures working class Pasifika and Māori students accumulate forms of capital that are not valued as much as their more privileged counterparts in more elite school settings. The result is a continued devaluing of Pasifika and Māori achievements in subjects such as HPE, even as they have been recognised within the NCEA system, and even as these students have achieved much greater success over time.

In the sociology of art, McCarthy (2013) draws upon field theory to understand the nature of relations to Maori art in art museums. The findings both confirm and deny Bourdieu’s (1995) contention about the social stratification of art, revealing that even as Maori art has become much more recognised in institutional settings, such as prominent museums and galleries, there continues to be a broader exclusion of a larger Maori audience. In this way, McCarthy (2013) both affirms the value of a Bourdieuan methodological approach, even as efforts to identify the distinctive and conflicting social practices that characterise his work also reveal how this distinctiveness has itself been contested by new patterns of participation amongst Maori museum and gallery visitors in particular.

In relation to the study of culinary practices, Morris (2013) finds Bourdieu useful for exploring why and how a recent focus on the simultaneous production of three distinctively Māori cookbooks may be understood as a challenge to Pākehā (European) cuisine in New Zealand. This capacity to influence the nature of the dominant cuisine is constituted as a strategy to modify the nature of the cultural capital that comes to be accorded recognition, prestige and influence. Morris (2013) sees this as part of strategising across broader relations in which Māori have been accorded increased power across multiple fields as part of a process of redressing past wrongs (particularly the dispossession of Māori through the Treaty of Waitangi). The development of such cookbooks is a reconversion strategy over what constitutes the dominant cultural capital within the field of cuisine,
working ‘to disturb the structures of the field of New Zealand cuisine’ (p. 215), seeking to challenge the dominance of Pākehā.

In a broader sociological inquiry into the social relations characterising the joint management by the state and the traditional Aboriginal owners of the Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory, Australia, Haynes (2013) draws upon Bourdieu’s concepts of field and habitus to help make sense of why state and traditional owners see one another as having more power than the other. Haynes (2013) argues joint management may be understood as both a single field, characterised by white and Aboriginal people having to work together in an effort to manage the park, and two distinct fields, characterised by differences in background, approach and social and cultural traditions for undertaking this management role. Specifically, Haynes (2013) seeks to ‘demonstrate how Bourdieu’s (e.g. 1977) theory of practice can be used to disentangle the park’s difficult sociality and to help explain the discontent and anomie that is so evident.’ (p. 196). The cultural capital of the traditional Aboriginal owners was seen to contrast with the ‘scientific’ capital of the white park staff, with the domination of the state (Bourdieu, 1998b) evident through the monopolisation of the Kakadu Board of Management meeting agenda, and the symbolic capital necessary to conduct these bureaucratic meetings. The result was continued tensions and unease as each group, drawing upon different forms of capital, treated the other with suspicion.

In the field of comparative education studies, and in relation to a wide-ranging study across Vietnamese, Nicaraguan and Eritrean contexts, Müller (2007) draws upon Bourdieu to explore how formal education can serve to foster various ‘strategy-generating’ practices as a counter to more discriminatory gender practices, thereby enabling women to achieve their goals. Drawing upon three revolutionary societies of Vietnam (since 1976), Nicaragua (1979–1990) and Eritrea (since 1991), Müller (2007) reveals how women in each context have been able to derive sufficient cultural capital from the formal education systems to achieve their aspirations; this was the case even in a context of increased militarisation in Eritrea, and increased focus upon economic development and efficiency in Vietnam. In this sense, the more agentic aspects of Bourdieu’s notion of ‘strategising’ was foregrounded as productive for understanding these educational practices.

Finally, some researchers are overtly positive about the capacity of Bourdieu’s theorising for researching ‘the other’ more broadly. Naidoo’s (2014) account of the validity of Bourdieu’s concepts and methodological approach, including reflexivity, when researching ‘the other’ provides insights into the value of his concepts and analytical approach within varied social settings. Specifically in relation to methodology, Naidoo (2014) argues in favour of the value of elaborating the power relations that attend any social practice, and that research should challenge taken-for-
granted assumptions as part of this process: ‘Methodologically, a relational method requires the systematic and multi-stepped investigation of the field of power in which the object of research lies. The object of research ought to be constructed as a theoretical problematic rather than as ‘given’ or on the basis of common sense.’ (p. 107).

Consequently, there are a plurality of approaches and arena within which Bourdieu’s concepts have been deployed to help make sense of social practices in more ‘southern contexts’, including in relation to educational settings such as schools. His methodological approach has been found useful, as well as needing to be augmented with concepts drawn from other research traditions.

4.8 Ethical Clearance

Ethical clearance for research was sought from the Ethical Review Committee of the School of Education, The University of Queensland (UQ) before conducting the research. After being granted ethical clearance, it was necessary for the researcher to ask the Director of the Provincial Department of Education and Training of Thao Anh Province for permission to access the research sites in Thao Anh Province, Vietnam, where data was collected. The researcher could not contact the principals of the two high schools in Thao Anh Province to ask for permission to collect data. The principals, teachers and system personnel involved were informed about the topic and purpose of the study and the procedures for collecting data and reporting the data as part of the process of seeking agreement of participants to be involved in the project. Teachers, principals and system personnel were then invited to participate in the research. Before each interview or observation, the participants were asked to sign a consent form indicating their agreement to be involved, and which advised that they could opt to no longer be involved in the research at any time, without penalty.

4.9 Situating the Researcher

4.9.1 My Professional Experience

Since 1986, I have worked in both of these schools, one of which – School A is the oldest of all high schools in the province. I undertook a number of responsibilities. Between 1996 and 2008, I worked at School A as a teacher of English, and was appointed to be Secretary of the school’s Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, and one of the Standing Members in Hoa Binh city’s Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, Thao Anh province. This role required me to cooperate to initiate, organise or carry out curricular, social activities or volunteer work, with a particular focus on activities to serve and improve students’ outcomes and young teachers’ quality of teaching and learning. To do this, I undertook research, observed teaching classes and provided comments as well as learnt interesting methods, set or followed good examples, helped teachers to learn on their
own and participate in the contests of excellent teachers at different levels, as well as other activities. I taught students English and how to be moral/good citizens. I also cooperated with divisions of Thao Anh Department of Education and Training (DOET) in building and implementing the strategies for developing education in the province, participating in workshops of pilot programs on curriculum and teaching method reform, then applying them to teaching. I was assigned to teach a number of pilot programs with five different sets of new textbooks (consisting of 15 new textbooks for both the standard set and the advanced set for English) since 1998. While teaching the pilot programs, I was asked to write reports on students’ results, and about the responses of students, parents, and colleagues.

In addition, I worked as one of the ten key teachers of English in the province, participating in workshops every Thursday for nearly one year run by DOET with Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA) teachers from New Zealand, before I did a Master’s course in Education Administration. During this time, we presented difficulties, disadvantages, experiences and advantages in teaching, in classrooms, exchanged ideas, found the solutions for common problems facing teachers, listened to and gained much knowledge of methodology, skills, and more from the VSA teachers and colleagues. Also, I helped run and teach English courses for Principals, Deputy-Principals, and administrative staff in provincial schools, supervised trainee teachers before they graduated from university every year, and taught English to advanced students who were well-prepared for the provincial and national contests. I often took part in organising and performing my teaching and lesson plans at the workshops, especially British Council’s workshops for teachers of English. I participated in many seminars, and workshops and then passed knowledge on to other colleagues. This included workshops to prepare Grade 12 students in the graduation exams; workshops on textbook reform organised by DOET and Oxford publisher; workshops for improving form teachers’ skills, etc. Additionally, I prepared for the provincial contest for excellent high school teachers held by DOET every two years (later changed to every four years). I was the only teacher of English in the province that was selected and included in the list of 20 teachers of the schools for gifted students and ELT Specialists from 63 provinces and big cities in the country to do a one-month training course in developing professionally in New Zealand by MOET in March 2013. This occurred under the Program for High School Education Development of Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training.

My time of teaching, learning and working at the two different schools has brought me many experiences, and knowledge of personnel and practices at each site. In keeping with Bourdieu’s (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) argument to be explicit about the nature of the relations attending the research process, including data collection, I acknowledge the importance of these relationships
during my data collection. Methodologically, this is important, as the relationships I already had were significant for being able to access teachers and other personnel (school administrators, especially deputies and principals) in the school who were both facilitating/leading the learning of teachers, or who were influenced by the efforts of others to lead teachers’ learning. For example, I was able to access the schools and their teachers more easily. Both they and I felt comfortable and confident to talk to, exchange ideas with, and learn from each other. Both administrators and teachers were willing to help me, so I was able to conduct the research at their convenience. They allowed me to meet them during break time, after class, in the evening, even at weekends. As my data collection period overlapped with a big summer holiday in Vietnam, I was able to make appointments with a number of participants during this time. They allowed me to meet with them in order to tell them about my research, and plan to undertake the interviews. The early months of the new School year was a busy time, especially at the School for gifted students, as there were many examinations and education activities taking place, so everyone was very busy at that time.

Prior to my data collection, I sent my participants the information on my research, an invitation to participate in interviews, and sought their approval for conducting my research. In fact, most of the teachers did not have time to prepare the answers, although some of them were worried and asked for the questions before the interview so that they could give me useful information. They said that my research was quite new and difficult, so at first they were confused, and hesitant to give answers, but after my explanation and encouragement, they felt less tense, understood more, and answered more confidently, according to their knowledge and experiences. The atmosphere became comfortable and natural.

However, at the same time, I also acknowledge that this ability to access these schools, and my intimate knowledge of practices in these schools, especially School B most recently, also influenced the sorts of questions I asked, and the extent to which I felt able to ask questions of my colleagues. My ‘insider’ status meant that I occupied a very specific position within the broader field of leading-for-teacher-learning – one in which I was privy to the intricacies of efforts to foster teachers’ learning, and some of the challenges that attended this work. This included recognition of the effects of increasing pressures and demands upon teachers in both schools, and a tendency to empathise strongly with teachers struggling to improve their practice. In relation to School B, in particular, where I will return upon completion of my PhD, I felt considerable anxiety about how to represent the findings, particularly the more challenging aspects of efforts to lead teachers’ learning. I was, after all, a member of the school community, and would return to the school community upon completion of the thesis. However, I also found Bourdieu’s (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) call to follow a three step process when seeking to analyse any given field (analysing the field in relation
to the field of power; identifying the particular logics that characterised the field, and; seeking to highlight the habitus of those occupying varying positions within the field) helpful for responding to my concerns about how I was representing the experiences of teachers from the two schools. Consequently, I endeavoured to analyse teachers’ practices in light of broader social relations that influenced their work, and how these relations influenced the development of their habitus, and how this in turn reflected the influence of ongoing power relations. This was not easy work, and I acknowledge that my insights are heavily influenced by my specific association with School A in the not-too-distant past (and where I worked until 2008), and my ongoing association with School B.

4.9.2 My International Experience in Doing PhD Program/ My PhD Reflective Experience

Social spaces or fields comprise different sites of accumulation and contestation over capitals which agents deploy to exert influence within the field. This certainly applies to my own example as I sought to acquire dominant forms of institutional capital through completing a PhD externally, in an Australian university. My prior success in research led to the accumulation of institutional capital in the form of high prizes in the contest for excellent teachers and undertaking teaching initiatives in Vietnam. A form of professional capital was also enabled as part of this process. Having taught a number of English pilot programs using new English textbooks and having worked with and learned from foreign specialists from New Zealand, and the British Council, my professional habitus was aspirational in orientation. My professional disposition was cultivated through my sustained work as a key teacher of English. A form of professional capital was also exercised through engagement in varied educational practices, including as Secretary of the School’s Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, a trainee supervisor, a trainer at training sessions, a key teacher, a form teacher. I was offered a full scholarship under the Overseas Training Project for Vietnamese government leaders and senior staff by State Budget (Program 165) to pursue a PhD programme on Human Resource Management at the University of Queensland, Australia.

The effort to study abroad came at a personal cost. As Lingard et al. (2003) discuss, leaders “persuade followers to sacrifice their own self-interests in favour of the interests of the organisation more broadly” (p. 57). My family and I had to sacrifice private feelings for my desire to pursue the PhD program as I realised the importance of undertaking more research into my area of expertise at an international level.

It is a great honour for me to study in Australia at the University of Queensland, because Australia is known as one of the countries which has a very advanced educational system in the world, and
the University of Queensland has been recently ranked in the top 3 universities in Australia and in the top 50 universities in the world (QS World Rankings, 2014). The School of Education, considered as part of the new Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, is one of the best-performing in the University and was ranked the best in Australia in terms of research. In fact, the School provides a variety of ways of studying as well as a wide range of programs in education, and offers new and interesting opportunities for students in learning and research. In addition, its aims are to explore and share knowledge regarding national and international educational development policies and practices. Moreover, the University of Queensland has a good relationship with the Government of Vietnam and has plans to help develop Vietnamese education. Therefore, participating in the Doctoral program at UQ is a good opportunity for me to enhance my knowledge of educational leadership and of teacher learning, exposing me to a very advanced educational system in the world, and giving me the opportunity to acquire professionalism and creativity through my interaction with academics and students at UQ.

For the opportunities mentioned above, I was “led for learning” by studying at UQ. I was provided with valued forms of capital, including abundant sources of documents and learning facilities as objectified forms of cultural capital, research funding and scholarship as economic capital, and social capital involving very nice relationships with the research community, including both academic and administration staff, especially my advisors. I took advantage of the dominant forms of capital at UQ to accumulate more valued forms of capital for myself. Because field and habitus are relational, my habitus – a set of dispositions – has also changed to be more proactive, creative, independent, courageous, and open to change as a result of my experiences in a new location in the field.

It is evident that a key part of the strategy of learning in an international environment is to foster human capital development (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2004; Government of Vietnam, 2012c; Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013), and exposure to foreign languages, especially English, is central to this work. The important logic of practice within the field of leadership-for-teacher-learning here is to acquire institutionalised capital from prestigious institutions. Some participants in this field experience considerable disruption and discomfort as a result of their experiences as they try to learn in a foreign and often alien environment. The primary familial set of their dispositions quickly becomes evident in these circumstances. However, at the same time, and through a process of socio-analysis (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), students such as myself who have had this experience are able to analyse their circumstances, and consider what it is in this environment which is proving so troublesome. While the habitus is habituated, it is not simply unchanging. The particular and varied circumstances of living and learning internationally have led
to an ongoing reappraisal of my experiences and knowledge to date, and a greater willingness to understand knowledge as deeply contextually embedded, and not as rigid and unchanging as I might have previously regarded. This knowledge and understanding depends on a greater understanding of circumstances in the environment.

Discussing the habitus structure, Maton (2008) refers to the influence of family upbringing. Maton makes it clear that habitus is structured by one’s past and present contexts; for instance, family upbringing and educational experiences. It is also structuring, which means one’s habitus helps to shape one’s present and future practices. It is a structuring structure as it helps to shape practices and perception of practices, and it is also already structured by the particular experiences which people have previously had.

Family, in fact, plays an important role in my learning. My habitus has been structured by my experiences and is developing through everyday practices. Grenfell, James, Hodkinson, Reay, and Robbins (1998) highlight just how important the family is in establishing the habitus, on the basis of the differential forms of capital available within the family:

> Capital attracts capital, but, as in the case of education, we do not enter fields with equal amounts, or identical configurations, of capital. Some have inherited wealth, cultural distinctions from up-bringing and family connections. Some individuals, therefore, already possess quantities of relevant capital bestowed on them in the process of habitus formation, which makes them better players than others in certain field games. (p. 21)

As these authors indicate, family provides actors with opportunities to enable them to play more or less effectively in the field. My parents, despite retiring from work but with their inherited structured habitus as educators and managers, still do not stop ‘contributing’ to the field. My parents are always a spiritual support, and bright examples for their children about study, efforts to overcome difficulties under any circumstances. My younger sister shared her experience with me as a former international PhD student. She understood how interesting but challenging a PhD life far from home for a long time can be, and what I was experiencing, and often gave me useful advice on my academic life. She helped recharge my energy, and got me out of spiritual crisis situations. Whenever I felt confused and nervous, she encouraged me.

My family habitus has a profound influence on my disposition. Every day, listening to the radio, watching documentaries, reading newspapers, magazines, books, or attending meetings, if there is education-related information update in the country or all over the world, the members in my family learning community do not forget to take notes, copy and save, or scan to be able to send to Australia in the hope that they can help me and facilitate my learning and research process as much as possible.
In brief, I am a high school teacher from Vietnam, and have worked at two prestigious public high schools in my province for over 16 years. While teaching, learning and working at two different sites, I have raised my awareness of the responsibility for school improvement. In order to exist, maintain and develop my position in the competitive field of leading-for-teacher-learning, I have developed particular social dispositions and social capital, by engaging with knowledgeable colleagues, and taking the opportunity to study overseas.

I would like to compare my professional learning and teaching process to a boat. I am both a boat guide and a passenger in a boat. The boat guide has carried generations of passengers from one bank to another. In turn, the boat guide has turned into a passenger and has been carried to many spectacular destinations by various stunning means of transportation by skilful committed leaders and advisors. No words can be used to express my gratitude to their great non-stop support and assistance in leading my learning. I recognise that our experiences have an impact upon who we are; as Che Lan Vien, a Vietnamese poet expressed in his famous poem Tieng Hat Con Tau: “The place where we live is just the land to live, but this place will immediately turn into the soul land when we leave.”

4.10 Conclusion

The chapter has discussed the methods and methodology adopted in the research. The qualitative methods involving interviews, observations and document analysis were applied to collect data. The research sites, participants, data management and analysis, limitations of the research, ethical clearance were also outlined. The chapter also included an account of the limitations of a Bourdieuan approach, together with an overview of applications of Bourdieu’s concepts in a variety of different ‘southern’ contexts. The chapter concluded with the researcher’s reflective experiences of and in leading-for-learning as a teacher of English and then a PhD student. The next chapter will introduce the policy and political context in Vietnam. These policies have had a strong impact on teacher learning as part of teachers’ work, and provide necessary contextual information to understand practices of leading-for-teacher-learning in the schooling sites under investigation.

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2 A boat guide is a familiar metaphor for the profession of teaching in Vietnam.
Chapter 5. The Policy and Political Context for Leading-for-Learning

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the policy and political context in which leading-for-teacher-learning was enacted in schools in Thao Anh province, Vietnam, including the two ‘exemplary’ schools that constitute the primary focus of the research. The chapter includes an overview of key policies that influenced the educators referred to in the subsequent analysis chapters, and the tensions that characterised these policies in relation to broader policy conditions that influenced teachers’ work and learning. These policies formed an important part of the broader field of schooling practices within which this leading-for-teacher-learning was undertaken.

The chapter explores five key policies that influenced these teachers’ work. The policies introduced below have sought to influence practice in schools. These policies helped constitute the field of leading-for-teacher-learning referred to in the analysis, and which the policy-developers, teachers and other school-based personnel sought to influence, and which influenced their work and learning. Even as these policies sought to orchestrate more productive teacher learning – to help ‘lead learning’ – their content also indicated how multiple discourses were at play in relation to teachers’ learning. While more productive democratic conceptions of professionalism were evident, more managerial foci also clearly exerted influence (Day & Sachs, 2004). At the same time, there were also tensions evident in relation to the place of English language learning as an important part of broader processes of educational reform in Vietnam, and which influenced how teacher learning was fostered (‘led’). An analysis of the content of these documents was undertaken, drawing upon Bourdieu’s theory of practice (particularly the dominant logics that came to characterise the field of leading-for-teacher-learning), and in light of literature presented in the literature review – particularly the nature of teachers’ learning practices, and English language learning. The latter focus was important, given the place of English and English language learning in Vietnamese educational policies. Before these policies are outlined, a broad overview of the Vietnamese political context is provided to better situate the subsequent analysis of the educational policies.
5.1 Overview of Vietnamese Political Context

The political system of Vietnam comprises the Communist Party of Vietnam, the State system of Vietnam (including the National Assembly, the Government, the Supreme People’s Court, the Supreme People’s Procuracy, (and the apparatus of local level), and various socio-political organisations. Vietnamese educational policies sit within a broader political and policy structure as indicated in Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3, below:

Figure 5.1. The Vietnamese Fatherland Front and its membership organisations

The Vietnamese Fatherland Front is a political alliance and voluntary coalition of the political organisation, socio-political organisations, social organisations and prominent individuals representing their class, social stratum, ethnicity, or religion, and Vietnamese people residing/living abroad (overseas Vietnamese). The Vietnamese Fatherland Front produces and disseminates propaganda and encourages the People to perform, implement the Party’s guidelines, and the State’s policies and laws. The Vietnamese Fatherland Front participates in building the Party and State by gathering organisations in society and contributing to promoting national solidarity and unity, building and protecting the country. The Vietnamese Fatherland Front consists of: the political organisation of the Communist Party of Vietnam; socio-political organisations – namely Trade Union, Women’s Association, HCMC Youth Union, Veterans’ Association, Farmers Association; and other social organisations, such as the Union of Science and Technology Associations, Red Cross Organisation, Gardening Association, Lawyers Association, Association of Journalists, Old
People’s Association, etc. The function of the Committee of the Vietnamese Fatherland Front is to orchestrate the activities of each of these bodies.

**Figure 5.2. The political system of Vietnam**

In terms of the political system, the Communist Party of Vietnam is the ruling party in Vietnam. The Party leads the State and society overall through the resolutions and guidelines to develop all fields, including the economy, politics, culture, society, security, national defence and external activities. The National Assembly draws up and amends laws. It exercises the constitutional and legislative powers, making laws and deciding important issues of the country and performing the supreme supervision over the activities of the State. The Government is the highest state administration agency of the State, implements executive power, and is the executive body of the National Assembly. The People's Court is the judicial body of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and implements judiciary power. The People's Court consists of the Supreme People's Court and the other courts established by law. The Supreme People's Court is the highest judicial body of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The Supreme People’s Procuracy exercises the right to prosecution and controls judiciary activities. People ‘s Procuracy consists the Supreme People's Procuracy and other lesser procuracies established by law.
At the local level, The People's Council is elected by the local people, and is responsible before the local people and superior state agencies. People's Councils decide local matters determined by law, including monitoring obedience to the Constitution and the implementation of resolutions of the People's Council. The People's Committees at local government level are elected by the People’s Council at the same level and are the executive body of the People's Council. The People's Committees organise the implementation of the Constitution and local laws, the implementation of resolutions of People's Councils and the implementation of tasks assigned by the state agencies. Local People's Courts includes People’s Courts at provincial and district levels, and Local People’s Procuracies includes People's Procuracies at provincial and district levels.

Figure 5.3. The model of the Government of Vietnam
The Government of Vietnam is the organ that implements laws. The Government consists of the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Ministers. Below them are the ministries and central branches that help the Government manage and run different areas of expertise, including the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the Ministry of Science and Technology, and other departments. Under this level of Government are the Provincial People's Committees. Each of the provincial People's Committees includes the Chairman and the Deputy Chairmen. There are also provincial departments such as Provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET), Provincial Department of Science and Technology, Provincial Department of Natural Resources and Environment, etc. These provincial departments help their Provincial People's Committees manage and run different areas of expertise.

At the district/city level, there are the District/City People's Committees each with its own Chairman and Deputy Chairmen. In addition, there are specialised divisions such as Division of Education and Training, and the Division of Natural Resources and Environment. These divisions assist each of the District/City People's Committees manage and run different areas of expertise in the district/city.

At the communal level, there are the Communal People's Committees also with a Chairman and Deputy Chairmen. Further staff who help the Communal People's Committees to run different sectors, include cadastral officials, and judicial personnel.

All of these organisations influence how policy is developed, including in education.

5.2 Major Policies in Education

Within the Ministry of Education, there were several policies reflective of the production of a habitus responsive to the particular logics and foci dominant within this broader structure. Such logics influenced the dispositions, beliefs, perspectives of these people, and those to whom the policies were “directed”.

Five major policies are referred to in this section:

1. **Curriculum reform 2000**
2. **National foreign language project 2020**
3. **Project to develop a system of high schools for gifted students in the period 2010-2020**
4. **Strategy for educational development in the period 2011-2020**
5. **Resolution on fundamental and comprehensive reform in education and training (issued 4 November 2013)**
These policies were important within what will be construed as the field of leading-for-teacher-learning practices in Vietnam. They have all had a significant influence upon schooling practices, as outlined in the following chapters. These policies are analysed here to better inform the reader about their effects vis-à-vis leading-for-teacher-learning, as outlined in subsequent chapters. These policies are significant because they have greatly influenced schooling practices as well as teachers’ daily work in schools and provinces in Vietnam. These policies, therefore, helped constitute the field of leading-for-teacher-learning referred to in the analysis.

Specifically, the policy *Curriculum reform 2000* focused on the reform in general education curriculum, and as such, affected all aspects of the curriculum in schools in Vietnam today. This policy also foregrounded foreign language learning in its support for “reforming the program for teaching and learning foreign languages… in general education schools” (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2000, p. 2). In this way, this policy was important for understanding how curriculum provision more broadly was undertaken in Vietnam.

The second policy, *National foreign language project 2020*, focused upon the comprehensive reform of the teaching and learning of foreign languages, more specifically, within the national education system in the period 2008-2020. Again, this policy was chosen because it was particularly important in relation to foreign languages. The logics that informed the field were economic, and reflected a belief that Vietnamese society required human capital resource development. Improved foreign language skill development was seen as an important part of this process.

Vietnam has a long history of teaching and learning foreign languages. However, in the context of globalisation and international integration, and in the context of reform – open the door to the world, making friends and expanding relations with countries in the world – “ineffective” practices in teaching and learning foreign languages (FLs) were criticised. Such responses also reflected more deficit oriented approaches that characterise teachers’ work and learning more broadly (Tang & Choi, 2009). They also reflect the tensions that characterise teachers’ work and learning in Vietnam in particular, including inadequate teacher learning opportunities and heavy workloads (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001).

The third policy was *Project to develop a system of high schools for gifted students in the period 2010-2020* (Decision 959/QD-TTg enacted by the Government on 24 June, 2010). This document’s general argument was to build and develop high schools for gifted students which would become a system of high quality institutions to meet the national standard and to enable this kind of high school to be a model of facilities, teaching staff and the organisation of education activities for other high schools for mainstream students. This policy was seen as important because it set the
foundation for broader reforms of education in Vietnam, as these gifted schools would serve as models for all other schools, acting as a major stimulus for reform for schooling throughout Vietnam. Also, within this policy, teacher learning opportunities were seen as a necessity to achieve improved student outcomes. This policy also supported a goal of 50% of students achieving foreign language level 3 based on the criterion of the ‘Common European Framework of Reference for Languages’ CEFR. This application of criterion from CEFR reflects the dominance of English as a valued capital, especially particular forms of English – in this case, English as sanctioned within European discourses of what constitutes standard English practices. In this sense, the policy represents the sort of continuation of an ideology of English as having particular standard forms. As Tupas and Rubdy (2015) also elaborate, such practices serve to ensure the continuation of an ideology of colonisation, with particular forms of English constituting what is ‘right’ for English language learning in Vietnam.

The fourth policy was *Strategy for educational development in period 2011-2020* (Decision 711/QD-TTg enacted by the Government on 13 June, 2012 – Decision on the Approval of “The Strategy for educational development in period 2011-2020”). This policy was also a broad-based initiative designed to foster educational improvement for the decade up to the end of 2020. Again, there was strong mention of the importance of foreign language learning, but also of the need for education to contribute to human resource development within the broader economy:

> Up to 2020, Vietnam’s education will have made a fundamental and comprehensive reform based on standardisation, modernisation, socialisation, democratisation, and international integration; the quality of education is improved completely, including moral education, life skills, capacity of creativity, capacity of practice, foreign language and Informatics capacity; meeting the human resource demand, especially high quality human resources serving the cause of industrialisation, modernisation and building knowledge economy; ensuring social equality in education and the learning opportunity for every citizen, gradually forming learning society. (Government of Vietnam, 2012c, p. 8)

More economic logics, reflective of the shift towards market socialism (Itoh, 2012) in Vietnam, were clearly at play within this policy, with its focus upon ‘high quality human resources serving the cause of industrialisation, modernisation and building knowledge economy’.

The fifth policy was the *Resolution on fundamental and comprehensive reform in education and training issued 2013*. It was selected for inclusion as it was the latest influential policy of Vietnam’s education during the time of the data collection process. The Resolution was issued for a number of reasons. Some of the reasons were that the quality and efficiency of education and training were still considered low, and had not met the requirements of earlier policies; there was a lack of continuity between levels and between modes of education and training; teaching staff and education managers were not compatible in quality and quantity; a number of them had not met the
demand for the reform in and development of education (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013). Moreover, investment in education and training was not seen as effective, and policies and financing mechanisms for education and training were not deemed appropriate (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013). Again, such reasoning suggests more economic logics were evident, with education constructed as an important vehicle for cultivating broader economic reform, but as not yet achieving this goal at a satisfactory level.

Each of these policies is now analysed in more detail.

5.2.1 Curriculum Reform 2000

This resolution set a number of main goals and the plan to implement general education curriculum reform. For example:

The goal of Reforming general education curriculum was to build curriculum content, teaching methods, new textbooks for general education which aimed to improve the overall quality of the younger generation, to meet with the requirement for human resource development serving the country’s industrialisation, modernisation, suitable for the reality and tradition of Vietnam; accessing general education level of advanced countries in region and in the world. (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2000, p. 1)

The resolution can be seen as seeking to influence teacher learning by encouraging particular types of learning. The policy revealed that the logics which were valued were those associated with economism, and human resource development – again reflecting how economic logics within processes of market socialism (Itoh, 2012) have exerted influence. More economic logics were reflected in the demand for human resource development serving the country’s industrialisation and modernisation. However, and at the same time, it is important to note that the approach adopted valued cultural difference – culturally-specific capitals – suitable for the reality and tradition of Vietnam; in this sense, the policy might be understood as a form of ‘vernacular globalisation’ (Appadurai, 1996) in which broader more economic logics were reinterpreted for the Vietnamese context, and serving as a vehicle for strengthening forms of ‘national capital’ in Vietnam (Lingard & Jn Pierre, 2006). Designers of the new curriculum encouraged teachers to adopt strengths of previous curricula while supplementing, developing and renewing programs appropriate for more neoliberal times. In part, the logics of comparison and improvement were evident in the push to achieve a general education level comparable to advanced countries in the region and in the world. The reform in general education curriculum in terms of programme content, method of teaching, and textbooks aimed at both human capital development and cultural capital development.

The resolution further emphasised:
Reforming general education curriculum had to master the goal, the requirements for the content, educational method of all levels, and grades that were shown in Education Law; overcome the shortcomings of current curriculum and textbooks; increase the reality, practice skill development and the ability to learn on one’s own; build respect for the knowledge of humanities and social sciences; supplement modern scientific and technological achievements suitable for students’ ability to understand. (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2000, p. 1)

From this excerpt it can be argued that teachers were expected to be challenged by the new policy supporting curriculum reform. It required understanding the goals, content, and method of education, as well as the education law set for primary, lower and upper secondary education levels, identifying and avoiding weak points of the current curriculum and textbooks, focusing on the relation to real life, the ability to put theory into practice and the capacity for learning on one’s own, as well as helping students to broaden their knowledge of humanities and social sciences and access progress in science and technology. As a result, the policy revealed how new dispositions would be encouraged amongst those within the teaching profession. However, and reflecting existing dominant practices of teachers’ learning in Vietnam (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001) and more broadly (Hardy, 2012; Tang & Choi, 2009), such an approach also reflected a disposition on the part of policy-makers which valued more autonomous teacher learning, and which cultivated expectations that teachers would be engaged in their own learning. A further goal was:

to assure the unity, inheritance and development of education curriculum; increase the link between general education, vocational education, and university education; streamline in the national education system to make the balance in terms of the structure of human resources; assure the unity of knowledge standard and skills, to improve application of curriculum, textbooks in different areas’ circumstances and conditions. (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2000, p. 1)

The new curriculum also required learning from the experiences of the previous curriculum to maintain and improve its strengths. At the same time, it highlighted the relationships between education levels, implementing the division in education process based on students’ levels, capacity and interests, resulting in the streamlining of education. After secondary education, students had many choices. For example students could enter into the labour market, attend vocational schools, or continue further study at university. The introduction of the new curriculum and textbooks sought to recognise that knowledge standard and skills must be flexible for different settings. Additionally, the reform in curriculum content, new textbooks, method of teaching and learning needed to be carried out in the knowledge of the need to renew physical infrastructure, reform testing practices, and develop teachers and educational administrators:

Reforming curriculum content, new textbooks, method of teaching and learning had to be simultaneously implemented with upgrading and renewing teaching facilities, organising assessment, examinations, standardising schools, training and nurturing teachers and education management. (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2000, p. 1)
Teachers had to learn how to implement the new curriculum and use updated textbooks appropriately in different circumstances. They needed to upgrade and develop their knowledge and method of teaching and assessing students in class and in examinations. Not only teachers but also managers had to be trained to satisfy the requirements of the general education curriculum reform. However, this was a form of training that was heavily managed by the government, displaying aspects of governmental scrutiny and oversight characterised by more managerial practices (Day & Sachs, 2004).

The policy was assigned to the government and many ministries (Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning and Investment), Branches, and Agencies. The government’s action had the power to direct the implementation of general education curriculum reform. This was an example of the broader field of power exerting influence upon education practices - of more bureaucratic logics emanating from the state exerting influence (Bourdieu, 2004).

There was also evidence of building cultural capital, and technology hardware – a form of objectified capital (Bourdieu, 1986), and associated guiding social networks – social capital – in different local regions. The government assigned MOET to:

- build the project of teaching and learning foreign languages, Information Technology in schools; reform the training curriculum in pedagogical universities and departments; organise the sessions to train teachers to enable them to teach new curriculum and textbooks. (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2000, p. 2)

In order to implement the reform, different levels of government and schools were construed as needing to invest a great deal of time, effort and funding to cultivate specific forms of capital amongst teachers and students. The government encouraged the embodiment of different forms of cultural capital through specific strategies such as encouraging teachers to develop knowledge in relation to specific subject areas, particularly in subject areas where they were weakest. Cultural capital was cultivated through building the project of teaching and learning foreign languages and reforming the training curriculum in pedagogical universities and departments. Objectified capital existed in the form of facilities, equipment and technology hardware and software. Mobilising skilled professional learning providers acted as a form of social capital to build cultural capital amongst teachers.

In the next section, I move to looking at the National foreign language project 2020 policy as it was considered one of the significant outcomes of the organisation and implementation of the Reforming general education curriculum policy outlined above. The teaching and learning of foreign
languages, particularly English, at general education schools was considered an area of particular concern, and requiring increased intervention.

5.2.2 National Foreign Language Project 2020

To improve the quality of teaching and learning in Vietnam and in response to perceived pressures of globalisation, Decision 1400/QD-TTg was enacted by the Government on 30 September, 2008. This policy was about the comprehensive reform of the teaching and learning of foreign languages within the national education system in the period 2008–2020. The logics that informed this work were economic, and reflected a belief that Vietnamese society required human capital resource development (Itoh, 2012). Improved foreign language skill development was seen as an important part of this process. The excerpt below illustrates the general goals of this policy:

To reform comprehensively the teaching and learning of foreign languages within the national education system, to implement a new program on teaching and learning foreign languages at every level of schooling and training, which aims to achieve, by the year 2015, a substantial progress in language level and competency for human resources, especially at some prioritised sectors. By the year 2020, most Vietnamese youth who graduate from vocational schools, colleges and universities will gain the capacity to use foreign languages independently. This will enable them to be more confident in communication, further their chance to study and work in an integrated and multi-cultural environment with a variety of languages. This goal also makes language as an advantage for Vietnamese people, serving the cause of industrialisation and modernisation for the country. (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 1)

Such different goals as outlined here showed multiple logics at work. There were not only logics of further study, but also logics of teacher learning and economic growth. Furthermore, there was an implied logic that language education was an unproblematic enterprise, and that teachers and students would readily be able to engage with foreign languages; also, in a context in which English was the dominant foreign language, there was no sense in which there was a recognition of the variety of forms of English, or the debates around the different ‘Englishes’ that exist in Vietnam (see Phan Le Ha, 2005), and the various forms of ‘unequal Englishes’ (Tupas & Rudby, 2015) more generally that characterise debates around English language learning. Through such practices, and over time, teacher learning, in relation to foreign languages practices, sought to “create” new dispositions amongst teachers, albeit in potentially limiting and problematic ways for those involved.

From the general goal, this project set a number of specific goals, including to eventually foster foreign language learning amongst all students:

To implement a ten-year education program wherein foreign language is enforced as compulsory for general education levels starting Grade 3. From School year 2010-2011, schools will implement teaching foreign languages according to new curriculum for about
20% of Grade 3 students and gradually expand the scale to about 70% in School year 2015-2016, aiming to reach 100% by School year 2018-2019. (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 1)

Again, there is an unproblematic endorsement of foreign language development. While support for such learning indicates institutional recognition of teachers’ learning, such authoritative overtones and the focus on specific programmes and textbooks also indicates how more managerial rather than democratic forms of professionalism and teacher learning (Day & Sachs, 2004) seemed to be particularly salient.

For students, it was claimed they needed to change their ways of learning, and be motivated to be active and creative in their learning. It was necessary for both teachers and students to cultivate the ability to learn on their own, and learn continuously over time. This was evident as embodied capital. Purportedly, it is accumulated by:

reforming methods of assessment in foreign language training; constructing a question data bank that helps assess learners’ level; increasing the IT application in foreign language training; and improving the ability to test and assess the foreign language training quality.

(Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 4)

The teaching and learning of foreign languages was being redesigned to promote the necessary language skills for a globalised labour force. The focus on testing in policy was also part of a broader process of globalising educational accountabilities (Lingard, Martino, Rezai-Rashti & Sellar, 2016) to more effectively manage and monitor students’ learning.

Among foreign languages, English was a particularly valued capital, playing an integral role in the context of integration and globalisation. English was used as the most popular medium of international communication. English was mentioned much more frequently than any other language within the policy itself. It focused on “identifying that foreign languages that are taught and learned at education institutions belonging to the national education system are English and some other languages” (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 2). Again, as indicated above, however, the different ‘Englishes’ that exist in Vietnam (see Phan Le Ha, 2005) and the various forms of ‘unequal Englishes’ (Tupas & Rudby, 2015), were not given recognition in policy.

There was a focus upon building a foreign language proficiency framework of 6 levels based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This was used for reference when designing curricular and teaching plans:

To construct and issue a detailed and unified foreign language proficiency framework consisting of 6 levels. This framework is compatible with other common international foreign language proficiency levels and used as reference when writing curricula and teaching plans. Based on this framework, criteria of evaluation are set up for different learning and training
levels, ensuring the interconnection in training foreign languages between education levels. (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 2)

Language proficiency frameworks were to be designed with other common international language proficiency levels – particularly the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – as a benchmark. There was evidence of a logic of comparative evaluation within the policy supporting teachers’ language proficiency in terms of four language skills considered as valued capitals – listening, speaking, reading and writing:

Language proficiency framework helps to define clearly requirements for competency, capacity in listening, speaking, reading and writing. These requirements should be compatible with criteria that define 6 levels in a framework, namely Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (KNLNN for short), issued by the European Association for Language Testing and Assessment, in which level 1 is ranked as lowest and 6 as highest. (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 2)

However, there was not critical awareness of how such an initiative constituted a form of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992; 2009), or of the complexities that attended actual engagement with the ‘norms’ of more dominant forms of English language learning (and the learning of other more dominant languages), including more racialised connotations (Pennycook, 1998).

This glossing over of difference was further evident in the ‘neutral’ description of the various levels to which teachers’ proficiency were expected to be developed:

to construct and implement a new program on compulsory foreign language training at different general education levels: qualify KNLNN level 1 when graduating from primary education; qualify KNLNN level 2 when graduating from secondary education; qualify KNLNN level 3 when graduating from high school education. (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 2)

Therefore, there was a demonstrated logic of international comparison at play in these policy documents, but without adequate understanding of the complexities of actual English enactment in the Vietnamese context (Phan Le Ha, 2005), or of the complex identity formations that attended teachers’ efforts to learn English (Le Ha, 2008).

Foreign qualifications in English proficiency were textually constituted as valued objectified capitals. These international certificates enabled both teachers and students to have better opportunities in study, in work and in real life. These expectations were presented across grade levels:

to organise the construction of ten-year foreign language programs for general education which start from Grade 3 to Grade 12; compile textbooks, teaching and learning materials that are suitable for different class levels, and to encourage education organisations to become more proactive in constructing and implementing bilingual programs which aim to improve their own training capacity. (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 2)
It was also encouraged that programs in maths, as well as some other subjects, be taught in ‘foreign languages’ (English): “Constructing and implementing other teaching and learning programs in foreign languages for Mathematics and other subjects that are suitable for high schools” (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 3). Again, however, the complexities attending English language learning, such as how English could displace other languages, or contribute to class-based inequalities (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2006b), were ignored.

The push for the accumulation of different forms of capital was evident in other ways. By encouraging teachers to train abroad – “Encourage teachers to take up international training courses either domestically or abroad that are internationally accredited” (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 4) – international certificates of language proficiency were constructed as valued institutional capital. They also provided evidence of an “aspirational habitus” (see Archer et al. (2012) on such habitus in schooling settings in England) on the part of policy-makers. However, such processes also potentially feed into conceptions of some forms of English as of greater value than others – particularly those that are recognised as originating from ‘centre’ rather than ‘periphery’ countries. Again, the result is an ongoing form of cultural imperialism (Pennycook, 1994; 1998; Philippson, 1992; 2009).

The logics at play reinforced that foreign languages, particularly English were necessary in almost all sectors (such as education, science and technology, business, tourism, etc.), and those who acquired English proficiency would be able to distinguish themselves through their capacity to express themselves competently and confidently in English. English was a distinctive form of capital in this context. This would enable them to have better opportunities for higher education, access to other cultures, and employment or professional learning in culturally diverse environments. Thus, English was construed as a valued capital in foreign language policy, but without little acknowledgement of the complexity and concerns that attend such advocacy.

5.2.3 Decision on the Approval of the Project to Develop a System of High Schools for Gifted Students in the Period 2010-2020

The third policy influencing teacher-leading-for-learning practices, as these related to teachers reported in this research, was Decision 959/QD-TTg enacted by the Government on 24 June, 2010. This policy gave approval for the development of a system of high schools for gifted students during the period 2010-2020. High schools for gifted students have different goals and practices that managers and teachers support, in comparison with ‘mainstream’ schools. They are ‘structured social spaces’ with their own logics of practice. They foreground particular kinds of ‘intelligent’ students for intensive development. Such schools:
ensure fulfilling the duties of discovering intelligent students, training them to be potential students and productive citizens with good qualities … and good health, meeting the demand to develop the country in the process of industrialisation and modernisation and international integration (Government of Vietnam, 2010, p. 1).

In this way, these schools were construed as sites that cultivated a distinctive habitus – one that was disposed to such “exclusivity”. This appeal to ‘exclusivity’, and stratification of the education system, also reflected broader competitive processes in education, particularly under conditions of increasing global competitiveness (Lingard et al., 2016). The focus upon industrialisation, modernisation and international integration constitutes evidence of the broader field of power exerting influence upon educational policy practices.

Accordingly, principals of this kind of school were responsible for making long-term and short-term school plans, and influenced by broader competing economic and educational, social, and civic logics of practice. This was really challenging when the development of teaching and administrative staff were impacted upon by more managerial processes that sought to manage and monitor the nature of the learning that occurred (Day & Sachs, 2004). This was the result of pressure to meet the demands of forming and fostering students’ capacity and qualities, at the same time meeting the demands of enhancing education quality and effectiveness in this kind of school.

These more managerial demands were evident in how the policy framed the work that needed to be undertaken in these schools. There was a focus upon compartmentalising the capacities and skills of teachers and those responsible for managing their work in schools. Principals of schools for gifted students were exhorted to ensure there were ‘sufficient … number[s]’ of staff, teachers with higher degrees; reflecting more management-oriented priorities, particularly audit processes (Power, 1997; Strathern, 2000), there was also a focus upon particular proportions of staff achieving at higher levels of competency in specified areas:

- develop teaching and managerial staff that ensure that they are sufficient in number, appropriate in structure and achieve at high level of professional standard; increase the rate of teachers and managers with PhD and Masters’ degrees, improve professional and pedagogical levels and the ability of foreign languages, Informatics, and practical science research, meeting the demands of the increase of scale, at the same time enhance education quality and effectiveness in this kind of schools. Up to 2015, 100 % of managers, teachers are good at expertise, pedagogical skills, and skilful at Information Technology and modern teaching facilities; 20 % of managers, teachers are able to use foreign languages in teaching and communication. (Government of Vietnam, 2010, p. 2)

This tendency to specify particular numbers and proportions of staff achieving particular targets also reflected broader processes of quantification of education in general (Hardy, 2015). The policy stated that it is important to obtain a high level of professional qualification such as PhD and Masters’ degrees. These formal credentials were recognised as valued capitals.
In order to develop the teaching and managerial staff in these schools, the policy required having a specific plan to train teachers working in this kind of school. This involved a variety of measures, oriented towards reforming methods of teaching, testing, assessment, and improving teachers’ capacity. This also involved sending teachers of English and teachers of other subject areas to English speaking countries to improve their capacity to teach in English:

Orienting the content of cultivating teachers of high schools for gifted students which is suitable for each stage. Increasing the nourishment for managers on management knowledge and skills; training teachers on the reform in methods of teaching, testing and assessment, improving the capacity of developing curriculum, materials of specialised subjects, the capacity of organising education activity;

…Sending teachers of English in these schools to English-speaking countries to train in English.

Organising short-term and long-term training courses in the country and overseas in teaching in English for teachers of maths, physics, chemistry, biology, information technology, in order to step by step implement to teach these subjects in English in high schools for gifted students. (Government of Vietnam, 2010, p. 4)

On the one hand, there was evidence of efforts to try to orchestrate various forms of capacity development – ‘improving the capacity of developing curriculum, materials of specialised subjects, the capacity of organising education activity’ – a process that could potentially contribute as a model for more active school leadership (Timperley et al., 2007). However, the focus of some of this attention, such as ‘sending teachers of English in these schools to English-speaking countries to train in English’ also reflects the influence of the ‘native speaker mindset’ and conceptions of non-native speakers as somehow ‘defective second language users’ (Ngoc Ba Doan, 2016, p. 2). In this way, there were clear tensions between the sorts of professional learning that would best help cultivate more relevant and informed knowledge and understanding on the part of teachers.

The learning practices encouraged here involved teachers’ participation in various certificates, Masters and PhD programs, improvement of the ability in foreign languages and information technology, practical science research, and especially professional and pedagogical levels, particularly through formal credentials. There was evidence of support for capital accrual – in this case, institutionalised capital in the form of credentials, but also the development of cultural capital accrued through exposure to native English speaking language learning environments. Not all forms of English were ‘equal’ (Tupas & Rubdy, 2015), and it was clear that English language learning in English speaking countries(contexts was highly valued.

Finally, these schools were competitive environments, and teachers felt pressured to maintain high standards, and to constantly improve their practice, and students’ results. Teachers who made significant achievements in their career at other high schools can be chosen and invited to move to
high schools for gifted students. Teachers at a school for gifted students who do not fulfil their duty may be advised to move to other high schools in the province. Similarly, for students, if they do not achieve at high standard, they can be asked to attend another school:

Supplement, complete the regulation on refining students of high schools for gifted students so that every year, semester or term students with genuine talent can be selected and supplemented and students who have not met the requirements for high schools for gifted students can be advised to move to other high schools in the province. (Government of Vietnam, 2010, p. 5)

In these examples, the logics at play were ones of strong competition, success, and arguably, fear of failure. These broader pressures towards competitiveness reflect the cultivation of a neoliberal imaginary in education more broadly (Ball, 2012), and contributed to the intensification of teachers’ work more generally (Hardy, 2012; Tang & Choi, 2009).

5.2.4 Decision on the Approval of ‘Vietnam’s Strategy for Educational Development in the Period 2011-2020’

The fourth policy was Decision 711/QD-TTg enacted by the Government on 13 June, 2012, entitled ‘Vietnam’s strategy for educational development in the period 2011-2020’. This policy was important because it was an overarching document, emphasising improving all aspects of educational practice more broadly in Vietnam. The strategy focused upon Vietnamese education in the period 2011-2020, including achievements and weaknesses, contexts, opportunities, and challenges facing Vietnam’s education in the period 2011-2020;

The general goal of the strategy showed that teachers’ learning was influenced by discursive logics of modernist reform. This was evident in how there was explicit links made between processes of ‘modernisation’ and ‘the development of teaching and managerial staff”: “standardisation, modernisation, socialisation, democratisation, international integration in which reform in mechanism of education management, the development of teaching and managerial staff are the key factor” (Government of Vietnam, 2012c, p. 1). Arguably, these pressures towards ‘international integration’ and ‘modernisation’ reflect the push for greater economic engagement in the world as part of Vietnam’s move towards a more marketised economy (Itoh, 2012). This was most obvious within the more economic logics reflected in “developing and improving the quality of human resources, especially high quality human resources” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011b). Thus, the embodied educational capitals most valued were those that were seen to foster economic development and improvement.
That the learning intimated was more atomist and managerial (Day & Sachs, 2004) was also evident in the broad array of foci (curriculum; textbook reform; morality; law; physical education; defence; values; life skills; vocations; ICTs) to which this reform pertained. The policy was:

highlighting the importance on the content of educating morality, law, physical education, national defence-security, and values of traditional culture; educating life skills, and vocational labour for general education students. (Government of Vietnam, 2012c, p. 11)

While on the one hand such a list indicates efforts to be comprehensive, and an awareness that education does not occur in a vacuum, such lists also suggest the intensification of teachers’ work more generally (Tang & Choi, 2009).

5.2.5 Resolution on Fundamental and Comprehensive Reform in Education and Training

Resolution No.29-NQ/TW of the 8th Conference, the Party Central Committee XI was the last major policy initiative that influenced the work of teachers and educators referred to in the research. The policy focused on the fundamental and comprehensive reform in education and training to meet the requirements of industrialisation and modernisation in Vietnam; again, this was in the context of cultivation of the socialist-oriented market economy and international integration more broadly (Itoh, 2012). It was issued on 4 November, 2013.

One of the key missions and outcomes emphasised in the resolution involved the development of teaching staff and educational managers to meet the requirement of the reform in education and training. This Resolution stated that the quantity and quality of teaching staff and educational managers were not appropriate, and did not keep pace with the requirements for educational reform and development (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013). Such descriptions indicate the deficit-oriented discourses that circulate around teachers and teaching more broadly (Tang & Choi, 2009). The logic of critique of teachers’ learning seemed to be evident, and was related to the learning of teachers encouraged in the two schools.

The Resolution identified that the development of teaching and managerial staff was one of the key tasks of fundamental and comprehensive reform in education and training. To build and develop these strengths, it was necessary to make plans to train and cultivate staff to meet the demand for socioeconomic development, security, and international integration (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013). Again, broader processes of policy-making responsive to increasingly neoliberal and economic logics (Ball, 2012; Lingard et al., 2016) were apparent. This meant there were broader pressures beyond individual school sites which were having an impact upon teachers’ learning.
At the same time, there were a range of other pressures upon teachers’ learning. This included strong reform of the objectives, content, methods of training, retraining, and assessing teachers’ learning and training results (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013). Teachers were also exhorted to engage in ongoing learning on an ongoing basis; a logic of life-long learning was evident. In part, such support could be construed as encouraging the sorts of more active and continuous learning associated with effective professional learning practices (Cordingley et al., 2007; Timperley et al., 2007). However, the sheer volume of reforms also seemed to imply challenges in effectively enacting teacher learning practices under current policy conditions in Vietnam. This plethora of other initiatives suggested in Resolution No.29-NQ/TW (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013) included: to continue reforming strongly and at the same time essential elements of education and training towards developing learners’ quality and capacity such as curriculum, methods of teaching and learning, contents of general education; to reform fundamentally methods of examinations, testing, and assessment of education and training outcomes according to the criteria trusted and recognised by the world education community; and to actively foster international integration and improve the efficiency of international cooperation in education and training by giving the opportunity for international specialists and Vietnamese people who live abroad to participate in teaching and doing research in domestic education and training institutions. In relation to English language learning, the latter reforms also seem to feed into discourses of more deficit-oriented accounts of non-native English speakers in Vietnam (Phan Le Ha, 2005), and intimate the difficulties of fostering the sorts of varied cultural knowledges spoken in Asian contexts (Ngoc ba Doan, 2014).

5.3 Conclusion

Consequently, Vietnam’s efforts to engage with processes of globalisation, with their associated dramatic transformation in economic relations, world trade, and communications relations, have impacted education policy. These educational policies were complex, and sought to foster reform at multiple levels and in multiple ways. This included in relation to teachers’ learning. The chapter has also indicated some of the tensions within these policies in relation to approaches and foci towards orchestrating (‘leading’) teacher learning, including in relation to English language learning, and the more deficit-oriented discourses that often characterise such learning more specifically. The chapter has sought to provide some insights into the contextual circumstances and tensions that influenced teachers’ work and learning in the schools and province reported upon in the research.

The following two chapters, Chapters 6 and 7, provide insights into the nature of the practices influencing teachers’ work and learning in the context of these policy reforms. Chapter 6 focuses on
leading-for-teacher-learning within schools. Chapter 7 focuses on leading-for-teacher-learning outside schools.
Chapter 6. Leading-for-Teacher-Learning Practices Originating Primarily within the School Sites

6.0 Introduction

This chapter explores administrators’ and teachers’ practices of leading-for-teacher-learning in one province in Vietnam, with particular attention to the nature of such practices in two ‘exemplary’ high school settings. As explained in Chapter 4, these were two of the most prestigious public high schools in Thao Anh province, Vietnam; School A was a high school for mainstream students, and School B a high school for gifted students. Looking into the nature and challenges of leading-for-teacher-learning in these sites is important because it provides not only useful insights into practices in such ‘exemplary’ schools, but also because these schools are presented by the Vietnamese government as the sorts of schools the government hopes will serve as role models for all other schools. The research presented in this chapter (and Chapter 7) provide insights into the successes and challenges that attend these schools, and may provide insights into the leading-for-teacher-learning practices that may attend other sites that do not possess the characteristics of these relatively high-functioning schools. The chapter construes the case in question as the particular ‘entity’ (Yin, 2014) of practices of ‘leading-for-teacher-learning’ in ‘exemplary’ schooling settings in one province in Vietnam, with a particular focus upon such practices in relation to two ‘exemplary’ schools (school sites noted for their high academic attainment in relation to academic grades, university entrance, and regional and national prizes for academic distinction).

This chapter draws on data from interviews with teachers of five different subject areas (chemistry, biology, literature and English at School A, and maths, chemistry, literature, English at School B), as well as district officials from the district within which the schools were located, together with observations of their professional learning activities. At the same time, and in order to better understand the practices within these schools, the chapter also draws upon experiences and insights from a small number of teachers in other schools who participated in various province-wide online fora as vehicles to facilitate/lead teachers’ learning; this includes on-line forums/discussion lists for teachers of English controlled by the district (DOET), to which teachers in the two schools had access. While such forums and discussion lists do not comprise a large component of the overall data set, they do help to further contextualise the nature of the leading-for-teacher-learning practices discussed. Data from these district-sponsored fora provided access to understandings of practices that were also available to teachers at the two schools, and contributed to understanding how such
fora could serve as vehicles for teachers’ learning, thereby contributing to a fuller understanding of the nature of the field of leading-for-teacher-learning. These insights help to further contextualise the experiences of the teachers and school administrators from the two school sites. These data show how practices of leading-for-teacher-learning were performed and developed, who was involved and what kinds of capital were developed through these practices.

In analysing the data, the chapter draws upon Bourdieu’s concepts of field, habitus and capital to provide insights into the logics of practice associated with possibilities and problematics of leading-for-teacher-learning. This includes how market socialism (Itoh, 2012) contributes to constituting the Vietnamese approach to implementing much of the global reform in education, and ultimately, to economic capital accumulation. The chapter also reveals how English is a valued capital in education, but how particular forms of English are more valued than others.

The chapter also recognises practices of leading and teacher learning as contested. This includes recognising teacher learning as contested. As outlined in the literature on teacher learning in Chapter Two, the thesis relies heavily upon Day and Sachs (2004) conception of teacher professional learning practices as comprising a wide variety of competing and conflicting initiatives and events, some of which reflect more active, democratic conceptions of professionalism, and others of which reflect more managerial conceptions. As outlined in the literature chapter, teacher learning practices may include more traditional ‘PD’/‘professional development’ events, such as individual workshops, or they may entail much more active and agentic practices focused upon specialists observing teachers and providing detailed feedback (cf. Cordingley et al., 2007). They may also involve the expression of more problematic discourses as teachers seek to make sense of their work under current intensified work conditions (Tang & Choi, 2009), including in relation to neoliberalism in education more generally (Ball, 2012; Connell, 2013; Lingard et al., 2016). While the term ‘professional development’ can be appropriated to reflect a much broader range of teacher learning practices than typically associated with reductive notions of ‘PD’ (e.g. individual workshops) (Hardy, 2012), to avoid confusion, I use the term ‘teacher learning’ to try to capture the myriad of practices associated with teachers’ learning. I also recognise such learning as inherently contested (see section 2.2.1.1 ‘The field of teacher learning as contested’ for a further elaboration of this contestation). As part of this work, the analysis chapters reveals this contestation in relation to English language learning as an important area within the broader field of leading-for-teacher-learning.

Chapter 6 consists of three main sections and is structured as follows: The first section focuses on how English teachers helped maths teachers engage in leading-for-teacher-learning. The second
section explores how leading-for-teacher-learning occurred in specific subject departments. The final section focuses on the leading-for-teacher-learning practices associated with teachers implementing the Pilot English 10 program – a key reform influencing English language teaching from Year 3 to Year 12.

While most of this chapter focuses upon instances of teachers’ learning occurring within individual school sites, one particular initiative – the Pilot English 10 Program – involved teachers learning both within their individual school (particularly School B, which was integral to the trial of this program), often on their own, as well as through various externally provided workshops, and electronic forums. The leading-for-teacher-learning in relation to this initiative is outlined in this chapter because while there was this hybridised learning occurring, it seemed that much of the learning involved teachers learning on their own about the Pilot Program within their own school. That is much of this learning seemed to be primarily originating within the school sites.

6.1 English Teachers Helping Maths Teachers

This section explores how some English teachers, particularly in School B, led the learning of their math teacher colleagues, who were seeking to improve their use of English as a medium of instruction. In order to undertake this work, the maths teachers needed help from the English teachers. However, it is important to highlight the contestation and struggles with this process as well as the successes that occurred. Important issues reported in this section include the English teachers’ support for their math teacher colleagues, the maths teachers’ openness to change, and the difficulties teachers faced in relation to issues of time, ageist perspectives and implementation.

Leadership for teacher learning can be performed by any individuals or groups, including teachers and administrators in schools. This was evident, for example, in the way the English teachers not only played the game in the specific subfield of their own subject department, but they also performed practices of leading learning by assisting their colleagues in the maths subfield and finished up learning together; this reflects how teachers can serve as leaders of their colleagues’ learning more broadly, and reflects the importance of relationships and connections between teachers within a school (Harris & Muijs, 2005; Muijs & Harris, 2003). According to the national foreign language project 2020 (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 8), between 2011 and 2015, the teaching of maths in English has been implemented to a level of 30% of high schools in the major cities (Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh city, Hai Phong, Hue, Da Nang) and some other key areas. Each year, there is an increase from 15-20% of schools in the 5 other provinces and cities in other subjects.
Up to December 2013, School B was the first school in the province to implement the policy to teach maths through the medium of English. Accordingly, School B is often cited as a flagship school for the policy. Moving forward to July 2014, there were three high schools in total (School B included). The results of this implementation were variable. DOET appointed some teachers in schools to do training courses, but many teachers still struggled to implement this policy.

6.1.1 Supporting the Teaching of English

As the following teacher indicated (Deputy-Principal, School B), teachers’ English proficiency in School B was seen as limited, but there were also multiple learning practices at play. This included Mathematics teachers learning on their own, as well as collaborating with their English teaching colleagues. There was also evidence of failure to institutionalise teachers’ learning of English via school-organised professional learning opportunities in English language learning:

In terms of this task, the teachers in the departments other than the Foreign Languages Department have to teach themselves English. Some years ago, the school organised some English classrooms for the teachers, but afterwards they were too busy to continue the course. If this course had continued up to now, things would have been much better. Currently, the teachers have to help themselves. For example, the maths teachers learn on their own. Every Thursday, they make plans in English, and then come to do rehearsal. They also receive support from the Foreign Languages Department. In addition, MOET organises training classes for teachers of natural science subjects to teach their own subjects in English. (Deputy-Principal, School B)

From this excerpt, it can be seen that English was encouraged as a medium for teaching maths at high school. English was shown to be a valued capital in this space. This was evident in how the deputy-principal highlighted the importance of teachers regularly learning English, even if it was typically on their own, and not always in various forms of networks (and even as learning in collaboration with others is challenging to orchestrate (Flaschberger, Gugglberger, & Dietscher, 2013)). The focus upon individualised learning also reveals how teacher learning is construed as the responsibility of the individual teacher, even as there is some evidence of more systemic approaches to try to support these teachers’ learning (Knight, 2002). Such individualised learning is also in keeping with more traditional approaches to teacher learning in the Vietnamese context, in which teachers seek to learn on their own to improve their practice (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001). This emphasis upon “individualised learning” is in keeping with broader, neoliberal logics within the field of power more generally, and the ascendancy of such logics within and across varied national contexts (Hardy & Lingard, 2008). It is also a reflection of the struggles to adequately resource the provision of teachers’ learning in a country which is on an expansive and rapid trajectory of growth and development. There is a process of strategising within the school to help teachers improve their
English capacity (Hardy, 2010) and reinforce English as valued capital, but this is largely individualistic.

Also, there were particular aspects of English language learning that were focused upon by these teachers. There was a strong focus upon various technical aspects of English:

When math colleagues made lesson plans, they asked teachers of English for help in terms of sentence structure, grammar, terms of maths and pronunciation. When they were not sure about some sentence samples, they had us look at those sentences again to see whether they were correct or not. (Teacher of English SBTE3)

This teacher explained how her Foreign Languages Department members supported the maths teachers and played the role of advisors and mentors (Harris, 2005a; Harris & Muijs, 2005; Muijs & Harris, 2003). For example, although the maths teachers embodied maths knowledge (they were certainly very skilful at their own subject), they still felt confused about how to convert this capital into another kind of cultural capital – English as a medium of instruction. Thus, the relationship and interactions with the teachers of English were construed as necessary. This social capital assisted these teachers to achieve more cultural capital, including in the objectified form (such as in their lesson plans). This process demonstrates how leading for teacher learning by the English teachers of their colleagues was different from the less collaborative approaches typically associated with teachers in Vietnamese classrooms (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001), but also how the emphasis upon more traditional forms of English teaching in the form of sentence structure and grammar continued to exert influence. This latter concern with technical accuracy also reflects how perceptions of such norms as needing to be highly accurate in relation to what were considered ‘standard’ English modes of communication (Phan Le Ha, 2005).

Learning English is a practice associated with the dominant field of power, and economic relations. Therefore, there is the interplay between the actors in their efforts to “lead teacher learning” and the broader field of the economy. It is important to recognise that teachers of English foster their maths colleagues’ learning by their willingness to support math teachers in terms of a valued capital – in the form of English language capacity. There is also some evidence of a more collectivist approach in the form of teachers providing some support to assist colleagues within the maths faculty to learn from one another. This was evident in the way in which teachers met together every week to rehearse their lessons in English. This work involved teachers learning from one another – taking a lead in fostering learning for their colleagues as “collaborative teacher learning” (Hardy & Lingard, 2008, p. 75). Such a learning-focused disposition (Harris, 2005a) was a product of necessity, and of a habitus responsive to governmental demands for improved teaching capacity in English. Under these circumstances, the dominant logic was one of compliance with the foreign language policy...
which advocated the teaching of subjects in English (see *Teaching and learning of foreign languages in the national education system in the period 2008-2020*, outlined in detail in the previous chapter)

At the same time, a logic of continuous learning was also evident in the planning and rehearsing which occurred as part of within-school support. There was a broad sense of optimism that such teacher-initiated support for learning would help facilitate teachers’ learning. For example, Teacher SBTM4 at School B said:

> Teachers in the Foreign Languages Department were willing to help maths teachers any time when we asked them for advice. For example, some teachers of English were happy to help me with my lesson plan in terms of use of English and language structures, which enabled me to be confident in front of the class. (Teacher SBTM4, School B)

Teachers accumulated valued capital as part of this process, including social capital evident in working together, and sharing experiences. As Printy remarked, ‘Teachers are most likely to incorporate learning into their practice when that learning occurs in the community of practice they primarily identify with, where affiliation is strong’ (Printy, 2008, p. 191). Even though the teachers were from different disciplinary departments (English; mathematics), the common experience of working in the same school, and the demands of expectations around teaching mathematics in English, helped forge stronger bonds between the different teachers.

### 6.1.2 Maths Teachers’ Openness to Change

The impact of MOET constituted part of the broader field of power and helped instantiate cultural capital accrual in the form of English language proficiency as embodied capital for teachers of natural science subjects. This valuing of English is reflected in the *Teaching and learning of foreign languages* policy, and is clearly evident in the practices of maths teachers.

In my interview with one of the maths teachers at School B, he explained how he was given “opportunities to lead”, and provided with real power – “a legitimate source of authority” (Harris & Muijs, 2005, p. 26):

> Yes, for a number of reasons. The first reason is the application of teaching maths in English. Among natural sciences planned to be taught in English is maths, which is first piloted. I was the first to teach that lesson in English in our school. The other subjects such as physics, chemistry, and biology have not applied yet. Other schools in the province have not done this yet, either. So to speak, I am almost the first in the province to do this. The ELT Specialist of DOET observed my lessons. He thought I did this job (taught maths in English), so I would understand more about it. I think that is why he chose me to be head of this group. (Teacher SBTM4, School B)
This teacher explained that English is encouraged as a medium for teaching maths at high school. It is a valued capital, and he was able to distinguish himself from other teachers who could not teach maths in English. He was using his English capacity to teach some pilot periods of his own subject in English. At first, he was a learner, but later he became a leader who innovated to help students learn maths through English as a medium of instruction; he was a leader of learning and learning by leading (Collinson, 2012). His willingness to be involved also reflected the cultivation of a habitus reflective of the dominant logics of advocacy for English language learning within the field of leading for teacher learning, and within the field of schooling practices as expressed in the Vietnamese context more broadly.

Reflecting the dominance of English language learning, the maths teacher SBTM4 at School B was enthusiastic about the initiative of teaching maths in English:

**Interviewee:** I think next year our school will implement this plan. According to the tendency of political support, this plan will receive widespread support throughout the country. At present, it is implemented by a number of schools, even Lao Cai (a mountainous province).

**Interviewer:** You piloted to teach some maths periods in English and your students understood the lessons, didn’t they?

**Interviewee:** I think they understood and were very excited, and were able to answer my questions.

**Interviewer:** Did you teach the Grade 10 curriculum?

**Interviewee:** In fact, I chose a topic, and taught the students from specialised class 11 Maths.

In this way, there is evidence of a broader field of schooling practices dominated by the push for English as a medium of instruction, and how this field constituted the circumstances for the emergence of a habitus exhibiting compliance with broader policy support for such learning. Such a response is indicative of the ‘ontological complicity’ of field and habitus – the deeply reflexive relationship between field and habitus, where each contributes to the ongoing emergence and structuring of the other (Thomson, 2014). As a result, teacher habitus was evident which reflected compliance with policy (‘this plan’) that sought to influence/“lead” his learning. This influence was enabled by a field of schooling practices dominated by policy prerogatives that construed English language as important to Vietnam’s future educational, and ultimately economic, development.

**6.1.3 Challenges of Maths Teachers Learning English**

While the national foreign languages project 2020 helped facilitate teachers’ learning, at the same time it also reflected considerable challenges. Reflecting the contested logics that characterise the field of schooling practices, and logics of leading-for-teacher-learning more specifically, there was
also clear evidence of contestation that attended teachers’ learning. This was expressed in concerns about the difficulty of teaching in English for many teachers:

In fact, it is certain that there will be a lot of difficulties. The first problem is teachers’ limited command of English, especially aged teachers. The second difficulty is that we do not always have enough time to prepare lessons. We have so much work to do that we cannot manage the time for good preparations. Teachers at our school have to prepare students for a lot of contests/exams at different levels. (Teacher SBTM4, School B)

There was a tendency to individualise concerns about teachers’ learning. Particular teachers were singled out as not embodying the sorts of dispositions necessary to successfully teach mathematics through English, and others as not embodying such dispositions. Older teachers, for example, were categorised as problematic – as not adequately disposed to ongoing learning. Concerns about time were also in evidence. In this way, even as a teacher habitus was evident which reflected broader logics of the field of schooling practices – steeped in processes and practices of compliance around English as a medium of instruction – there was also at least discursive contestation over the nature of the policy prerogatives in place, and how they played out at the school level. Teacher learning was construed as beneficial, but the extent to which it was seen as adequate to the task of altering the practices of colleagues viewed as possessing a ‘limited command’ of what was required, revealed a habitus forged through exposure to teachers’ struggles to make sense of educational policy reforms over time. Resonating with the discriminatory practices that attend various forms of English language learning more generally (Phan Le Ha, 2005), the English language capacity and capital of some maths teachers were construed in terms of deficit discourses. There was a tendency to foreground such struggles as evidence of inadequacies, and of the potential for reform to be limited in its effects. The extent to which teachers can improve their English due to their older age, or the hesitance to change the way of teaching, seemed to counter the more overtly effusive support for learning English. A habitus had been formed within a field of schooling practices characterised by increasing demands and competitiveness over their teaching time, and reflected various forms of hesitation and concern about the future of English language learning practices in maths. It seemed difficult for the teacher learning practices to challenge a habitus forged through previous experiences of problematic practices on the part of teachers. This is an example of structured structures serving as structuring structures (Bourdieu, 1998b). Also, teachers who initiate and develop the new way of teaching may meet some barriers due to work pressure. Another maths teacher from School B explained further:

At the school, teachers only implement teaching maths in English for a while; they have only taught several pilot classes because there are too many jobs at the school. For example, every year our school organises exams for gifted students at school level twice, participate in Provincial exams twice and one National exam. Besides, there are other exams such as Olympic 30 April exam for the South of Vietnam; Provincial and National exams at which
students use calculators to solve puzzles of maths, physics, chemistry, and biology; the exams of maths and English on the Internet at different levels, etc. Teachers have to prepare various tests and exam papers, and train students, prepare them for all the exams. I have not mentioned many other jobs yet (clubs, extra-circular activities based on topics…If we manage to teach our subject in English, I am afraid we cannot do all the jobs well. (Deputy Head Teacher of Maths Department, SBTM3, School B)

In this school, the maths teachers accepted changes in their everyday practices when they tried to implement the foreign language policies. However, they also struggled to do so because of the more immediate demands upon them. As Hardy (2013) has observed: “Teachers’ pedagogies, work and learning are heavily influenced by the conditions within which they are undertaken” (p. 207); in this case, the maths teachers’ acquisition of a valued capital – the command of a foreign language, and English in particular – and their ability to use it as a medium in their teaching was challenged by the demands of preparing, designing, and organising exams at different levels, as well as undertaking extra-circular activities.

The foreign language as a valued capital is also contested more overtly within educational institutions. Not everyone agrees with the emphasis on English, even as it is supported in policy. Different individuals and groups respond differently, depending upon their experiences. The resulting dominant practices come to exhibit their own particular “logics,” or ways of being, which, in turn, characterise particular fields (Bourdieu, 1990b). Some are in favour of the plan or consider the plan as an interesting challenge. Others find it quite difficult to carry out because they believe it will make their students think too much about how to use English to express their ideas instead of focusing on solving the tasks more effectively and creatively. This contestation over learning English is reflected in the insights of a Biology Department Head:

I think it will be quite difficult to implement this, especially in some classes in our school or other schools where the number of students who are good at Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing skills is not big. It means both teachers and students will find it difficult to conduct a class as expected. Students have to struggle with vocabulary. It will take them time to choose suitable words or expressions. Each period lasts 45 minutes, but there are many contents to disseminate, many problems to solve. Teachers as well as students, therefore, have to make much effort to complete a lecture of a period; otherwise the lesson plan may be ‘burnt’. It is certain that everything will be easier and more convenient when students have English capacity. At that time, students are more interested in, and want to challenge this way of learning. (Biology Department Head, School A)

This teacher forecast that teacher-learning-to-teach English would be complicated because of students’ capacity in English. As a result, their struggles with timelines and their expectation to complete a lesson and achieve the goal of each class would be inevitable. While not expressing it in these terms, this teacher’s concerns also reflect the colonising influence of English and how support
for English is embedded within conceptions of ‘good practice’, and illuminates how these teachers’ practices were ultimately racially defined by their relationship with English (Pennycook, 1998).

The way in which some teachers were constituted in deficit terms because of their poor capacity with English was also evident in how the Maths Department Head in School B expressed concerns about older teachers:

Teaching other subjects in English medium requires two objects’ capacity. The first is from teachers. The second lies in students who are unfamiliar with this way. Teachers over 50 years old used to learn Russian; they are very confused to learn English from the beginning. For teachers under 35 years old, they can undertake the task, but learners may feel difficult to access this way of teaching. By this I mean young teachers under 35 need the one-two month training, then they can perform in class. They teach from one to two months, they are able to manage their teaching. (Maths Department Head, School B)

The focus on Russian also reflects how there have been different dominant languages in Vietnam, including Chinese, French, and Russian. English has been very much associated with the open door policy since 1986, and teachers of Russian have found themselves marginalised as part of the shift to endorsing English (Phan Le Ha, 2005). Teaching maths in English for these teachers results in not only tensions but also contradictions. Bourdieu argued that fields are social sites where actors, whose particular social dispositions or habitus develop over time, engage with one another in a process of contestation over different capitals that collectively constitute the field (Bourdieu, 1990a). The perception that older teachers did not have the capacity to engage with English is also reflected in Ngoc Ba Doan’s (2016) research, where there was a sense of prejudice against older teachers. These actors embodied their cultural capital in different ways, with some forms of capital being considerably more valuable than others. The challenges faced by older teachers (over 50) who used to learn Russian as a subject at school and at university and whose structured habitus was less amenable to change, were similarly reflected in Pham Hoa Hiep’s (2001) description of how teachers of Russian have found it difficult to learn English as a result of the significant policy changes in 1986 focused on opening Vietnam up to more market-oriented relations.

In my conversation with a Chemistry Specialist at DOET, he highlighted the importance of teacher learning, but also the difficulties of leading such learning under pressures of inadequate time to learn English, and pressures to teach so many classes:

I think teachers are a really important factor, so how their expertise level meets the demand, how the capacity is to meet the demand is the thing they need to be trained…This needs to be solved but how to be solved effectively is a very difficult job because learning English is not simple. The nature of English should be learnt since one is small. Now how a teacher aged 30-40 studies is why people in the society have evaluated that it is difficult to implement this plan. If teachers are advised to put aside everything to go to English classes, it will take 5
years, and then they need to reteach students. It is really difficult. It is not reality. (Chemistry Specialist, DOET)

English is a valued capital that teachers are being encouraged to accumulate. However, this process of accumulation requires much effort, a long time. This Chemistry Specialist’s comments also reflect how there is a continued focus upon teachers’ individual capacity to learn on their own, even as it was recognised that this may not be successful (‘It is really difficult. It is not reality’).

Only when teachers make a strenuous effort, can they engage in practices of educational reform. As the Government of Vietnam (2012c) suggested in policy:

The development of teaching and managerial staff is shown by consolidating, completing the system to train teachers, making a basic and overall reform in the content and method of training, nurturing aiming at forming teaching and managerial staff who are able to implement the reform in general education curriculum after 2015. (p. 10)

Such responses are very generic and fail to account for the specificity of practice that characterises teachers’ learning. Such contextual learning is essential for facilitating teachers’ learning (Cordingley et al., 2007), but tends not to be a dominant logic within the field of schooling practices more broadly, or, as indicated in this research, the field of leading-for-teacher-learning more specifically.

The Principal from School B also complained about the lack of priority policy that guided how to support financing for teachers who teach pilot programs of natural sciences subjects in English. He revealed: “Until now, there are not any documents to guide me to pay more for teachers who apply to teach natural sciences subjects in English.” Reay (1998) argues: “Generating cultural capital is not straightforward, seamless process. It involves a complex amalgam of time, effort and both material and psychological resources” (p. 70). This could suggest why there is a lack of impetus for maths teachers because besides discursive support for improving English as valued capital, there has not been sufficient institutional support for teachers in terms of economic capital.

These snippets provide examples of the contestation surrounding policy support for teaching subjects through English. The policy push for enhanced English competency and capacity within the field of leading-for-teacher-learning seems to be at odds with some of the experiences of teachers within the field. Learning is not seen as easy to facilitate/lead, and this is a challenge to developing the forms of capital the policy seeks to inculcate. However, “learning from disagreement and discussion is also teacher leadership” (Blegen & Kennedy, 2000, p. 4). In other words, the difficulties of teaching maths in English may be understood in part as evidence of the process of learning on the part of teachers and teacher leaders.
In summary, this section has identified some of the characteristic logics of maths teachers’ learning in relation to teaching their subject through English. Their practices characterise the field of leading-for-teacher-learning as the product of the interplay between different agents within the field, including DOET and school administrators, and teachers of maths and foreign languages departments. This section has attempted to capture the complexities of how teachers and administrators respond to policy support for educational reform, but also how such reform is difficult work. The section also reveals how it is difficult for teachers to learn and difficult for those seeking to lead teachers’ learning.

6.2 Leading Learning in Subject Departments

6.2.1 Teacher Learning in Community in Subject Departments

At Schools A and B, the administration teams required teachers to continually improve their expertise and practice, and this often occurred at the subject department level. For example, an English teacher observed that such development was a ‘top priority’ and involved meeting together to discuss particular ‘special topics’ in English that teachers had to teach as part of the ethos of the school (for ‘gifted’ students), but also that this was very difficult to maintain in such a busy school environment:

Expertise jobs in our school have to be a top priority…Exchanging expertise often occurs. Often this is done through lectures in classes, teaching demonstrations, and through the comments that contribute to such lectures. Those times were when we shared, but to make it better, we should have more Subject Department meetings on special topics. For example, the Department Head raises some special topics. I think we should find ways to manage the special topics well ... It means the meetings related to special topics are when we exchange expertise regarding a certain issue. It is especially good for young teachers, but it is also difficult due to time limits. There are many jobs to do at school. Young teachers struggle with the variety of tasks. Senior teachers also guide young teachers, but they are so busy. Even they do not have enough time to go to observe teaching demonstrations… (Teacher SBTE4, School B)

For this teacher, practices of observing teaching demonstrations and attending meetings discussing themes in his subject area were crucial; this situation contrasts with what Pham Hoa Hiep (2001) described as teachers tending not to recognise the possibility of engaging in various forms of learning involving one another, including class observations and various forms of formal and informal discussions and meetings with colleagues. Such responses reveal how teachers could serve as leaders of colleagues’ learning by working together with them, giving one another constructive ideas (Harris & Muijs, 2005; Muijs & Harris, 2003; Writer, 2014).

However, these experiences were still relatively infrequent, and this was a source of anxiety for teachers because they felt they could not devote enough time to this work. The discussions they had
together enabled them to exchange forms of knowledge – specific embodied capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Swartz, 1997) – which the heads of subjects possessed; this embodied capital also included knowledge of useful strategies to assist students. This included helping teachers to teach their students well in class, and to choose proper themes, or points to teach. This also involved helping teachers decide which exercises should be given to students. However, concern about time was evident because of work pressure in this competitive environment. Although they tried to work collaboratively and work as mentors to help young teachers, time was still limited for both experienced and inexperienced teachers. One head of subject’s comment revealed this pressured working environment:

The better the working environment is, the more challenges it has. This is inevitable, but the matter is whether we can overcome or not. Once again we mention leadership, which is very important. Take our school for gifted students as an example. If there were not any challenges, we did not suffer any pressures, then we did not see any difficulties, this school would be valueless in quality from the judgement of colleagues and people! I am sure about that. Therefore, there are certainly many difficulties. (Literature Department Head, School B)

This Subject Head’s comments reflected a professional habitus grounded in experiences of being a senior teacher in a competitive school field. This competitive context fostered a habitus responsive to the constant pressure which characterised this environment, and that normalised such a focus. This was the case for all teachers at School B, High School for Gifted Students, who struggled to maintain their position. This pressure was part of the doxic experiences that characterised these teachers’ work within a school field dominated by constant demands for increased performance. Such doxic experiences are misrecognised as inherently socially arbitrary practices that are a ‘natural’ part of what is considered the norm in specific contexts (Bourdieu, 1977; Deer, 2008); this reflects the ‘practical reasoning’ as expressed by particular groups and individuals in relation to their understanding of the world (Bourdieu, 1990b). In the context of schools for the gifted, such as School B, this includes an acceptance of such competitive pressures as ‘simply how it is’. Teachers accepted the rules of the school and of the education branch for the system of schools for gifted students. Only when teachers were able to survive pressures and difficulties could they bring prestige and reputation to the school, and gain respect – forms of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1977) – valued by colleagues from other schools and the people within and outside the province.

A focus upon subject department meetings was also evident in relation to the Foreign Languages Department Head at School B. In terms of working out the problems faced in the teaching process, and sharing experiences in teaching, this Head commented on the importance of the department meetings (in his case, for foreign languages) in his school:

…There is another activity which is of great importance. They are regular subject department meetings that focus on two tasks. The first is to solve the problems arising in teaching. The
second is teaching demonstration, which is reformed in this school year. It is about teaching a specialised topic. All members of the group attend and draw upon the experience in expertise teaching. (Foreign Languages Department Head, School B)

In this instance, the focus was upon both solving problems as they arose, and teaching demonstrations related to specialised topics. While a habitus reflecting the influence of a gifted sub-school field characterised by a logic of anxiety may be less apparent in this instance, there was still clear concern (‘an activity of great importance’) about how to prepare for and conduct – lead – the demonstration classes. This head emphasised that in this school year, there was a difference in the preparation for and assessment of a teaching demonstration. In the past, teaching demonstrations involved observing and assessing teachers’ colleagues, with a focus upon the nature of these teachers’ teaching practices. However, this had since shifted to focusing upon how teachers organised a class with the support and advice from other teachers, so that they could achieve a more productive atmosphere in the class, and ensure their students’ active participation in that specialised class. This was a new kind of teacher learning – an example of how teachers provided the conditions – took a “lead” – in focusing their colleagues’ attention upon the nature of student learning. This opened up the possibility of challenging established, doxic experiences (Bourdieu, 1977; Deer, 2008).

The focus on more actively observing teaching demonstration classes was also evident for teachers from School A. In line with such discussion, a teacher at School A revealed this was an important part of his repertoire of learning:

I think… I myself learn on my own, improve, learn experience from colleagues, friends, make teaching demonstration observations – it is a regular activity, and guide trainee teachers. Through observing classes, we draw much experience in organising a class, in method of teaching, or the content of a lesson ... … we will learn other teachers’ strengths, which help to make our method of teaching become better. (Teacher SATL2, School A)

Adding to this point, the Biology Department Head at School A explained some benefits of teaching demonstrations as one of the approaches to improve teachers’ expertise:

Demonstration periods have many effects. First, we can see how that teacher performs a lesson, learns from them or draws some experience and tells them so that they know how to improve and they can overcome difficulties. Second, the administration team regulates demonstration periods so that they are not repetitive and are sufficiently challenging for students. So when a teacher prepares to demonstrate that lesson, all remaining teachers will work together finding ways to deal with those challenging issues to be taught. Through that process, teachers learn from one another, and can invest in expertise more. (Biology Department Head, School A)

These excerpts show the nature of teacher leadership for learning when they work as a group – before, during, and after each teaching demonstration period. This required their time, effort, and
especially responsibility shared amongst the group members. During the procedure of observing classes, or after observing each class, observers and the teacher who presented spent time drawing out experiences from the lessons. The whole group then commented on the good points and shortcomings in comparison with the aims of that period. They referred to things that could be done differently, and especially noticed whether the students were able to actively take part in the class. From this, a logic of evaluation was evident within the field of schooling practices (as expressed at this particular school site), involving both the presenter and the group evaluating himself/herself to see what needed to be improved. Unlike the individualism, conservatism and presentism (Lortie, 1975) which characterises so much of teachers’ work, teachers sought to engage with one another to improve their practice. Good results also ascribed teachers with professional prestige – a valued form of symbolic capital in this context. In contrast, if observers did not witness high quality teaching demonstration for 2-3 times continuously, they felt this would certainly bring teachers loss of prestige and negative outcomes. Consequently, the whole group of teachers invested and drew upon various forms of cultural and social capital in their practices of teaching demonstration as part of their work to gain symbolic capital of respect from their students and colleagues, and to maintain their position in the school. Consequently, the logics of leading-for-teacher-learning did not simply reflect efforts to improve engagement of teachers for the benefit of student learning, but also for reasons of esteem.

6.2.2 Special Topic Lesson Plans and Special Topic Teaching/Skill-based Instruction

Apart from discussing expertise issues in their own subject area or observing colleagues teaching demonstration classes, teachers were also able to lead-for-learning in designing special topic lesson plans. The following are some comments made by the Deputy-Principal at School B about how the development of special topic lessons facilitated teachers’ learning:

At high schools for gifted students, teachers’ expertise is mainly developed through special topic lesson plans that teachers learn from on their own. … High schools for gifted students often have more detailed, special topics that other schools do not. These special topic lesson plans are for gifted students. Through composing those special topic lesson plans, teachers’ expertise is improved. Not everyone is able to do those special topic lesson plans. Then there are MOET’s programs to train teachers of high schools for gifted students. Then special topic lesson plans that teachers themselves teach, and train. (Deputy-Principal, School B)

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3 Special topic lesson plans: There are many forms of special topic lesson plans. For example, special topic lesson plans for training gifted students, or guiding weak students to learn, or guiding students to consolidate their knowledge before High School Graduation exam. These plans are made by schools or by the teachers who are in charge of that group of students. Besides these forms, teachers who teach specialised subjects at high schools for gifted students have to make and teach special topic lesson plans based on MOET’s frame of the intensive program for high schools for gifted students. It is an advanced part of knowledge for gifted students. It is upgraded and enlarged from background knowledge. This intensive program is more open than the standard program for mainstream students. Teachers have a right to design programs depending on materials/learning sources, students, and targets to achieve.
In this instance, the Deputy-Principal at School B put an emphasis on the teacher learning through specialised topics. It was also evident that teachers learning on their own (in this case, in relation to specialised topics for gifted students) was a dominant practice. A proactive habitus on the part of those in schools was evident in the way the Deputy ascribed responsibility for such learning to the individual teacher him/herself. This was also a reflection of the broader field of power, including the influence of relevant policies (Government of Vietnam, 2010), (MOET, 2012b), (MOET, 2012c) with their focus upon teachers’ reform in method of teaching, and testing and assessment.

Special topic teaching was challenging. Teachers struggled with Literature special topic lesson plans and special topic teaching, and identified demands and significant pressures of developing such lessons:

…”When students learn special topic lesson plans, teachers have to give them big assignments. Special topic teaching as part of their normal subjects is not easy at all. Teachers have to invest much in doing research. We have to guide students to do research exercises, outline procedures for students: how to do drafts, how to amend, and when to give a talk. It looks like a workshop. Through this, teachers also get to grasp a lot of new knowledge, and develop enough capacity to guide and control students. After big exercises, teachers draw good points, and shortcomings, then finalise those exercises because they are deeply special topics. I am not sure about other subjects, but for Literature, each grade has 12 specialised topics within 70 periods. This is included in MOET’s regulation. Teachers can conduct these periods in afternoon periods, or have to organise in a certain form. For instance, there was one year when I worked on Han Mac Tu and Xuan Dieu, two of the new poets. Among the new poets, I chose two typical authors for students to do research in depth on those two authors. Although my requirement was about new poetry movement, which meant comprising many authors, I let the students focus on two authors related to Thao Anh province. This was a chance to know more about not only new poetry but also locality. After students researched the information, I gathered, gave marks, reviewed and made alterations. From that special topic, students understood those authors well. Afterwards, I took this topic and made improvement for the whole. Then this completed my special topic lesson plan. This is only applied in schools for gifted students. (Literature teacher SBTL3, School B)

Here we can see how the teacher’s habitus was forged through exposure to a field of schooling in which having to work with his gifted students, and the specialised topics they must complete as part of their studies, was part of the dominant logics of practices. Again reflecting more dominant practices within the field of schooling practices, teachers in these circumstances also undertook a lot of learning on their own (Lortie, 1975, Rosenholtz, 1991; Hardy, 2012). Leading teacher learning was very much the responsibility of the individual teacher. This learning was considered an important part of on-the-job activity. The teachers accepted that this was the case, but also struggled with how to learn to improve their practice as an ongoing part of their teaching. They led themselves; they were teacher leaders who acted as their own guides, mentors and advisors, to improve the quality of Literature education according to the new requirements. The field of leading-for-teacher-learning of Literature teachers at School B was influenced by MOET’s regulation and
pressure for increased emphasis on specialised topics designed as a workshop. Through his own experience and strategies, this Literature teacher guided his students to explore the knowledge of not only a new poetry trend but also the place where students were born and grew up.

Leading for teacher learning in relation to the special topics was also evident in how the Biology Department Head at School A spoke about providing teachers with the opportunity to engage with such topics as part of their work:

In the Biology Department field, I give teachers the conditions so that they can develop their expertise by letting everyone select specialised topics suitable for their capacity to teach gifted students. I encourage everyone to write specialised topics, initiatives, and support teachers who meet difficulties in teaching challenging lessons or solving challenging exam papers. I give everyone in the department a chance to be in charge of a team of gifted students. (Biology Department Head, School A)

Unlike the situation for the Literature teacher at School B, a more “collective” disposition was evident in relation to the Biology Department Head at School A in her more apparent, overt support for teachers. Within the Biology Department of School A, the Department Head acted as a facilitator to help other teachers. She motivated her colleagues to choose and write specialised topics and/or initiatives that they were able to, and assisted them when they struggled with challenges during the teaching process; this included dealing with challenging lessons or exam papers. Her support of teachers’ professional learning was evidence of her leading-for-teacher-learning. Also, she gave her subject department members real responsibility. This was evident in the way all the teachers in the department were given a chance to be responsible for teams of gifted students. Through this task over time, more collaborative logics were evident, challenging more individualistic logics that characterise the field of teachers’ learning (Hardy, 2012), and logics of leading-for-teacher-learning. This reveals how teachers can also be supported by more senior teachers to improve their expertise, rather than having to lead themselves and their peers in their learning.

6.2.3 Teaching Teams of Gifted Students

The requirement to teach groups of gifted students also served as a vehicle for teachers’ learning within the two schools. This was evident in the way the design of a specialised topic was considered essential to the work of teachers within subject departments:

In the task of training gifted students,… the main teacher … is in charge of the team of gifted students …[as well as] being in charge of a specialised topic. (Biology Department Head, School A)

The data revealed teachers were responsible for teaching and learning within the school. Through high expectations within the Biology Department, teachers developed a disposition towards
engaging in school plans for change, including participating in designing specialised topics to train
gifted students. The response is the inculcation of a habitus responsive to these demands.

That teachers were expected to perform at a high standard was also evident in how the Mathematics
Department Head described expectations of teachers in relation to solving advanced problems to be
provided to students:

…A further second thing is that a maths puzzle is given 2, 3, or 5 ways to solve/ solutions by
you, then that maths puzzle is called an “interesting puzzle”. The puzzle that is solved by one
way is considered a “challenge puzzle”. And one more thing is that when he (sic) observes
students as well as colleagues, if you only have one solution to that maths puzzle, you have
not been a teacher yet. The reason for this is that the fact a teacher as well as student can solve
10 maths puzzles is not as good as the fact s/he can solve one in 10 ways. So it is the thing
that should be developed most in expertise of a high school for gifted students. (Maths
Department Head, School B)

In this example, this head focused on the importance
of teacher learning in a very challenging
environment – a high school for gifted students. For his Maths Department, maths teachers were
required to develop and embody a form of cultural capital – specifically, the capacity to solve a
maths puzzle in many ways. If not, it would be difficult for them to maintain their position in this
school. Accordingly, each teacher should be creative to seek their own appropriate trajectories.
Again, there was strong evidence of a challenge to more supportive approaches
to leading teachers’
learning, and expectations that teachers would address their learning needs on their own.

In addition to this, the Foreign Languages Department Head at School B pointed out a further
practice of leading learning. This occurred when young or new teachers were given the opportunity
to teach teams of gifted students by working with other experienced teachers:

The school often gives the teachers the best conditions to develop their expertise. Take
teaching specialised classes as an example. Currently the school gives the teachers who have
just been appointed to the school the opportunity to teach specialised classes by cooperating
with an experienced teacher. When both teachers undertake the duty to teach the same subject
in the same class, they will share ideas, experience, knowledge, how to teach with each other.
It is a chance to help the new teachers develop better. Afterwards, these new teachers can lead
their group. If they are not given the opportunity to teach specialised classes, it will be
difficult for them to lead the group. (Foreign Languages Department Head, School B)

In this case, the focus was on the cooperation and exchanges of experience between young or new
teachers, and more experienced teachers. This involved sharing ideas, experiences, knowledge, and
ways of teaching related to teaching teams of gifted students. This was evident in the fact that new,
inexperienced teachers were accompanied by senior teachers, who showed their concern for training
new teachers (MOET, 2012c, 2013a) when they were assigned to teach the same subject with gifted
students; such close collaboration is not common practice in Vietnamese education (Pham Hoa
Hiep, 2001), but it is an important effort to perhaps challenge the doxa that surrounds expectations that more individualistic modes of learning are the ‘norm’. Teachers learned from their colleagues and hoped they would be able to take a lead in their work, leading the group in the future. In this way, it could be argued, there was evidence of a logic which challenged more traditional individualistic approaches to teachers’ learning, challenging the individualistic trait theory approach to leading (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Niesche, 2011; Stogdill, 1948, 1974).

In addition to the support teachers received from their colleagues, the support from students was also highly valued by the Biology Department Head at School A:

…I also want to mention old students. For example, students who I taught before and they won National prizes. Many times in their study process, they have interesting documents; they sent me or emailed me. Those things also helped me to develop my expertise, especially students who are interested in my subject, adore teachers and care about the younger generation. (Biology Department Head, School A)

This Department Head appreciated students’ concerns about her teaching and the next generation of students. Her learning-focused disposition was evident in her regard for her old students who provided her with valuable materials via email or by post. These students contributed to a respectful and responsive habitus on the part of a Biology Department Head who converted this material (and symbolic) capital into different forms of material (and symbolic) capital when she made these resources available to her students. This process entailed a translation of accumulated capital on the part of her students during their study at higher levels of education (especially in teams of gifted students) but especially university education, and the transformation of this capital into a form that could be used for teaching purposes back at the school. These former students sought to convert their capital in ways that enabled further accrual by these teachers and subsequent students. Therefore, this teacher who led other teachers, was herself led by former students who assisted her with accrued social capital (acquaintance with students) and cultural capital related to her own subject.

Like the Biology Department Head at School A, one Maths teacher at School B also mentioned his students’ influence on his learning:

…The further good third source in my teaching process for gifted students is students’ answers. I can give students assignments or ask them to do research; afterwards I can study from students’ papers or answers, so we can learn from students. (Maths teacher SBTM4, School B)

This teacher emphasised that teachers could learn from their present students, not just from former ones. This teacher himself learned from the gifted students in his classes as part of his ongoing practice. This practice was apparent in the way he asked his students to do assignments, and then
their assignments were considered as lessons for him and other teachers. This process of learning from ongoing practice might be understood as a form of reflective practice in action (Schon, 1983, 2003). However, it was more than this. This process also entailed the transformation of his students’ capital into a form in which he and his colleagues could gain benefit. In other words, his classes were a social site where both teachers and students could accrue more cultural capital in the form of particular types of knowledge pertaining to mathematics. The way in which this teacher reflected upon learning from his students’ work indicates a form of ‘research’ on the part of this teacher into his classroom practices – even as such practices are not common in Vietnam (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2006a). Arguably, this capital, in turn, contributed to the more productive logics within the field of leading-for-teacher-learning.

When asked more about some resources that helped teachers to study and improve their learning in relation to teaching gifted students, this maths teacher also identified the internet as an informative source that can be shared with others:

…Yes. I see the biggest source is the materials on the internet. I join some forums, websites on maths in the world, e.g., mathlinks.ro, mathscape.org, forum geometricorum … then it is the source I get from the Internet. I participate, and exchange expertise with other members in those forums. (Maths teacher SBTM4, School B)

By accessing the internet to the links mathlinks.ro, mathscape.org, or the forum geometricorum, this teacher was able to explore a lot of professional knowledge relating to maths. His relations with other members of the forum teaching maths, and the exchange of their ideas, also served as a form of social capital which he was able to translate into cultural capital in the form of improved understanding of maths. That is, through this practice, he transformed social capital and cultural capital into an embodied form, evident in improved teacher learning. This capital accumulation, through engagement with people on these fora, was an example of how this teachers’ learning was “led” by his participation in these online activities.

6.3 Implementing the Pilot English 10 Program within the Schools

This section reveals how teachers’ dispositions, evident in striving to teach and implement the Pilot English 10 Program within the two schools, helped contribute to what is described as the field of leading-for-teacher-learning, and the broader field of schooling practices more generally. (The program is called ‘English 10’ because it spans ten years of time - from Grade 3 to Grade 12). The implementation of this pilot program was facilitated by support from MOET and DOET, particularly the assistance of the feedback, comments, advice, and experiences that the English Language Teacher (ELT) Specialist in DOET and teachers in the province provided. However, there was also much learning occurring about the program within the two schools, particularly
School B, and by teachers on their own. The pilot program is a program for teaching English that is not yet fully officially endorsed for use in all schools, as the program may change before being implemented across all school sites. Some of this learning also occurred through teachers’ access to electronic forums in which teachers from other schools discussed the ‘Pilot Program’.

6.3.1 Implementing the Pilot Program

English is one of the three compulsory subjects in the national high school examination that commenced in the school year 2014-2015. As such, English proficiency has come to be a valued embodied capital. Students do four examination papers. Maths, literature, and English are compulsory, and the remaining examination papers are optional. This examination is used for the purposes of High School graduation and for entry into University. For students, the capacity to understand and communicate in English when they graduate from high school is considered more and more to be a basic skill that all students have to embody. A high level of English proficiency is therefore needed on the part of teachers, and as a result, there was a considerable focus on the place of English in the schools, and of the need for teachers of English to be working at a high level, achieving required qualifications to teach English. As part of this process, there was considerable pressure upon teachers to lead their own learning and that of colleagues in relation to the teaching of English within their respective schools.

Within this broader context of reform, the ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager at DOET, and administrators and teachers at high schools in Thao Anh province tried to successfully implement the English 10 pilot program. School B was one of eight high schools out of 51 high schools in the province that implemented the pilot program. Most Grade 10 students at School B enrolled in this pilot in the school year 2013-2014 and met the requirements in the examination to test their English ability of four skills at the beginning of the school year. This was revealed by the Foreign Languages Department Head, as follows:

School B is the only high school where most Grade 10 students enrolled in the English 10 pilot program in the 2013-2014 school year, and passed the entrance examination. Only when students attained the average grade point of examination subjects (including Listening, Writing, and Speaking) of five or over five [out of 10], were they allowed to follow this new program... And most of the students passed it. (Foreign Languages Department Head, School B)

From the comment provided by the subject department Head at School B, it can be seen that this program required a satisfactory to high standard in all language skills (the average grade point of 5 and above). It was therefore expected that students achieve the required level of English in order to have the opportunity to undertake this pilot program at the school. The school performed well as a whole because it was very selective about the students it enrolled. Not all students were admitted to
undertake this pilot program; only those who passed were accepted. The Foreign Languages Head’s acceptance of the situation reveals a habitus forged within a field of schooling practices within which such competitive logics for English language development were taken-for-granted as acceptable practice. The result was the cultivation of a significant level of compliance with, and acceptance of, this policy reform. This was a competitive process, as students could only be accepted into the course if they passed the preliminary English exam.

Other schools in the province have not implemented this pilot yet for a number of reasons. First, due to the difficult nature of the program, schools have not forced their students to participate when they have not voluntarily enrolled in the program. A further concern is the restriction on informing students about the program at some schools, according to Project 2020. The program is deliberately selective in its intent. In part, this is in response to some high schools not having enough teachers with ‘C1 qualifications’ to teach the program, or enough facilities. These C1 qualifications are a relatively advanced level of English attainment as measured against the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR). See Table 6.1 and Table 6.2 below for a summary of these credentials, and how they have been translated in the Vietnamese context:

Table 6.1 The 6-level language capacity framework for Vietnam, and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6-level language capacity framework for Vietnam (KNLNNVPN)</th>
<th>Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Level 1</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Level 3</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Level 5</td>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>C2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 The 6-level language capacity framework for Vietnam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 levels</th>
<th>Overall descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Level 1</td>
<td>Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions. Can introduce oneself and others, and can answer the questions about personal details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Level 2</td>
<td>Can understand familiar sentences and structures regularly used related to basic communication need. Can exchange the information on familiar and routine topics. Can describe one’s background, surroundings, and matters of immediate need in a simple way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermi Level 3</td>
<td>Can understand the main points of a clear, standard paragraph or speech on familiar topics in work, school, leisure, etc. Can handle most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Abilities and Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 4</strong></td>
<td>Can understand the main ideas of a complex text about concrete and abstract topics, including technical exchanges in one’s field of specialisation. Can communicate with native speakers fluently and spontaneously. Can produce clear, detailed texts on various subjects and explain a point of view on an issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 5</strong></td>
<td>Can understand and recognise implicit meanings of long texts with a wide range. Can express ideas fluently and spontaneously without having difficulty in searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed texts on complex topics, showing the ability of organising texts, and using connectors and cohesive devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 6</strong></td>
<td>Can understand almost everything heard or read easily. Can sum up the information from spoken and written sources, rearranging the information and presenting it again logically. Can express oneself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, distinguishing nuanced meanings under complex circumstances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If teachers do not have a high level of English, it is construed as very difficult for them to teach this program. Teachers who have not attained English proficiency as required (C1 for high school teachers) have to try to learn on their own until they obtain C1, and then they are allowed to teach the Pilot English 10 curriculum. Indeed, this focus upon C1 certification (as part of the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR)) is itself a reflection of the valuing of an external, high-stakes conception of English language learning, based as it is upon a European conception of English, rather than more localised conceptions. English can be seen as continuing to operate in a dominant way, as a language of colonisation, even as it may have the potential to be engaged in alternative ways (Pennycook, 1998).

The challenges surrounding learning about the new program were evident in the way the ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager at DOET described the nature of demands upon teachers’ teaching and learning practices, including the need to undertake considerable learning on their own within their own school setting:

> Regarding English subject, we are implementing the new, difficult program. Many teachers claim the time factor: 45 minutes is not enough for them to carry out all contents…But they have a right to decide what they can teach from the textbook in that 45-minute period. Secondly, they should be creative as long as they make the class lively, flexible, and enable learners’ study. Thirdly, they have to learn on their own, train on their own, and see again if their leadership is assured. When doing so, their responsibility will improve.

> …To meet the demand for the educational reform, the first thing is that teachers have to learn on their own in order to assure the requirements for language. The second is about the
capacity of expertise and pedagogy, the capacity of testing and assessment suitable for the new program. This means reforming testing and assessment. (ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager, DOET)

This comment reveals a field of schooling practices in which teachers’ learning is characterised by struggles over how to manage not only time, but also how to learn to use more creative pedagogies, and how to undertake this learning largely on their own – all practices characteristic of teachers’ learning in Vietnam (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001), but not reflecting the more collaborative and structured conditions for the successful facilitation of teachers’ learning more broadly (Cordingley et al., 2007; Timperley et al., 2007). Through a more individualistic conception of teachers’ work, teachers were encouraged to lead their learning on their own to continuously acquire more cultural capital (mastering the requirements for language teaching and methods of testing and assessment).

However, and at the same time, the ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager from DOET also organised workshops to help teachers to develop professionally. One of those workshops was about designing the tests for the Pilot English 10 Program, as explained by the Foreign Languages Department Head, at School B. This workshop also involved the participation of this Department Head – further evidence of the close association between teacher learning within School B and the Pilot Program:

... besides that, I participated officially in DOET workshops, in the role of presenter, the ELT Specialist and I were both the main lecturers at the workshops entitled Making/Composing tests for the Pilot English 10 Program according to Foreign Language Project 2020. It was necessary to have this workshop due to a new program. A new program framework has to require the new way of testing and assessment. ...not completely new, but different so that it was reasonable for that procedure. (Foreign Languages Department Head, School B).

This Foreign Languages Department Head stressed the importance of the workshop for which the ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager at DOET and he were responsible. With their cultural capital through the experience that both had gained about testing practices, they tried to guide and help teachers with the tests. It was a difficult job, but this Department Head was very enthusiastic about explaining the criteria and giving some samples of tests to analyse. I also attended this workshop when I collected data. It was held for about 48-50 teachers who were successful in achieving the C1 certificate. There, I observed that through their efforts to help teachers understand assessment practices in particular, this Head of Department (and DOET Vice-Manager) were examples of teacher leaders who acted as sources of expertise and information (Muijs & Harris, 2003, p. 439). Together with the ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager at DOET, this Department Head encouraged teachers to discuss and give their opinion, and was willing to answer the teachers’ questions. Therefore, as difficult as it was making the tests, the teachers understood how to compose the tests for the Pilot English 10 Program due to
this workshop. Through this example, what might be understood as the ‘field of leading-for-teacher-learning’ was evident in how the ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager at DOET and the Foreign Languages Department Head at School B worked together, supported their colleagues in the workshop, and in how teachers led their learning by discussing, sharing together their ideas and experience.

However, at all times, this work was always oriented towards those teachers who had attained C1 certificates, and within the parameters of a dominant conception of English within the Pilot English 10 Program. Again, the field of schooling practices was a site for particular kinds of leading-for-teacher-learning that construed these teachers as worthy of these forms of intervention, for broadly competitive educational (and ultimately, economic) purposes, and of the program as unproblematic in its approach to English language learning.

In addition to attending this workshop, the teachers of English also tried to improve their understanding of the new program through intensive courses, and other workshops organised by MOET and DOET. This learning was often focused upon learning about particular textbooks. This was evident in how the teacher of English SBTE3, at School B explained about a workshop she attended:

Some teachers and I (the total was 13 teachers) who were prepared for teaching the Pilot English 10 Program were sent to attend the workshop on the Teaching English 10 textbook organised by MOET in Ho Chi Minh City. Participants were ELT specialists at DOETs and teachers who were going to teach this new program in the provinces from Hue or Quang Binh turning back to South Vietnam…The organisers published the book on behalf of MOET and the authors. They introduced the textbook, asked teachers to discuss, teaching some sample periods… Then they guided us through ways of testing and assessment. (Teacher SBTE3, School B)

This teacher ‘led’ her learning by attending the workshop on the Teaching English 10 textbook organised by MOET in another city. Through these different experiences, she had a variety of interactions with diverse actors, but also interactions which further consolidate existing practices in English classrooms in Vietnam, including a strong reliance upon textbooks (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001). As a result, she engaged in very particular forms of capital accumulation including in relation to: institutionalised capital (in the form of C1 certificates), symbolic capital (recognition and allowance to teach the Pilot English 10 Program), and social capital (the interactions with other teachers in different provinces, workshop organisers, and textbook authors, etc.). Through such various modes of learning, this teacher acknowledged the benefits, but was less aware of the selectiveness of the learning process in which she was involved – both in terms of who was engaged in this learning (teachers with C1 certificates) and the nature of this learning (various workshops on textbooks in terms of methods of teaching, as well as testing and assessment).
More conservative logics within the field of schooling practices, and teachers’ learning, were also evident in the way in which the implementation of the Pilot English 10 Program was regarded as satisfactory by the ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager at DOET, and how he accorded this success to the ‘training’ around the new textbooks, organised by DOET:

Thao Anh province has the largest number of high schools in the country which implemented this set of textbooks (called English10 years according to National Foreign Language Project 2020). The outcome of pilot program implementation in the first year (School year 2013-2014) was quite good. 8/51 high schools in the province with the largest number of classes and students implemented effectively, School B included. It was showed in the improvement of students’ ability of listening and speaking. Actually, at first, there were a number of difficulties because students’ vocabulary was limited, but later DOET organised to train teachers and organised the forum for teachers to share experience in teaching vocabulary. Everything was overcome after one semester. (ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-manager, DOET)

In this way, more conservative logics, including various forms of training provided by DOET for teachers, oriented to curriculum coverage focused on particular texts, were dominant within the field of leading-for-teacher-learning. In these instances, more substantive practices of leading-for-teacher-learning may have been evident in other ways, but were circumscribed by who was allowed to participate (those teachers with C1 certification), a focus upon issues of curriculum content coverage, and an emphasis upon textbooks.

6.3.2 Learning about the Pilot Program through Electronic Forums

Much of teachers’ learning about the Pilot Program also occurred through teachers engaging with electronic forums within their schools. There was considerable evidence of efforts amongst teachers to facilitate their own learning about the Pilot Program through these electronic forums. The following extract from a teacher on a discussion list who had been undertaking the Pilot English 10 Program provides insights into the nature and challenges of learning about the teaching and learning situation involving this program, and how she sought to learn from other teachers on the online forum to try to improve her teaching as she struggled with the new English program within her school. Again, there was a strong focus upon learning in relation to textbooks:

Now I am teaching the pilot English 10 textbook, the period Speaking, Unit 2 (period 12). My school’s students are also excited about learning this program, students can interact with one another very much in class. However, my school’s students also meet some difficulties similar to those in fellow schools. Up to Unit 2, vocabulary is much and difficult. Students start to feel more tense. I carried out reviewing simple vocabulary at the beginning, and by the end of some periods, and students also participated very eagerly and felt more relaxed. This also helped them remember more vocabulary. I am also trying to help students to get used to the rhythm of the program.

Talking about the time issue, the contents of some periods take so long, for example, Language, Looking back and Project. If teaching fully, it is impossible to keep up with the
time. Regarding grammar, teachers have to teach through this part, then students are able to practise easily. At the moment, I have to cut exercises in the same section, and ask students to do this at home. Do teachers have better solutions to discuss more?... (Foreign Language Department Head, School E)

This Foreign Language Head at School E was learning about the benefits and challenges of the new program and sought to improve her understanding of the new English curriculum via this electronic forum. She explained that students were interested in the new area of English communication practices, however, they also experienced pressure through the huge input of new words (vocabulary). They felt tense when they started Unit 2 and went to the part Language, Looking back and Project. Her comments about the time issue, and question (Do teachers have better solutions to discuss more?) reveal challenges of implementing the new textbook in compliance with the policy National foreign language project 2020. They also reveal how standardised practices of relying upon particular types of texts and approaches to implementing new language reforms have resulted in teachers focusing their learning upon specific aspects of language development e.g. the amount of vocabulary students have access to, and that such foci dominate teachers’ learning and subsequent practices, rather than concerns about whether and how students can actually make sense of contextualised and communicative forms of language expression (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001).

While teachers made efforts to find solutions to their problems of learning how to implement the Program, included seeking advice from other English colleagues and the ELT specialist, this work was always circumscribed by how the program was organised, including a focus upon techniques of teaching vocabulary, rather than more holistic approaches to English language learning, or whether and how such learning might be appropriate:

First, teachers need to define active words and passive words. In the period, focus students on practising Active words through language games such as crosswords. We can search again techniques to teach vocabulary in VTTN4 magazines or search on the internet, then you will have so many techniques to help students train vocabulary they have just learnt. Remember that one word is Active in this lesson, but can be Passive in the other, so you classify Active words and Passive words based on each lesson content. (ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager, DOET)

In one sense, this ELT Specialist, DOET and General Education Division Vice-Manager at DOET acted as a facilitator, not just a top-down manager, and encouraged teachers to continuously learn through professional magazines or internet resources to develop their pedagogical knowledge within their schools – all part of the plethora of potential approaches to foster teachers’ learning (Timperley et al, 2007). However, again, such logics for teachers’ learning were also circumscribed by a focus upon particular kinds of teacher learning – those associated with more reductive

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conceptions of English language learning, and without necessarily taking into account various contextualised and communicative forms of expression (Pham, Hoa Hiep, 2001).

6.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, leading teacher learning was evident in a variety of ways within schools in the province, and particularly within ‘exemplary’ schooling sites (School A and School B). Lingard et al. (2003) state that leadership is recognised as exerting significant influence on all aspects of practice within schools. In the schools presented in this chapter, this included leadership for learning oriented towards more economic logics, and a broader field of power that fostered practices of leadership-for-learning that placed a strong emphasis upon teacher learning for English language acquisition and capacity. Leading for teacher learning was also influenced by relevant policies, influenced as these are by the broader field of power – including more bureaucratic (administrative) and economic logics. However, these were not the only influences at play.

Teachers were also engaged in more collaborative and arguably productive modes of teacher learning, including sharing ideas and resources with one another. This included English teachers seeking to work more collaboratively with their maths colleagues, and teacher engagement in on-line maths forums. However, the extent to which such practices challenged more doxic practices within the schooling field, and more individualistic logics of learning within the field of leading-for-teacher-learning in particular, is a moot point. Also, while there was evidence of contestation against more reductive approaches to English language learning, there was also evidence of how conservative, individualistic approaches to teaching and learning dominated the learning of teachers.

Teachers were important players in the field of leading-for-teacher-learning as they engaged in particular strategies, employing their expertise as part of this process and revealing conflicts, complexities and practices of work intensification. During this process, teachers invested much time, energy, and intellectual capital. There was also evidence of anxiety resulting from the authorities’ demand for their learning and expertise improvement, from work pressure, or time and funding issues. And all of these pressures and demands had an impact upon teachers’ learning, and reflected particular dispositions towards their learning on the part of those orchestrating such initiatives. As a consequence, the field of teacher-leading-for-learning within schools was revealed as a site of struggle between competing logics.

The opportunities and challenges that attended practices leading-for-teacher-learning in relation to exemplary schooling sites within the province continue to be revealed in the next chapter, Chapter 7, which focuses on practices of leading-for-teacher-learning beyond the school sites.
Chapter 7. Leading for Teacher Learning Practices Originating Beyond the School Sites

7.0 Introduction

Chapter 7 focuses specifically upon contested practices of leading-for-teacher-learning informing the work of teachers within the two ‘exemplary’ schools that are the primary focus of the research, but practices that originated beyond the individual school sites, and to which teachers had access. The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section describes the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning originating within the province, including teachers undertaking more traditional ‘in-service’ professional learning workshops and courses offered by the province. The second section focuses on teachers undertaking tertiary studies - including teachers taking intensive courses, particularly certificates in English, and Master’s courses more broadly. The third section emphasises teachers participating in various cross-school learning initiatives - particularly competitive ‘contests’ against teachers in other schools, as well as engaging in various exchange visits with other schools. The chapter concludes with practices of leading-for-teacher-learning internationally, involving an international lecturer modelling exemplary English teaching, and how some teachers were supported to do short- and long-term study abroad. During the process of analysing the data, Bourdieu’s thinking tools of field, habitus, and capital are also employed, as in Chapter 6, to identify the logics of practice that characterised these processes of leading-for-teacher-learning. Relevant literature on teachers’ learning and English language learning, as outlined in the literature review, are also drawn upon to help make sense of these practices of leading-for-teacher-learning originating outside of schools.

Also, to help avoid conceptual confusion over the way terms are deployed, as in the previous chapter, the term ‘teacher learning’ is used to refer to all instances of teachers engaging in a range of professional learning experiences – both more traditional workshop approaches (sometimes described as ‘PD’), as well as more active teacher-centred approaches. However, as I make my argument, I also try to specify which form of teacher learning is being advocated in the instances of ‘leading-for-teacher-learning’ that are outlined in the chapter. Those instances of leading-for-teacher-learning that seem to be associated with what the state deems important and its processes for ensuring their advocacy, for example, are akin to what Day and Sachs (2004) describe as more ‘managerial’ professionalism, while those instances of more teacher-centred approaches might be understood as more ‘democratic’ (Day & Sachs, 2004) in orientation.
7.1 Leading-for-Teacher-Learning within the Region: Teachers Doing In-service Professional Learning

As discussed in earlier chapters, School A and School B are two of the most prestigious high schools in the province. Under these circumstances, the field of leading-for-teacher-learning as it pertained to these two schools was characterised by particular logics of practice. These logics included teachers and administrators being expected to share and exchange experiences for professional and pedagogical development. These practices included teachers constantly developing and improving how to teach their subjects and giving class demonstrations, and observing demonstrations of other teachers’ classes. It also involved working closely with their colleagues to improve their teaching practice, including in relation to English as a medium of instruction.

However, various leading-for-teacher-learning practices were also evident involving opportunities and experiences undertaken by teachers outside the individual school sites as well. This included how teachers were engaged in various forms of externally facilitated in-service professional learning practices. Teachers were also supported to be involved in exchange visits with other teachers from other schools, regions and provinces. As a result, there was evidence of the embodiment of particular kinds of social capital (the relationship with colleagues) and cultural capital to help support such learning. This capital accrual seemed to be an important part of supporting – leading – the learning practices of these teachers.

This section explores how short-term workshops were seen as key approaches to teachers’ learning by teachers from these two schools. These ‘in-service’ workshops were organised by MOET, DOET, groups of high schools in the province, or in the region prior to the beginning of each school-year, or when considered necessary at different times during the year. The purpose of the workshops was to assist teachers to update and acquire valued kinds of capital (cultural capital as new knowledge and information, and social capital as rapport between teachers in different schools and among work colleagues) in an effort to resolve specific concerns and issues arising during teachers’ teaching and learning.

7.1.1 Teacher Workshops as Traditional Vehicles for Teacher Learning

Training courses or short-term workshops are considered a common approach for teacher professional learning (Hardy, 2012); this is also the case in the Vietnamese context (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001), and this was evident in teachers’ descriptions of their professional learning practices. Through such approaches, practices of leading-for-teacher-learning were evident in more traditional ways. Support for more traditional approaches to teacher learning were evident in the way the Foreign Languages Department Head at School B described workshops experienced every year, as
provided by the province, and Ministry of Education more broadly. These workshops involved specific, discrete focus areas, including particular teaching methods. In relation to English, this also included the discrete learning of particular skills, such as how to design exercises for students to practice speaking skills:

Teachers are professionally trained through workshops or regular training courses annually. Workshops have two levels – regional/provincial level and ministerial level.

Workshops at regional level are those that are organised for some provinces. Workshops often occur just for a few days. Annual training courses in expertise and pedagogy occur in teachers’ most convenient time. It is summer. For example, MOET organised a training course in English expertise, particularly teaching methods. This kind of course often takes place for one week. During this time, MOET invited qualified lecturers of prestigious universities in the country to teach trainees. These lecturers carried on teaching a thematic topic on pronunciation, or multiple-intelligences. They taught trainees how to design exercises to practise speaking skills. This meant topics were close to the high school education program we were doing in class. (Foreign Languages Department Head, School B)

This focus upon discrete skill development reflects more traditional approaches to teachers’ learning, and potentially, how more managerial forms of professionalism (Day & Sachs, 2004) come to be enacted in schooling sites. The result is a continuation of more conservative teacher learning practices within the field of schooling practices, and in relation to efforts to lead teachers’ learning more specifically. Also, in relation to English language learning, such responses intimate the continuation of English language learning activities that foster more discrete practices rather than the more nuanced approaches to understanding the nature and role of English in the Vietnamese context. There appears to be a glossing over of the different forms of English, including various forms of ‘unequal Englishes’ or the nuances and differences that characterise actual practices of English in different cultural contexts (Tupas & Rubdy, 2015). The focus on such entities as pronunciation also reflects the emphasis upon particular forms of English language learning that might foster reified conceptions of English, rather than an understanding of English as multifaceted, or of different forms of English beyond some sort of normalised conception of ‘native-like’ practices (Holmes & Dervin, 2016).

In this way, these workshops provided teachers with very particular kinds of capital in institutionalised forms (Bourdieu, 1986), and various forms of symbolic capital (recognised as legitimate and powerful) (Lingard & Christie, 2003) through engagement with qualified lecturers of prestigious universities in Vietnam. These forms of capital were valued at the District and Ministry levels. These workshops were seen as an opportunity for department heads to learn but this learning was of a more general ‘management’ kind:
Last summer, DOET organised a workshop to train subject department heads. These heads would manage, run, and simultaneously orient activities for their own subject departments. (ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager, DOET)

This specialist’s compliant disposition was evident in the way he engaged with the DOET organised workshop for subject Department Heads. Its purpose was to train these heads so that they could come back to their school and exercise their capacity to lead teachers in the subject departments. A more managerial conception of teachers’ learning (Day & Sachs, 2004) was clearly in evidence, with the focus on ‘manag[ing]’ and ‘run[ning]’ the subject department. The ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager at DOET emphasised the responsibility and power given to subject Department Heads. He possessed a form of embodied capital which he endeavoured to make available for the subject heads. Each subject department also had its own rules and structure and was a social space which required all agents to be proactive in their learning to maintain themselves as competent in a field of practice characterised by increased competitiveness. Reflecting more conservative approaches to teachers’ learning more broadly recently (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009; Tang & Choi, 2009), more traditional, hierarchical leadership-for-teacher-learning practices were evident.

The way in which teachers in schools were ‘led-for-learning’ by colleagues in other schools in relation to more traditional workshops was also apparent. At the same time, there was also evidence of teachers seeking to share practice more broadly with one another during such events to address specific concerns:

Training sessions occur in summers or in the school-years. The major purpose is to carry on the contents [in which teachers] need to be trained. Besides that, there were times when teacher representatives of schools also want to exchange expertise with one another. There were issues that had not been solved in the school; we exchanged ideas with other schools to make progress. I recognised it was beneficial because our school was not able to find solutions, while fellow schools were able to solve the same problems. So we learned from them. (Biology Department Head, School A)

The social capital of being able to participate in the cross-school workshops, a variation on the doxic practice of workshops within schools as part of structured teacher PD (Hardy, 2012), enabled teachers to disseminate requisite capital, enabling teachers to learn from one another, and enabling some teachers to act as leaders of the learning of other teachers – both formally and informally. The formal workshops helped foster these practices; this was evident in the way teachers acted as representative leaders who shared experiences, and learned from each other. As a result, some issues that had not been solved yet by the school were able to be solved thanks to the collaborative practices – perhaps a form of nascent professional learning communities (Stoll, 2011) – that
characterised the field of leading-for-teacher-learning in these instances. DOET was also seen as central to this work:

Some teachers in our school participated in organising seminars with DOET. For example, regarding training expertise, Foreign Languages Department often cooperates with DOET, or in terms of Central coast conference, Maths Department often does. That is the program of high schools for gifted students, but DOET has to be an organiser. (Deputy-Principal, School B)

In this example, DOET occupied primacy in relation to teachers’ learning, and teachers were expected to learn from the activities provided through DOET; in this case, we see the intricate imbrication between the field of schooling practices, with its emphasis upon bureaucratic structures, and how a habitus was forged amongst school educators (including this deputy principal) which was attuned to responding to such hierarchical structures. These DOET workshops were construed as enabling teachers’ learning within the field more broadly, even as the extent of this learning may have been quite limited because of the short-term nature of such workshops, thereby providing evidence of the misrecognition that attends more dominant practices within fields (Bourdieu, 1990b). Such domination was evident in how the Literature Specialist at DOET also valued teacher learning via such workshops, and was particularly evident in the way ‘western’ approaches to teaching were construed as most beneficial:

Training courses were improving better, more modern, and tended to access Western teaching approaches, very western. I think in the knowledge economy, knowledge cannot be crammed, but just be suggestions through training sessions, I found it was very good. (Literature Specialist, DOET)

Even as there was recognition that ‘knowledge cannot be crammed’, there was also a sense that such workshops were ‘very good’. This DOET Specialist’s focus upon western approaches also reflects a form of cultural imperialism more broadly.

While some workshop approaches were more long-term in nature, these were often associated with English language learning in particular, and tended to focus upon a more reified conception of such learning, reflecting a form of cultural imperialism (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 2009) in relation to such language development. That such logics were clearly in evidence was reflected in how English as a medium of instruction was construed as inherently beneficial, and that workshops to this end were valued by teachers:

Actually, teaching maths in English is also very good. I attended a training course for two months and took the exam for an English certificate….Later, I participated in workshops in Da Nang twice. Each time took one week. Two lecturers majored in maths. They gave sample teaching periods. Afterwards, teachers worked in groups, making lessons and doing teaching rehearsal. Other groups and lecturers gave comments. The workshops on teaching maths in English were very effective because teacher participants had the opportunity to do teaching
practice, exchange lesson plans with other teachers. Teachers were also provided with a dictionary of maths terms of the whole program according to textbooks. This dictionary was cooperatively compiled by teachers. (Maths teacher SBTM4, School B)

While the process may have been more productive of teachers’ learning (beyond simply an individual one-off workshop), the focus above was on the accrual of English as a valued capital. At no point was there any consideration of the nature of such learning, and whether and how the forms of English being cultivated reflected the actually existing Englishes that these teachers would come into contact in their particular contexts. In a way, and like students engaging with TESOL in international settings (Chowdhury & Phan Le Ha, 2014), these teachers were ‘desiring’ subjects of a unified, dominant conception of English language learning, with little attention to the plurality of actual Englishes in the Vietnamese context.

Moreover, teachers were also provided with forms of objectified capital – such as a dictionary of maths terms. This dictionary was developed in conjunction with teachers, and was seen as beneficial for maths teachers as they taught from textbooks. This teacher and other maths teachers felt that through such practices, they could accumulate more capital. However, all of these practices of forms of capital acquisition were occurring within a broadly impoverished view of English language learning more broadly, tied tightly to textbooks, and one that failed to account for the more reductive forms of English advocated through such practices, and the broader family of Englishes in which some forms of English are much more dominant than others (Phan Le Ha, 2005).

At the same time, and reflecting broader neoliberal logics influencing teachers’ practices, there was also evidence of expectations of teachers to engage in much individual learning. Such a response reflects neoliberal inflections of the broader framework of market socialism informing the overall direction of Vietnamese public policy (Itoh, 2012); even as they were engaged in more collaborative modes of learning, these teachers also came to realise that they were leaders who were responsible for their own learning. In this way, there was a direct relationship established between processes of neoliberalism – evidence of the influence of increased processes of marketisation within the broader field of power (Bourdieu, 2003) – and leading-for-teacher-learning practices in which these teachers engaged. That this work was considered unproblematic by so many teachers, reveals the complicity between field and habitus, with a habitus amongst teachers deeply implicated in the further development of this ideal of increased self-sufficiency. This propensity for individualised learning was reinforced by the ELT and General Education Division Vice-Manager at MOET, who also indicated that this was difficult work:
In terms of English, we are implementing a new and difficult curriculum. Many teachers think that the amount of time in one period is so short. They cannot implement all the content for a period of 45 minutes. They have a right to decide what they can teach within 45 minutes and what they can teach from textbooks. Secondly, they are encouraged to be creative (how to be flexible, dynamic during their classes). The third is studying on their own, training themselves and considering if leadership is assured. From this, their responsibility is increased.

So what do teachers of foreign languages continue doing to meet the requirements? First, they have to learn on their own to assure required capacity of language, the capacity of expertise and pedagogy, the capacity of testing and assessment suitable for the new curriculum. This means reforming testing and assessment. English will be tested for skills soon. (ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager, DOET)

In addition to this emphasis upon individual learning, a particular conception of English language learning was supported. English proficiency was a form of valued capital, but with a particular focus on ‘skills’. Such a skills approach does not adequately address concerns about the ways in which English is deployed in Vietnam, including ways to appropriate English language more effectively in the Vietnamese context (Phan Le Ha, 2005), and the sorts of cultural interfaces that influence such deployment. In this way, and even as there was strong policy support for teachers to become more proficient in English language learning and teaching, this was occurring within a field characterised by a distinct lack of attention to the complexities of English language learning, and constant concerns and anxiety about how to engage with English. Constant talk about the “difficult” curriculum reinforces a sense of the gap between teachers’ capacities and broader neoliberal logics which would seek to instantiate/’lead’ a teaching disposition perfectly at ease, and commensurable with more dominant/imperialistic conceptions of English language proficiency.

7.1.2 The Role of Key Teachers at Workshops

The Deputy-Principal at School B revealed evidence of more conservative logics within the field of leading-for-teacher-learning, and a similarly conservative habitus – as a result of exposure to more conservative teacher learning approaches – when he described how training sessions involved particular ‘key teachers’ in fostering the professional learning of other teachers. These teachers’ work was also heavily influenced by the push for teachers to learn how to teach new textbooks:

The most important thing is self-learning and self-training. The second, the key teachers participate in professional activities organised by DOET and MOET. MOET often organises professional training sessions for subjects. For teams of key teachers, they often perform their productive role when textbooks change. They learn from MOET about the new textbooks and then help other teachers learn about the new textbooks... (Deputy-Principal, School B)

The Deputy-Principal highlighted the important role of key teachers. These teachers seemed to be construed as more productive leaders in the training sessions where new textbooks were introduced by MOET. In a traditional ‘cascade model’, they firstly learned about the new textbooks from
MOET workshops, and then transferred this knowledge of the content of the textbooks to other teachers. The Chemistry Department Head at School B explained this distinction of key teachers:

For example, every year key teaching staff must attend the training courses and come back to train the whole province. For example, recently, they went to learn about the program to change textbooks of MOET. Then they trained this issue for teachers in the province.

… For a key teacher, first this teacher must have the professional capacity and capability of transmitting knowledge, ability to deliver in front of the crowd and the ability to comprehend the knowledge of MOET. This teacher needs to have the spirit and enthusiasm and responsibility for work. (Chemistry Department Head, School B)

This head is also a key teacher. His comments reflected a habitus that was constituted through exposure to a field of leading-for-teacher-learning characterised by very traditional approaches to informing teachers. As a key teacher, he was construed as possessing the requisite capital in alignment with the Ministry – the ‘professional capacity and capability of transmitting knowledge, ability to deliver in front of the crowd and the ability to comprehend the knowledge of MOET’. His subsequent habitus arising from exposure to such conservative logics, was also constituted through experiences of these teachers as embodying enthusiasm about such work, and as responsive to Ministry expectations that they would assist other teachers. This meant they were distinctive from others. In other words, these key teachers actively participated in, and helped constitute, the field of leading-for-teacher-learning as relatively conservative, and responsive to District and Ministry prerogatives.

However, this work was not straight-forward, and more context-responsive efforts were also at least partially evident in the way a History, Politics and Civic Education DOET Specialist considered how to foster learning amongst teachers in schools:

Reducing the amount of time for training often occurs. For example, MOET’s training sessions took two or three days. When we returned to carry out again, it was reduced in time and content as well. We considered how to organise this so that it was suitable with the level and conditions in schools. Only then was I able to convince them to participate together. I chose the activities that were easily implemented in their own schools. I acted as a guide and a consultant and shared responsibility with teachers. In the class I had to know to discover talents and gave them missions. At that time, this would be an impetus for other teachers. They would think and try to do as their fellow(s). At first, it was confusing because it was a new approach, and every teacher did not completely understand, but now things are okay; this has brought about a high level of effectiveness. (History, Politics and Civic Education Specialist at DOET)

In this instance, the specialist at DOET revealed some logics of leading learning – including efforts to try to create conditions for distributing leadership by fostering the leadership capacities of others (Timperley et al., 2007); in this case, this was by trying to facilitate the leadership capacities of the teacher with which he worked; this was partially evident in how he endeavoured to ‘share responsibility’ with teachers. His decision to ‘choose’ the ‘activities that were easily implemented’
revealed this effort at fostering leadership was not straightforward, and evidence of a challenging field in which teachers appeared resistant to particular kinds of learning – those not seen as able to be immediately implemented in their schools. In part, such responses reflect the more conservative disposition of teachers more generally (Waller, 1932; Lortie 1975; Rosenholtz, 1991). Within this framework, he claimed to ‘share responsibility’ with teachers. A more progressive, critical habitus was perhaps partially evident, but also one that was heavily inhibited by the broader conditions within which this work was undertaken. The sort of ‘distributed leadership’ (Spillane, 2006) he performed was only partially supportive of teachers developing their own agentic capacities, under these conditions, as he attempted to support teachers under his guidance and consultancy. The field of leading-for-teacher-learning was circumscribed by deeply embedded conservative practices which inhibited how the teachers involved were able to lead their colleagues for learning effectively.

7.1.3 Contestation over Demands of Time to Engage with the New Reforms

Leading-for-teacher-learning was also construed as heavily affected by time constraints as teachers struggled to learn about new initiatives under challenging material conditions. Again, this was evident in relation to more traditional ‘training course’ approaches:

The training course was organised by MOET with the theme ‘Process of professional activities’ [how to teach a lesson] under the unit research. This issue was new. I did not know how many days key teachers did the training course, but we as department heads were trained again within one day. The content was new, but it was difficult to implement due to the lack of our country’s teaching conditions. (Literature Department Head, School A)

Again, there was a strong focus on content, with the training course on the theme of ‘Process of professional activities’ under the unit research organised by MOET, focused on activities oriented towards lesson planning. Trainees worked under extreme time pressure. This could be interpreted as school leaders facing greater complexity in their tasks (Hartley, 2007), and a lack of the sort of conditions for fostering professional learning opportunities more broadly, such as engaging proactively with specialist personnel in schools over more extended periods to be able to provide substantive feedback to teachers (Cordingley et al., 2007).

Even when some reforms seemed to offer the opportunity for more sustainable, ongoing practices, more conservative logics meant teachers struggled to engage in such practices. This was evident in relation to a more cooperative learning approach, based on an international program, and focused upon realigning teachers’ attention to student learning as evidence of teacher learning, rather than focusing attention upon teachers’ practices alone. From the outset, this initiative seemed to offer considerable promise in relation to cultivating student-focused teacher learning:
In terms of the training on innovative professional activities, there was a lot of content, but the most important content was about the change in the method of observing teaching demonstrations. Before, while observing teaching demonstrations, teachers sat below, following a teaching period to focus on mainly evaluating teachers.

The new method was introduced from outside of Vietnam – a “foreign model” – was brought in and introduced in our country. It meant teachers in the group discussed together and designed a lesson plan, then appointed a representative to present the lesson in a class. At this time, the other teachers sat along both sides of the classroom, and followed to help students learn better. The teacher observers did not evaluate the teacher presenter, but the focus of this method was to help students learn better. (Biology Department Head, School A)

The focus here was on the new method of observing teaching demonstrations, which required a change from a conservative disposition on the part of teachers to a more proactive and innovative one. Significantly, this involved focusing on students’ learning as the primary evidence of success, rather than simply teachers’ teaching (Hayes et al., 2004; Stoll, 2011). This collaborative working towards more of a ‘learning communities’ model (Lalor & Abawi, 2014) between teachers occurred during lesson preparation, as well as a teaching demonstration in class. This new model meant that teachers must have the capacity to undertake research into students’ learning as part of their practice. This is part of what Timperley et al. (2007) refer to as developing a ‘learning culture’ within a school. This research required the collaboration of a group of teachers, and the quality of that period would be attributed to the whole group. A quality lesson was therefore potentially a product of the social capital forged within the group. One of the outcomes of such a model was the positive interaction between teachers. It meant when teachers sat with each other, the purpose was not just to point out any one individual’s shortcomings. If there were any shortcomings, the whole group was expected to take ownership and try to find possible solutions to perform better next time.

The observers’ dispositions were potentially formed by teachers not just sitting at the back of the classroom. Instead, they were to sit on both sides of the room to observe students’ activities, observe how students interact with one another, how students take notes, and if this was effective, and what they were doing when they worked in groups and if this proceeded as expected. The hope was that such a stance would foster a more collaborative logic of practice at play that challenged more individualistic logics.

However, the way this played out revealed the field of leading-for-teacher-learning as a contested space. There was a sense in which the conditions in schools made it difficult to implement, and that such learning became diminished across the different organisational levels (involving a progressive reduction in time by those facilitating/leading professional learning from MOET, DOET, and subject departments):

Some older teachers commented that the implementation process would encounter the difficulties: small classroom area, large number of students, limited Internet access, and no
sample teaching pattern to follow. Therefore, we have trained to know the new techniques, but have not applied them yet so far. Besides, DOET specialists attended a training course at MOET’s workshop for 5 days. Key teachers (Department heads) did one day. Department heads came back to schools and trained teachers in one period. Also, students did not get used to always having guides in class, so teaching effectiveness would be limited. (Biology Department Head, School A)

For the teachers, it was difficult to adapt themselves to the new way of organising the class due to the dominant logics that characterised both students and teachers’ learning, including processes of work intensification (Tang & Choi, 2009), as well as the shortage of significant forms of objectified capital (Bourdieu, 1986) (e.g., appropriate rooms and Internet access). Vietnam’s present classroom environment where desks and benches are long and heavy and difficult to move itself inhibits such approaches. The number of students was also often large with 45-50 students; Such classroom conditions did not allow teachers to sit on either side to follow the student learning sequence. Also, the classroom was not well-equipped. For example, it was not easy to access the Internet to search information when needed. There was no sample teaching pattern and the time spent on training teachers was reduced. This inhibited teachers’ understanding of this new model. Teachers needed more time, and a reflexive disposition did not yet appear to be fully cultivated. Instead, more traditional, doxic practices of professional learning prevented the development of more reflexive dispositions.

The issue of time was also reflected by Deputy-Principal 1 at School A in her description of the difficulties of teachers attending specific professional learning workshops/seminars for which they had not been officially supported:

Sometimes teachers considered being able to go or not, because when they were not appointed to participate, the school could not arrange time for them. Sometimes, seminars were organised in summers but it was not certain that they could attend those seminars. They had to apply for a permit. (Deputy-Principal 1, School A)

Again, a centralised bureaucratic system, reflective of more managerial practices (Day & Sachs, 2004), militated against the development of more productive teacher learning practices that might serve to enhance teachers’ professional learning capacities. Teachers were beholden to authorisation to attend the typically reductive workshops on offer as key modes of teachers’ learning within the province.

7.1.4 Inhibitions in Funding

The reductive effects of these short-term initiatives were exacerbated by financial obstacles, including complex procedures to access funding:
There are many resources and elements that influence teachers’ leadership such as environment, and finance. However, our State’s mechanism has much influence in the participation in professional development. For example, there were in-service professional development programs in Ha Noi, but the school did not have the budget to provide for this kind of seminar. Therefore, I had to spend my own money to participate. Sometimes, there was a budget for these sessions, but the procedures were so complicated. There needed to be MOET’s official letters to appoint specific individuals to a certain workshop. Only then were they allowed to participate. Those were key teachers who were appointed to training courses. Afterwards, they returned and imparted new knowledge and skills to other teachers. (Deputy-Principal 1, School A)

The shortage of economic capital to facilitate teachers’ learning was readily apparent. More bureaucratic logics emanating from the broader field of power also reflected more managerial rather than democratic/professional approaches (Day & Sachs, 2004), and meant participants still faced difficulties regarding official procedures to participate. This included the need for MOET’s official letters to appoint specific individuals to a certain workshop:

The same case happened to heads of subject departments attending the last training programs, but when they asked for expenditure, they had to have official letters and comply with the regulations of the senior authorities. After that, their travelling expenditure would be refunded. If not, they had to spend their own money. (Deputy-Principal 1, School A)

To sum up, this section discussed the dominance of short-term ‘in-service’ teacher learning, typically in the form of state-sanctioned workshops, and the way in which teachers accepted such learning as an accepted part of their practice. Even when they expressed difficulties about such learning, this was typically in a context of acceptance that such learning as potentially beneficial, and that all that was needed was an increase in funding to allow them to attend, and less bureaucratic restrictions. Even when more substantive, student-centred approaches to teachers’ learning, such as the collective observation of classes were construed as possibilities, more dominant logics inhibited the capacity for alternative forms of learning to become cultivated.

7.2 Practices of Leading Learning as Teachers Undertaking Tertiary Studies

This section provides insights into the leading-for-teacher-learning practices associated with teachers undertaking tertiary studies. The section comprises two subsections. The first focuses upon leading-for-teacher-learning in relation to teachers undertaking intensive English courses/certificates – particularly certificates in English language learning. The second section relates to leading-for-teacher-learning in relation to teachers undertaking Master’s courses.

7.2.1 Leading-for-Teacher Learning and Intensive English Courses/Certificates

This section focuses on the intensive courses that teachers of English and maths experienced to accumulate English as a valued capital. Through intensive English courses, there was evidence of
teachers leading their own learning and being led for learning by MOET, DOET, schools, and subject departments. These teachers’ learning processes contained complexities pertaining to workload, anxiety, stress, and pressures of time, study, and exams.

English occupies an important role in Vietnamese society, and its significance is reflected in the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Training seeking to increase the number of teachers proficient in English. However, the approach adopted often reflects a reified conception of English, with a focus upon ‘nativist’ approaches, and inadequate attention to the multiple ways in which English is actually deployed in Vietnam – how people make meaning through English – or how English serves to marginalise many people (Phan Le Ha, 2005). More neoliberal logics are also reflected in the way in which English learning is supported because it is the international language of business, commerce, and trade. Vietnam is a developing country, and consequently in a less dominant position than more developed countries with English as a first language. Because English is so important to trade in a more globalised context, and the Vietnamese government feels pressure to try to improve trade relations, improved understandings of English are construed as important for the continued economic growth and development of the country. It is this ‘developing’ status that enables the push for English to be deployed so effectively, and to exert such influence upon these teachers. There is a sense – a broader logic of practice – that intimates that when more people can speak English, it makes it easier to trade, and helps the economy. Such a stance ignores the inherently imperialistic connotations associated with English language acquisition (Philippson, 2009), or how it marginalises other forms of English (Pennycook, 1994). English is perceived as a global lingua franca, problematic though that term is (O’Reagan, 2014). English is a dominant language of business, trade, education and international communication, so there is a sense that Vietnamese citizens need to master English. As a result, the push to engage with English is a form of symbolic violence that is closely aligned with more economic logics. People have to struggle much to acquire English as a form of capital. This is considered important in order for Vietnam to actively participate in globalisation and international integration. Consequently, English is a valued capital within schools, and an important link between education and the economy.

Within schools, a more neoliberal logic of practice was evident in the way teachers have sought to acquire this valued capital, typically on their own. These neoliberal logics work to create teachers and students who are perhaps more active, dynamic, but also more individualistic, and constructed as responsible for their everyday practices of learning; in this scenario, teachers become, potentially, leaders of their own learning. Also, while their English has improved, this has required a huge time investment that is physically and emotionally draining. These neoliberal logics also
increase competition that works against teachers collaborating and working with each other for the betterment of their own learning and that of their students.

7.2.1.1 Opportunities given to teachers of English and Maths to take intensive courses

Reflecting the dominance of English language learning in Vietnam, and the hierarchical nature of English learning with some forms of English more attractive than others (Phan Le Ha, 2005), the nature of leading-for-teacher-learning in the research sites was heavily influenced by the push for teachers to acquire particular English certificates. According to the national foreign language project 2020 of MOET (Government of Vietnam, 2008), and ‘Teaching and learning of foreign languages in the national education system in the period 2008-2020’ made by the ‘Program to develop Secondary Education’ (MOET, 2010a), primary and secondary teachers of English were required to secure a ‘B2’ certificate, and high school teachers of English needed to have ‘C1’ – all as measured against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Maths Teachers were encouraged to get B1. These certificates are part of the six levels according to the 6-level language capacity framework for Vietnam, and are compatible with/ equivalent to A1 to C2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (MOET, 2014a), outlined earlier in Chapter 6.

Reflecting the dominance of English language provision beyond the Vietnamese context – a form of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992; 2009) – this language capacity framework for Vietnam was developed based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Under these conditions, a European conception of English constituted a dominant logic. To this end, DOET ran exams in conjunction with a university to organise the survey of teachers’ capacity for MOET. To attain the certificate, teachers needed to train and improve their English level and communicative approach.

A practice of leading learning was demonstrated through the Ministry’s support for intensive English courses. Such courses were also construed as enabling teachers to implement the new curriculum and textbooks. This certificate was an important form of institutional capital recognised by all within the field of schooling practices. Based as it was on the European framework, the certificate was symbolic of a particular kind of state-sanctioned professional learning on the part of teachers, and a level of competence reflective of the aspirations of the Ministry of Education. That the certificate was European indicates a form of symbolic violence (Brady & Schirato, 2011; Crossley, 2005) as a particular, dominant form of English was given the imprimatur of approval by the Vietnamese government. Teachers struggled to acquire English because this was not easy. During this process, teachers received support from different authorities (the school and DOET
encouraged them a lot), as did their colleagues. As one of the young teachers of English from School B revealed:

Last year, five teachers from our department were sent to Hue to improve their English, and then took an exam to get C1. The course was so intensive, and the exam was so difficult. The course is very demanding. The knowledge we needed to study and improve was different and more difficult than what we had learned at university. We were so stressed and worried. Fortunately, the school and DOET encouraged us a lot, and we made great effort... Finally, all of us obtained C1 certificates… (Teacher SBTE6, School B)

For this teacher, the accrual of a dominant form of capital – capacity in English – was at the cost of considerable angst. The learning associated with the certificate differed from teachers’ previous experiences of learning at university. Teachers had to struggle to get C1. As a consequence, teachers were very worried, revealing how being ‘led-to-learn’ in this kind of assessment cultivated strong anxiety. These concerns also revealed how the focus of attention was upon the attainment of the certificate itself, rather than whether and how teachers were able to deploy a conception of English language learning that enabled communicative competence (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2007). In this instance, actually learning from their own practice, and that of colleagues seemed to be much less of a concern. This reflects Pham Hoa Hiep’s (2001) insights that ‘a flexible, empirical approach to teaching has yet to be grasped by many Vietnamese teachers’ (p. 3).

In this way, the field of leading-for-teacher-learning was a structuring social space evident through plans to train, re-train, and nurture teachers’ development. This helped produce cultural capital, of a very particular institutionalised form, in an embodied state. This involved establishing interactions between teachers and between teacher leaders and lecturers, within and outside schools, and between schools and other educational organisations. Supplementing and improving the qualification quality of foreign language teachers from schools and language institutions was an area of ongoing interest – involving a form of social capital development involving teachers accessing other personnel (including lecturers) outside their school. The result of this was the accrual of English certificates. Also, “encouraging teachers to undertake international training courses either domestically or abroad that are internationally accredited” (Government of Vietnam, 2008, p. 4) reveals how international certificates of language proficiency were valued institutional capital. In one sense, advocacy for such capital accrual may help constitute an “aspirational habitus” (cf. Archer et al., 2012), with deeply embedded educational aspirations on the part of policy-makers, seeking the cultivation of a similar disposition amongst teachers. This could be understood as an example of leading learning in the way that teachers were motivated by MOET to attend international training courses in Vietnam or in foreign countries. This form of training required teachers’ qualified capacity, so teachers needed to learn from various sources to equip themselves with valued capital in different forms.
However, reflecting the tensions that surround English language learning, teachers learning foreign languages was seen as challenging, and involving much work and learning on the part of schools and teachers:

Teachers who teach specialised subjects have to organise how to teach to achieve the highest outcomes. They have to find out the best ways to lead their teams of gifted students to success, attaining the highest prizes at different levels: provincial, national, and even international. Teacher leadership is performed in each class, and each subject with the best outcomes. … Teachers have to learn much to improve their expertise and pedagogy aiming at national and international levels…. The school oriented teaching specialised students in English, but this effort has to be made by each subject department and each teacher. (Deputy-Principal, School B)

This work involved teachers attending specialised university courses in an effort to achieve the highest qualifications of language proficiency:

Our first job is standardising our English capacity, and our department is the only department in the province that achieved C1 – the required standard. But it is not natural for us to achieve the standard; we had to send teachers to Hue Foreign Languages University to undertake the intensive course. These teachers had to study there for 2 months, and then took the exam for C1. After they were tested and achieved the standard, they were awarded C1 certificate. Of course, there are several teachers who are already qualified for C1, but young teachers who have been recruited to our school also received C1 and they also spent two months improving English at Hue Foreign Languages University. (Foreign Languages Department Head, School B)

This work was achieved through the deployment of significant economic capital on the part of the Ministry of Education. Teachers stopped teaching at the school for several months and left for another city far away from home to undertake the course. MOET, DOET, the school, and the Foreign Languages Department encouraged them, gave them time to focus on study by employing other English teachers to replace them while they are away undertaking the course, as well as expenditure support for the course. By supporting these teachers’ learning in this way, DOET’s ELT Specialist, the principal, the vice-principal, and the Foreign Languages Department Head from School B, all arguably acted as leaders of these teachers’ learning. However, this was not simply some sort of “idealistc” concept, but deeply grounded in specific and often challenging practices in an effort to secure the institutionally sanctioned qualification. These teachers had to engage in ongoing and substantive study of the materials offered throughout the course to ensure they were adequately prepared for the examinations. Again, however, there appeared to be little acknowledgement as part of this process of the nuances that attend English language learning – of the multiple ways in which English is actually spoken in different contexts. In contrast with Ngoc Ba Doan’s (2014) research in tertiary settings, there appeared to be little focus upon the forms of cultural knowledge that attended English, including moving beyond those cultural knowledges.
associated with dominant constructions of English, such as that associated with Britain and the United States.

Harris and Muijs (2005) state that teachers are now working as advisor-mentors, research colleagues to those who begin their profession of teaching, facilitating expertise development activities and acting as members of school-based leadership groups and leaders of change efforts. The department head who commented above acted as a leader who gave his colleagues opportunities to lead learning and expertise improvement. He did not have to sit for the C1 exam because he received a Master’s degree in the USA. He possessed a distinctive institutionalised form of capital which meant that he did not suffer the same C1 exam pressure. Some forms of English were clearly of greater value than others – a variation, perhaps, on the different families of English to which Phan Le Ha (2005) refers. However, the pressure for the attainment of particular ‘standardised’ forms of English was reflected in how he knew the importance and challenge of this exam, and always encouraged his department members to embody exemplary language capacity, and set the goal for the whole department to get C1.

Maths teachers also acted as active players in the field of leading-for-teacher learning, employing English as part of this process in the hope they could use English effectively in their teaching. However, their background was different from the colleagues from the Foreign Languages Department, and the requirements for them were different, too; therefore, their accumulation of this valued capital was quite different in some ways. Reflecting different forms of distinction within the field, maths teachers undertook different courses from their English colleagues, and at what was considered a ‘lower’ level:

Maths teachers also did intensive courses as teachers of English did, but they followed the lower-level course book. It is PET (Preliminary English Test). Well, at the end of the course, teachers of English were trained in some aspects (e.g., maths terms, structures) related to science subjects for one day, whereas maths teachers studied an English course book for maths for one or two days. (Teacher of English SBTE3, School B)

Similarly, math teacher SBTM4, School B provided insights into the teacher learning he experienced to help build his English capacity:

I was sent to do training for 2 months in Hue city. I took the exam and got B1 certificate. Afterwards, I did more training twice in Da Nang city. Each time lasted one week. In Da Nang, there were two university lecturers. Their major is maths. We studied very hard and it was useful to do training. I feel more confident to use English in my teaching. (Math teacher SBTM4, School B)

From these excerpts, maths teachers see themselves as different social agents from their English teacher colleagues. They began with the PET course book whereas the English teachers used more
advanced resources, reflecting different capital accumulation strategies. They spent more time studying maths, and it was necessary for them to acquire this particular form of capital as it was related to their mathematical rules, and their particular experiences. As for their Foreign Language colleagues, English was an important capital of distinction, albeit expressed in a different form. However, again, such differentiation does not reflect the more substantive variation in actual English language use in non-Anglo settings more generally.

7.2.1.2 Pressures and contestation involved in taking intensive English courses

The anxiety surrounding the English courses and associated exams reflects the dominance of particular constructions of English within the province, and schools at which these teachers worked and learned. At the first exam in 2012, only 50 teachers in the province of three levels (Primary, Lower-secondary, and High school education) received the required certificates. At the end of July 2014, there was an additional 55 high school teachers who got C1. Up to 30 August 2014, 179/355 high school teachers, making about 50% of the total of high school teachers had acquired C1. When they received the C1 certificate, they were qualified, and this accrual of objectified capital in the form of a certificate became symbolic of a particular cultural capacity. It set these teachers apart as different – “distinctive” (Bourdieu, 1984) – from people who did not possess those specific qualifications. As a result, the successful teachers were recognised as being in possession of a distinctive form of capital.

Not all teachers were given the opportunity to do intensive courses. Many teachers learned on their own before taking the exam to get C1 certification. This meant not all teachers were treated equally. The logics of leading-for-teacher-learning were quite differentiated, and varied. For example, those teachers who were newly graduated, taught gifted students for English exams or were recognised as excellent or key teachers, were advantaged:

The teachers who were selected to survey teachers’ English proficiency were potential teachers such as the young teachers who have just graduated from university, teachers who teach teams of gifted students to take English exams at different levels, teachers who attained the Title ‘Excellent Teachers’ at different levels such as School, District, City, or Provincial levels, or key teachers from District/ City Offices of Education and Training and Provincial Department of Education and Training. (ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-manager, DOET)

In this case, undertaking studies at a much higher level, via intensive university courses, constituted a form of distinction for those teachers able to take up this opportunity. Attendance at the university constituted a form of symbolic capital accrual which was highly regarded, and which marked these teachers out as particularly accomplished in English language acquisition. However, in order to be chosen to participate in the classes that helped improve English proficiency, teachers of English
already needed to embody distinctive cultural capital. That is, the certification process acted as a filter, with potential teachers or successful applicants benefiting from the distinction conferred by the award upon them – but only these teachers. Other teachers who did not meet the requirements could not benefit from the potential learning offered through this process. Even for those teachers who satisfied requirements to be involved in this learning opportunity, there was much concern about engaging in such intensive courses:

Before the exam, teachers were guided and helped to review for the exam for 3 days. I obtained B2, so DOET allowed me to take a 3-month course at the Provincial Continuing Education Centre. Lecturers from Da Nang city came and taught on the last 3 days of each week (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday). The course book was ‘CAE [Cambridge English: Advanced] Result’, which helped train all language skills. We were very stressed because this course book was very difficult. At the same time, we had to teach at school for the first three days of the week, and of course the school schedule had to be rearranged… We worked really hard. In general, doing a 3-month course was very good but we were very worried when thinking of the exam because we just felt confident to do the exam papers on writing and use of English. We were very worried about Listening and Reading tests. (Teacher of English SATE7, School A)

Only teachers who attained B2 – one of levels of the certificate according to CEFR – or who were key teachers, or whose English was good enough to follow courses, were chosen to do a 2-3 month intensive course at a selected University. Again, particularly standardised forms of English language learning dominated what was considered valuable and valid English language learning practice, and reflected and reinscribed broader processes of colonialism (Pennycook, 1998).

The attention given to the teaching of English was reflected in the esteem conferred upon teachers achieving B2. The further investment in institutional capital – such as the provision of access to university lecturers from a neighbouring city – reflected the valuing of English as a form of capital in modern-day Vietnam. When the course was organised for 3 days/week in the province in three months, teachers had to teach and do the course during that period. Teacher SATE7 said: “DOET allows me and another teacher to undertake the course, but we still need to teach enough classes, and of course the school schedule has to be rearranged”. The sort of work intensification attending Vietnamese teachers’ work more broadly (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001) was clearly evident as these teachers struggled with the intensity of juggling studying for the certificate and their ongoing teaching commitments. It was difficult for teachers to do both things at the same time. This made them feel tense and tired. Again, the anxiety created by this process also reflects how the valuing of this form of capital was not without its consequences, and of the difficulty of attaining the sort of distinction reflected in a high level of certification of English language capacity. The desire not to continue with the course also revealed contestation over the process of English language acquisition, as evident through this model:
We did not want to do the course anymore because we felt so stressed about exams. In order to improve our English, teachers have to learn on their own. (Teacher of English SATE7, School A)

Arguably, except for teachers who had IELTS, TOEFL certificates or did overseas courses – all of whom did not have to take the exams for C1 – most teachers did not seem to be in favour of this exam, and felt worried that it would take much time, effort and money, cause pressure and affect work and family life to do the courses and exams. Such responses bring to bear issues of who benefits from such pressures for teachers to engage in English language learning. In western countries in which English is the dominant language, beneficiaries include western universities that enrol large numbers of international students and that are involved in various forms of aid to developing countries, together with other agencies also involved in aid initiatives (Widin, 2015). In the circumstances described here, universities, and other organisations and companies associated with CEFR (such as those universities and organisations involved in the Cambridge English Advanced courses, for example) seemed to benefit from the additional symbolic capital associated with its qualifications. Even as these teachers were beneficiaries of the extra resources provided by the state to enable them to undertake the intensive course, this process of being led-to-learn was contested.

Teachers were aware that the exam for C1 was organised by MOET and its purpose was to monitor teachers’ language capacity; therefore, teachers had to prepare for this exam and took it. It meant teachers had no choice, but to comply with the top-down policy. This created considerable angst and disruption:

Regarding my and other colleagues’ expertise improvement in our Foreign Languages Department over the last time, for example, the exam to get C1 is compulsory for high school teachers to achieve the required standard. I had to leave the school for a university for several months to focus on my study, review, and prepare for the exam. During that time, the quality of my team of gifted students was much affected. The quality decreased. …The exam for C1 was really difficult! (Teacher SBTE2, School B)

This teacher was responsible for training a team of gifted students, and was reluctant to do the course due to her workload – a significant concern amongst Vietnamese teachers more broadly (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001) – but later she put this aside to undertake the course in another city. She was torn by competing demands. Although she already exhibited distinctive embodied capital through her work as a teacher for these gifted students, she still took the course and the exam to obtain this new kind of institutionalised capital.

Bourdieu described the field as a social space of competition reflective of the dominant logics that will come to characterise the field:
A field is a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies. (Bourdieu, 1998a, pp. 40-41)

It can be argued that the field of leading-for-teacher-learning, as expressed in relation to the two schools in this province, was dominated by more performative pressure upon teachers to acquire English language qualifications. These logics of practice involved support for intensive short-term courses at universities, and exam preparation for the tests as part of these courses. English teachers’ efforts to attain C1 were construed as challenging, and involved a repertoire of practices including engagement with other institutionalised forms of English language acquisition in addition to attending university courses, including various Cambridge English exercises:

At the beginning of the 2-month course, we took the First Certificate in English (FCE) test. Teachers who got B1 or B2 were allowed to follow the course. Its curriculum was more intense and not similar to the curriculum that I was taught in a university. It was more difficult and had many strange words and phrases. Listening was so challenging that I rarely achieved 70-80%... In terms of accommodation, staying in the dormitory or a guest house, or a hotel is expensive... In terms of course books, they handed out some course books called Solution and taught us based on this course book. We ourselves photocopied more exercises and test in CAE (Cambridge English: Advanced) book to do more practice. We also bought CDs. When we returned home after the course, we were sent exercises to do. Each learner had to do 5 exercises in a period of set time (one exercise in 2-3 days). Many teachers spent most of the time practising English... We felt so stressed. (Teacher SBTE3, School B)

These teachers acted as students in their class at university – a new ‘sub-field’ with new rules that they had to obey. (Grenfell et al. (1998) refer to primary, secondary and tertiary education as individual “sub-fields”.) The teachers suffered from exam pressure and they embodied cultural and symbolic capital through their studies at university and during their teaching. Part of this process of preparing for the university exams also involved exposure to additional forms of institutional processes of English language learning, such as the Cambridge English exercises. Whether such practices actually assisted with these teachers’ development of more communicative competence (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2007) is worthy of further scrutiny.

However, these teachers did not have a choice about involvement in these courses. Responding to policy pressure for improved English outcomes, they had to access a variety of capitals in objectified forms (new curriculum and course books, books, photocopied documents, and CDs) and institutionalised states (CEFR certificates). Through these practices, teachers also accumulated social capital – “that form of capital linked to social networks and relationships” (Lingard & Christie, 2003, p. 324). They established relationships with lecturers from universities and colleagues within and between schools, forming various networks of connections that helped
contribute to the forms of distinction they sought to cultivate (Bourdieu, 1984), and that helped facilitate their learning. This included through, for example, processes of receiving feedback, comments and advice from lecturers, exchanging experience with their peers, learning from each other, and working collaboratively.

After class, teachers were able to learn on their own using books, documents – forms of objectified capital. If they failed in this endeavour, they were not allowed to teach the English 10 Pilot curriculum according to Project 2020. This also meant it was very difficult for them to position themselves as successful learners in relation to teacher learning practices, and schooling practices more generally. A habitus was forged that reflected a broader field of relations dominated by pressure for English language learning tests as markers of esteem, and under these circumstances, teachers were responsive, but also anxious. Therefore, teachers who had not attained English capacity as required (C1 for high school teachers) had to try to secure this accreditation – this valued form of institutional capital. As a result, they tried to learn and sit for the exam until they obtained their C1 certificate. As a teacher from School B revealed, this was also challenging because of other demands in their lives:

Undertaking the course is also good. Most teachers want to do it, but they are worried that they cannot care for their families, have to study very hard and spend much money when they live far from home, so some do not want to go,...Well, we had to pay for all the materials….During 2 months, if teachers try to study hard, they will accumulate much knowledge, but now we are not young any more, we are distracted by many things. (Teacher SBTE3, School B)

Again, and as in other schooling settings in Vietnam external pressures impacted upon teachers (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001). At the same time, and in spite of all this angst and effort, such foci upon particular institutionalised forms of English, symbolised by the C1 certificate, reflect a challenge to those forms of communicative competence associated with more dialogic approaches to English language learning (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2007).

Teachers also recognised that continuing learning was a necessity. ‘Lifelong learning’ as a duty of individuals throughout their life, was supported – even as such discourses are deeply problematic for the instrumentalist approaches to learning that they often advocate (Biesta, 2006). After having achieved C1, teachers still have to frequently learn on their own to maintain the achieved standard. A number of teachers were selected to do another course to foster specific skills for teaching English in classrooms:

We chose some teachers to prepare them for advanced training for teachers of English. Its purpose is to train teachers’ working skills such as English capacity in class, application of Information and Communication Technologies in teaching English, techniques of teaching
This means the learning process is ongoing. In this way, teachers are ‘condemned’ to a perpetual state of lifelong learning (Biesta, 2011, p. 61). Such an approach also reveals a focus on particular skills, rather than the more substantive forms of communicative competence encouraged in educational settings (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2007), or critiques of the notion of English as a so-called ‘international language’ more broadly (Pennycook, 1994). As Thomson (2008) explains, Bourdieu pointed out that the game that occurs in social spaces or fields is competitive and the participants are various social agents using different strategies to maintain or improve their position. These teachers who were selected to undertake further courses were learning within a field of leading-for-teacher-learning that provided resources for very particular kinds of state-sanctioned learning, and demanded that these teachers continue to engage with such initiatives for their own learning, and to facilitate that of others.

### 7.2.2 Master’s Courses

Teachers and administrators in the schools were also encouraged to undertake more advanced forms of tertiary learning – particularly Master’s courses. Teachers were supported, at the school level, to do these formal courses:

Teachers’ learning to improve their level is approved by the school’s administration team, and by teaching staff, then is transferred to subject departments so that members in the same group can discuss handling with problems, suggesting solutions to help develop teachers’ expertise…At this school, generations of teachers have enthusiasm for the work and contribution to building the school, but the next generation of teachers has more learning conditions to improve their level. The number of Master’s is larger and the expertise level is improving. (Deputy-Principal 1, School A)

Such comments indicate evidence of a field of leading-for-teacher-learning increasingly characterised by support for a greater focus upon more advanced formal qualifications amongst teachers. Supporting a teacher to undertake a formal course was well discussed in the school, and there was a particular political process around how the decision was made. This involved drawing upon knowledge of members of the Communist Party cell, Trade Union and Youth Union within the school. The Trade Union focuses upon the needs of teachers, the Communist Party members focus on ensuring broad guidelines within the school are followed, and the Youth Union focus on the needs of students and young teachers:

In regard to suggesting the personnel in the subject departments going further into study or attending training courses, this is all discussed in the school’s administration team on Friday mornings. Trade Union and Youth Union of the school are invited to these meetings, and it is necessary to reach their agreement before each decision is made to send a teacher to a course. (Deputy-Principal 1, School A)
The need to ensure that agreement was reached between these different groups meant that there were very particular politics which surrounded the orchestration of professional learning within each school. These restrictions revealed contestation over who was supported for such learning opportunities and when these were to occur. There was a sense in which contestation over funding also led some teachers to pay for their Master’s studies themselves:

The school gives opportunities for teachers to do Master’s programmes to improve their professional and pedagogical level, giving them good conditions concerning time, and funding. Related to funding, partly it follows the State’s policy, but some of them have managed by themselves when it is not their turn to do Master’s courses, and they really want to make progress. Now the school has a Master in Education Administration. He is the school’s Principal. Three Deputy-Principals and two teachers attained Bachelors’ degrees in Education Administration. (Deputy-principal 2, School A)

Even as there were restrictions, there was evidence about how the State and the school supported their teachers and administrators in professional learning to acquire cultural capital in the institutionalised form of a Master’s qualification. This was indicated by giving selected teachers time to review and take the entrance examinations, time to undertake courses, and by providing them with economic capital to help them with tuition fees and a living stipend. Thanks to this, School A’s administration team and some teachers had acquired degrees in educational administration in recent years. However, and reflecting contestation within the field, there were clearly still some teachers who had to support their own learning when they did not have the same opportunity as their other colleagues. The effort from these teachers also proves that they were taking the lead in their learning, but this process also engendered anxiety due to concerns about finance in the middle of their course, as well as the pressure caused by both their study and work. In other words, although taking higher education courses was encouraged every year and desired by teachers, some teachers had to wait for their turn to do Master’s courses. Normally, one teacher in a Subject Department was allowed to do a Master’s course.

Leadership can emerge from anywhere within the organisation (Blackmore, 2010). The above excerpts show that several organisations in the school had an influence on and responsibility for teacher learning. In this sense, it was not just the principal who had authority, and there is a sense in which some of the decision-making was distributed throughout the school:

It is also clear that the role of the principal within a distributed leadership model is no longer one of absolute authority. Distributed leadership implies sharing of power and decision making and therefore, at times, the principal may not have either positional or expert authority. (Harris, 2012, p. 15)

However, it is also clear that only when teachers received approval from these organisations could they maximise opportunities around their learning. Teachers were given the opportunity in terms of
time, finance and acknowledgement by different local authorities, and families as well, to pursue higher education. Different authoritative levels paid much concern to teachers’ learning by supporting teachers to accrue cultural capital in the objectified form of advanced academic credentials.

Teachers in most subjects, especially maths, literature, English, and chemistry had been doing their best to pursue Master’s courses, and many of them completed degrees. For example, as Foreign Languages Department Head at School B mentioned: “In the Foreign Languages Department at School B, 6 out of 9 teachers have Master’s degrees”. Deputy-Principal at School B said: “Most of key teachers are from School B and School A because of either their degrees or experience in teaching and educational activities”. Therefore, the number of teachers with these advanced awards was seen as important. Again, a form of symbolic capital was evident whereby the school could deploy such statistics within the local educational market, and which it employed as a marker of distinction – an indicator that the practices at this school must be superior to those at others.

However, a specific set of conditions had to be evident before a school could encourage its teachers to undertake further formalised study at advanced levels, including a need to increase the proportion of higher qualifications at the school:

Appointing teachers to study further depends on some regulations such as affirmed capacity; graduation degree ranking fairly good, or excellent, the demand, and the number of certificates that the school currently has as small. Those are the conditions. Most teachers who have undertaken a course have to meet the conditions… Well, regarding the age range, it seems to be under the age of 45. In order to undertake a course, it is necessary to have the target from DOET, and permission from a principal. (Literature Department Head, School A)

Teachers needed to meet before undertaking advanced degrees, and the process was perceived as demanding. Again, this pertained to age, substantive embodied capital, and needs of the schools. This also referred to a form of leadership or succession planning in place.

Also, not many teachers were allowed at the same time to undertake advanced university study to minimise staffing disruptions at the schools. For example, I am the only teacher from School B doing a PhD. In addition, some teachers had to manage their budget to pursue higher education because economic capital from the school or national budget was insufficient.

A maths teacher at School B received support for his study journey from all of the relevant bodies within his school. He was very appreciative for this provision for his learning:

When I took the course, the finance for education came from the State, according to the regulations of the State. The travelling fares were financed twice per year by the school. Besides, living stipend (food and accommodation) was financed by myself (from salary), or
partly by my family. So to speak, the school, family and society supported me. (Teacher SBTM4)

According to this teacher, many resources had a significant influence on his study. Leading-for-teacher-learning was evident in the provision (by family, the state) of economic capital in the form of tuition fees, living stipend, and travelling expenses so that he could access an institutionalised form of capital – a Master’s degree. In other words, the State and the school supported teachers in furthering their professional knowledge and accreditation. This also shows the leadership practices of the State and the school via provision of economic capital for this teachers’ learning during his studies.

7.2.2.1 My Master’s experience

Leading-for-teacher-learning was also apparent in my case when I was also given the opportunity to pursue a Master’s programme. The practice of leading-for-teacher-learning was evident in the support of governmental and local authorities for my Master’s programme. My advocacy for this course reflected my progressive disposition and strategies to affirm a more dominant position in the field of leading-for-teacher-learning – enabling me to lead the learning of others much more authoritatively.

In 2002, DOET selected four female educators to go to Hanoi to undertake a Master’s course in Educational Administration according to the Programme for the Sake of Women’s Progress initiated for the first time by the Vietnamese government. The notion of political justice, with its emphasis upon improving the circumstances for specific marginalised groups (Keddie, 2012), was evident in this programme. Among four members were three members who took over important positions in their offices: a Division Vice-Manager at DOET, a key officer of a division at DOET and a Vice-Manager of the city Office of Education. I was the only teacher from a high school. I was the youngest and first teacher in the provincial high schools to be appointed to attend that kind of program. At that time, it was not easy for high school teachers to be sent to do a Master’s course. Moreover, no one in DOET as well as high schools undertook a Master’s course in Educational Administration at that time; it could be argued that there was a relative lack of ‘leading-for-learning’ amongst more senior personnel in DOET at that time. Therefore, when I was appointed, and then supported by many authorities to follow this programme, I felt very stressed. They selected me perhaps partly because of my background, study outcomes at university, and recognised contributions. It was also due to my experiences in education after about 6 years of teaching and undertaking some significant duties as a key teacher in the province and head of the school’s youth union, and one of the key standing members of the city’s youth union. With such privileges, I was
believed to embody valued cultural capital and to be distinctive (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986). My colleagues and administrators at the school and DOET evaluated my capacities highly; I was seen as being “distinctive” in relation to the dominant logics that characterised the field. I was already a leader of my own learning.

During my course, it was fortunate that my family were able to greatly support me both intellectually and spiritually. My parents inspired confidence in me by their valuable lessons and experience in educational management or education in general, as they benefited from their lives as lecturers, educators, and managers at colleges and government departments. They also often took notes and sent me updated information on education and relevant issues domestically and internationally. Families are important, as Archer et al. (2012) has affirmed in their research: “families provide an important context within which young people develop (and pursue or abandon) particular aspirations, with the interaction between family habitus and capital being particularly crucial” (p. 905). I was able to mobilise the capital I already possessed through my parents’ support and passion for academic studies. This “family habitus” (Archer et al., 2012), contributed to my efforts to obtain a Master’s degree.

When I changed my status by getting married and then having a baby in my last year of the Master’s course, at first, I was discouraged from studying and could not accept the thought that I had to live far from my baby, but later with my family’s great encouragement and love for me, I left my several-months-old daughter at home with my husband and parents, saying goodbye to the whole family and continuing my education journey. Worrying about my baby’s health, controlling my love for her and missing her so much were inevitable when being far from home during a semester. A busy workload during my studies partly helped me to forget my homesickness. Also, I helped my classmates with English and at the same time we learned and discussed ideas about other subjects together – creating a collaborative practice (Harris, 2005a) to enrich our insights of education management.

As a result of this support, I achieved the second highest average score (8.5) in the Master’s program, and 9.8/10 points for thesis defence, and then was honoured to be one of the two students in that course who were appointed to a PhD program in Vietnam as soon as having completed the Master Program in Educational Management with distinction. In this instance, academic credentials constituted forms of institutional capital which were readily converted into the opportunity to undertake further study – a PhD. This was enabled by previous academic success. Such prior success constituted a form of symbolic capital which, together with the Master’s degree, was then
converted to the opportunity to engage in further study at the highest academic level. And all this to foster my own capacities to lead the learning of other teachers.

### 7.2.3 Contestation over Master’s Courses

However, in spite of the benefits I have accrued through this process of studying my Master’s, as Thomson (2005) has argued, “fields also have inherent contradictory tensions, or oppositions” (p. 748), and it was readily apparent that the field of leading-for-teacher-learning vis-à-vis higher education programmes was also contested. As in relation to the acquisition of English language learning certificates, barriers in age, health, foreign language capacity, time, and finance all inhibited teachers’ desires to achieve more cultural capital in the institutionalised form of such qualifications. This was evident in how teachers explained why they did not undertake such studies:

The older teachers or some Department Heads did not do Master’s programmes. First, they are old so they are reluctant to do this sort of course. Second, they have enough knowledge to handle the teaching at school. Third, the program of Master level is so deep in comparison with the program of General Education level. The fourth is related to their health. Fifth, there are so many tasks to do at the schools. The sixth reason is about families. The next is English capacity. Teachers need to have B level or above. A further reason is that the salary still remains unchanged. Last but not least, their prestige will be badly affected if they are not successful in the entrance exam. They feel ashamed. And this may happen that they may not do well in the English test or exams in their expertise because the Master’s tests are difficult. The knowledge is abundant and candidates are asked about many issues. It is said that those who study well may not pass the exam as it depends on their fate. (Biology Department Head, School A)

The way in which English as a valued capital intersects with the opportunity to undertake a Master’s was also apparent. Under these circumstances, more dominant and performative logics, with a focus upon increasing the number of teachers with Master’s qualifications, was contested. More performative logics were also challenged by a teacher habitus grounded in local practices and concerns which were not seen as necessitating further study at an advanced level. As in other educational settings in Vietnam where teachers struggled with time pressure, and work intensification (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001), a more conservative disposition was cultivated amongst teachers. This contrasted with the sorts of lifelong-learning practices evident elsewhere in the field, and performative practices more generally that encouraged more reductive forms of lifelong learning (cf. Biesta, 2010).

Teacher SBTE3 at School B similarly explained why some teachers were resistant to being ‘led’ to engage in teacher learning in the form of a Master’s degree:

In my opinion, some teachers at our school have not undertaken any Master courses because they may be old. They will be teaching for only a few years before their retirement. Another
possible reason is that they still have enough capacity to undertake the duties of the school without doing Master’s courses. (Teacher SBTE3, School B)

Again, a more conservative disposition towards teachers’ learning was evident, and that challenged both more performative and educative logics within the field of leading-for-teacher-learning more broadly.

### 7.3 Cross-school Leading-for-Teacher-Learning: Contests for Excellent Teachers, and Local Exchange Visits

This section provides insights into various cross-school practices associated with leading-for-teacher-learning within the province, and particularly those that involved the two schools that are the main focus of the research presented. This includes, first, how various contests for ‘excellent teachers’ were considered as enabling teachers’ learning, and, secondly, how various visits to other school sites within the province were considered significant vehicles for leading teachers’ learning. The latter included visits involving international dignitaries.

#### 7.3.1 Participating in Contests for Excellent Teachers against Other Schools

The way in which teachers within the two schools were encouraged to engage in learning to acquire more professional capital was also evident in how they participated in and prepared for various contests for excellent teachers. The purpose of contests was to discover teachers who were excellent at expertise and pedagogy, enabling them to become core teachers of schools, and of the province, and honour them with the title ‘Excellent Teacher’. This occurred within a broadly competitive logic, as such competitions were seen as cultivating an impetus for increased competition between schools and teachers in the province.

The nature of the contests, and how teachers learned from them, was highlighted by the Principal at School B when he talked about teachers’ participation in the contests designed for excellent teachers. More individualistic approaches to teachers’ learning were clearly in evidence, as was the cultivation of a culture of fear for those teachers who were not seen to be ‘self-motivated’:

> Regarding the contests designed for excellent teachers, the first thing teachers have to do is that teachers themselves have to study and be creative. With the same knowledge, teachers have to create new ways of teaching, learn from other people, go to observe teaching demonstrations, read documents, mobilise all of the sources they have… I hope teachers are voluntarily aware of the need to improve their expertise. This is considered as their living source. If they do not train on their own, they will be moved to another place or be sacked. So they themselves have to learn continuously to improve their expertise and pedagogy. (Principal, School B)

Teachers were expected to be compliant with expectations that they would engage in these practices, and develop dispositions for dynamic and creative practice. In order to constitute these
new dispositions, it seemed to require teachers to practise different strategies. This Principal also revealed deeply competitive logics within the field of schooling practices, and the field of leading-for-teacher-learning more specifically, and a subsequent habitus grounded in expectations that teachers would comply with these demands. This was evident in the way he expected his teachers to be self-aware and reminded teachers if they did not conform, their positions in the school would be at risk. Thus, it was very crucial for teachers to train themselves continuously to acquire the knowledge – cultural capital – necessary to teach their students more effectively. This helped in ensuring their position in the school was maintained. In this sense, and reflecting more dominant individualistic logics, it was imperative that teachers were leaders of their own learning.

A long-term approach to teachers’ learning was seen as an instrumental part of the process of engaging in such competitive contest practices, and as integral to the success of teachers as individuals:

… Every year, the administration team [Principal and Deputy-Principal(s)] also organises the school-level contest for teachers who teach well. The teachers who achieve high points in this school-level contest will be selected to participate in the province-level contest for teachers who teach well. The province-level contest is organised every four years, so it is quite long. This contest has the effect that teachers have to invest much in professional development. The participation in the province-level contest also requires having to have initiative, so teachers have to have thorough preparation. Initiatives have to be meaningfully and well-written in order to achieve prizes. … In general, they have to be equipped with a lot of knowledge, and prepare for many years, at least two years of frequent preparation. And it is necessary that the previous generations of teachers, who took part in this contest before, impart their experience … … (Biology Department Head, School A)

Teachers were required to spend a lot of time and effort to learn and prepare before taking part in the contest. This involved a lot of time in teacher learning, undertaking initiatives such as research into how better to teach their subject area, being experienced in teaching both basic and advanced programs, and improving their capacity to engage with others. Ongoing contact with their colleagues, particularly other teachers with experience of the contests, helped constitute a habitus disposed to participating in the contests, and being competitive in doing so. This also occurred through learning from the previous generations of teachers who took part in this contest. Their effort proved that they were taking the ‘lead’ in their learning but they were also always under pressure during this process. So the leading learning which occurred here was very much influenced by more traditional conceptions of teachers having to undertake their own learning, as reflected in the nature of teachers’ learning as part of teachers’ work more broadly (Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1991; Hardy, 2012) even as they also benefited from contact with more experienced colleagues.

As with those teachers struggling to come to terms with the challenges of the contest, I had also experienced these pressures. I myself invested much time, experience, and energy in preparing for
the provincial contest for excellent high school teachers organised by DOET every two years (then changed into every four years). The contest was demanding. All the participants felt very stressed; the conditions surrounding the contest cultivated a habitus subject to constant concern. This was caused by not only the challenging requirements of the contests but also the permanent anxiety over the time for preparing and participating in the contest; such pressures of time resonate with broader pressures upon teachers more generally in Vietnam, and how the demands of their roles make it difficult to engage in productive professional learning (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2001).

This contest entailed much hard work. It required teachers to experience numerous exam rounds. The first round consisted of written tests. One test was the test of the capacity of understanding of English language knowledge, in which there were also 1-2 questions on the method of teaching. The other test focused on the capacity of understanding of social knowledge. This previously-applied test mainly tested teachers’ understanding of policies, guidelines, documents, rules, and regulations of the Education domain, and how to deal with situations in the class and at work appropriately by applying professional, and pedagogical skills. Again, as outlined earlier in relation to various professional learning experiences, it is difficult to understand how such processes could cultivate the forms of communicative competence that should attend English language learning (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2007). Some previous candidates had not been successful in this test, so all candidates seemed anxious about it. If teachers did not pass either of these two exam papers, they were not able to continue in the contest. In this way, success in the tests represented particularly significant forms of institutional capital, and success in these tests determined whether teachers would progress or not.

My success in these contests was evidence that I had been able to take advantage of capital accumulation during my teaching, work, and study. More conservative logics within the field of leading-for-teacher-learning were also evident in the way I engaged in learning on my own, seeking and reading materials, studying new, appropriate methods of teaching, taking the initiative, doing research on my area of expertise and exchanging ideas and experiences with senior teachers, learning from colleagues and experienced teachers. Specifically, when undertaking research to produce an initiative, I had to reflect on my expertise and spend much energy and time working on it. During that process, a more conservative disposition continued to be evident, and reflective of the broader logics of the field of teachers’ learning more generally (Hardy, 2012), as I engaged in much reflection on teaching myself. However, a more collaborative logic was also evident in the way the Foreign Language Department members also helped the project become more effective and feasible. Afterwards, my initiative was presented at the school’s board for judgement. When it was assessed, it was sent to DOET’s assessment panel. As part of this process, there was pressure to
ensure that I obtained a prize. This is one of the compulsory requirements to recognise a teacher as having passed the contest for excellent teachers. My strenuous efforts ensured a good outcome in this case. I passed the contest and was considered one of the most successful candidates in this contest. This outcome also resulted from the support, encouragement, and experiences from my managers, colleagues, students and family as well as my awareness of my sense of responsibility for school improvement. In order to exist, maintain and develop my position, I had developed particular social capital, by engaging with colleagues, continuously learning from them, exchanging experiences with them, but at the same time, I also engaged in much learning on my own. In this way, I complied with the expectations to learn in particular ways, and to do so within the parameters established within DOET and MOET. My more compliant habitus reflected the broader, conservative policy-driven field of schooling practices more generally, and was also evident in the way I was devoted to my career, sought to make a considerable contribution to the development of the field of leading-for-teacher-learning – a field continuing to be dominated by more traditional practices.

7.3.2 Exchange Visits with Other Schools

7.3.2.1 Exchanges with national and international dignitaries

The field of leading-for-teacher-learning was not only being constituted within local schooling contexts, but this field was also structured (and structuring) by practices beyond such settings. This was evident in the occurrences of exchanges between teachers and a prominent maths professor, and other foreign visitors to the province. The interaction between teachers and a prominent maths professor enabled teachers’ learning. There were also practices of mutual learning between schools in the province or from different regions. This section will discuss these experiences.

The Maths Department Head at School B explained the special task that his Subject Department performed in an interview with Professor Ngo Bao Chau, a famous, internationally-renowned Vietnamese mathematician who won the Fields’ Medal for his contribution of “the fundamental lemma”\(^5\) of the Langlands program\(^6\). A logic of leading-for-teacher-learning was evident in the way in which teachers of natural science subjects at School B, specifically maths teachers, were assigned to work collaboratively (endorsed by MOET and DOET) in organising the interview between students, and teachers in some high schools in the province and Professor Ngo Bao Chau; this

\(^5\) The fundamental lemma: A “lemma”, in mathematical terms, means a formulation that is used to solve a larger problem. Ngo’s contribution is the proof of the fundamental lemma of the Langlands Program, which had taken all attempts of mathematicians for nearly 30 years to achieve. Ngo’s proof is ingenious because it uses new geometric ideas. Time magazine listed his achievement as one of the top 10 scientific discoveries of 2009. (http://news.uchicago.edu/article/2010/08/19/ng-bao-ch-u-receives-fields-medal-highest-honor-mathematics)
interaction reflected a model of learning through interactions in a collaborative group (Bannister, 2015). This work was recognised and valued by teachers, such as the Maths Department Head in School B:

Recently, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and Provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET) assigned our Maths Department the honour to collaboratively organise the interview between students, and teachers in some high schools in the province, and Professor Ngo Bao Chau. This interview was very useful. It gave teachers and students more impetus and more passion in maths. We understood more about his efforts in study and research. He spent a lot of time on maths…He found out the remaining missing piece to form the whole picture. The picture brightened up. He continued doing research very hard and this resulted in his great success. His contribution is the proof of the fundamental lemma of the Langlands program. The professor shared his point of view on ways of learning, shared his knowledge of maths history, and shared his experiences during his studies. He also answered the questions raised by students and teachers. The conversation with him really increased maths passion amongst teachers and students. I admired him a lot and felt touched because Professor Ngo Bao Chau represented a Vietnamese person gaining the highest prestige in maths area in the world. This is a good example for teachers and students to follow. (Maths Department Head, School B)

This showed how the Maths Department members were exposed to and influenced by the symbolic capital of prestige associated with the distinguished professor. In turn, teachers who interacted with the professor were lauded by their senior managers. This capital accumulation was evident in ways that teachers could follow the Professor’s example by learning from his struggles in studies and research. Through his talk and answers in the interview, the audience, especially teachers, were exposed to his passionate disposition for maths. They also felt pride and respect for his success after he described his great effort and hard work. The professor spread his interesting but challenging experiences that helped nourish belief and will for teachers who were undertaking a very challenging job. This interview was valued as an instance of leading-for-teacher-learning. However, it is also important to recognise that such brief interactions also represent a more traditional ‘one-off’ approach to professional learning, and do not reflect the more ongoing, collaborative, learning-culture oriented developmental approaches found to be beneficial for teachers’ learning in the longer term (Timperley et al., 2007).

Some other teachers were also trusted with a special task during his visit. This involved facilitating the interactions between different individuals and groups, which enabled the process of social capital cultivation – another example of more short-term approaches to leading-for-teacher-learning. The Foreign Languages Department Head at School B organised the program for this interview. While not reflective of more long-term approaches to teachers’ learning, this teacher still felt he had benefited from the experience, and that this influenced his teaching practice positively:

I have never played a role of an MC [master of ceremonies] in such important meetings, but when I was assigned the task to be an MC in the interview with Professor Ngo Bao Chau, I
was willing to undertake this and did my best. You know, to meet with Professor Ngo, a Fields’ Medallist who has such prestige and academic knowledge, I had to design a play for that interview. It meant that I had to make a plan in which there were valuable questions beneficial to the audience, including students, parents, and teachers of some high schools. The choice of questions was extremely important. In order to select proper questions, I had to get to know students’ needs, teachers’ interest and the professor’s interests as well. I needed to know what topic in his area and what social issues he wanted to speak about. To have this information, I had to learn from many sources about his academic stage, works and different positions. I sought to know more about him and learnt a lot. Thanks to playing the role of MC in that interview, it can be believed that now I am one of the people in the province who know much about the professor. I brought students in my classes the knowledge that I sought and the knowledge I learnt from his talk. This has flowed into my lectures, so my students were very interested. Through me, students also learnt more about Professor Ngo and his leadership. He is now acting as scientific director of the newly founded Vietnam Institute for Advanced Study in Maths. (Foreign Languages Department Head, School B)

The cultural capital accrued by Professor Ngo Bao Chau was valued as symbolic capital of renown by not only Vietnamese people but also by people throughout the world. Interactions with the Professor constituted a form of social capital (Bourdieu, 1990b). In this instance, the school in which the Foreign Languages Department Head at School B acted as an MC was a social site that recognised the Professor’s contribution and provided circumstances in which he enabled, indeed dominated, the learning experiences of these teachers, at least for a moment. The social capital acquired through engagement with the Professor were construed as significant. Through exposure to the embodied capital of the Professor, he tried to acquire understanding about the Professor’s biography, focussing on the experiences in studies and research. This head created an exciting atmosphere with the involvement of Professor Ngo Bao Chau and other foreign professors, as well as other special visitors and students, parents, and teachers of some high schools in the province. His effort in seeking and improving his knowledge about the Fields’ Medals and medallists, together with his valued cultural capital – particularly the capacity to communicate in English fluently in the interview – were construed as beneficial by participants, even as this was also clearly a more traditional, conservative approach to teachers’ learning.

7.3.2.2 Exchanges with high schools for gifted students in Maths conferences

Another example of leading-for-teacher-learning was evident in the exchanges that occurred in relation to high schools working with gifted students. The exchange of expertise between schools for gifted students through conferences was construed as beneficial by teachers in the two schools focused upon here. This was the place where teachers worked together, learned from one another, and shared professional issues arising during the teaching process.

In terms of the exchanges with high schools for gifted students at maths conferences, it was clear how various forms of social capital were forged between provincial, ministry and school personnel
through the work of those who organised such conferences, and School B was at the centre of this organisation:

The Maths Conference in the central region involving 16 provinces was held in School B. The Maths Department participated in organising the conference very thoroughly and completed the task. Provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET) [manager] took the chair for this conference, and General Education Division of DOET [manager] coordinated the conference. This is an opportunity to connect the schools for gifted students of the Central Highlands provinces. (Maths teacher SBTM2, School B)

The focus in this excerpt was on the cooperation and exchange of experience amongst 16 provinces in the region. The conference was held at School B. That the Provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET) manager took the chair of this conference reflects the high status this body was accorded within the field. The General Education Division of DOET manager orchestrated for this Maths Department to organise the conference, so there was evidence of different form of distributed leadership focused upon ‘extending or sharing leadership practice’ (Harris, 2009, p. 3) – at least on the part of DOET. There was also evidence of more individual learning within collaborative settings (Meijer et al., 2007) involving different agents in fostering the conference, signifying its importance within the field of leading-for-teacher-learning more broadly. The process involved connecting the schools for gifted students of the Central Highlands provinces – an example of leading to foster a form of social capital that would not have been otherwise present. This social capital development was also evident in the form of involvement of a retired professor who was the former Principal of Hanoi University of Natural Sciences. This professor acted as the chair of the conference; his presence was evidence of the symbolic capital of prestige, and the deeply embodied forms of institutional and cultural capital in relation to Maths:

This conference arose spontaneously from the needs of the sectors/ regions in the country, under the advice of a professor who is former Principal of Hanoi University of Natural Sciences. The professor retired, but is still involved in teaching specialised teachers in Master classes and training courses in summer. This workshop was held in Ha Ngan for the first time (last year), this year in Thao Anh and Chuong Dung. The participants are maths teachers and leaders of DOETs. This was the opportunity to meet and exchange experiences of teachers in the process of teaching mathematics. (Maths teacher SBTM2, School B)

This conference involved sharing ideas, and exchanging experiences of teachers about the process of teaching mathematics. In this way, it constituted and fostered a form of social capital amongst the participants. Rather than simply learning on their own to develop professionally, teachers found it very useful to discuss advantages and disadvantages with one another at this conference:

Teachers themselves learn on their own to improve their level, but through workshops like this, teachers had a chance to discuss problems or good experiences with one another. This helped teachers become more confident. This was a way to bind people together and work together to share not only in the professional field, but also many other issues such as methods, and how to communicate. (Maths teacher SBTM2, School B)
Moving beyond simply ‘delivering content’ (Webster-Wright, 2009) to teachers, more substantive professional learning was made possible through teachers working together to share expertise in relation to both the professional area in which they worked and methods of teaching and learning, as well as how to communicate with each other. This maths teacher, SBTM2, asserted that teachers became more confident and active through this process. Through this work, a more active approach to learning was evident as teachers engaged with one another to learn from one another:

When a teacher presented a certain part in the program, or a specialised topic – for example, a specialised topic on Inequality to train gifted students – s/he had to explain in detail. Then colleagues gave comments. It was very useful. The colleagues in the audience were able to listen to how the presenter wrote about that content. They observed, understood, and then transformed it to their own knowledge. This was also beneficial to the writer and presenter. S/he thought s/he had given information away to the audience, and now needed to do further research to further inform audiences in the future. This meant he himself needed to continue doing research. (Maths Department Head, School B)

The act of presenting was a form of leading-for-teacher-learning within the field, going beyond simply the ‘training model’ of teachers treated as passive recipients of information (Zeichner, 2003), even if the conference approach was still of a relatively conservative ilk. The knowledge that was conveyed was a valued form of capital that those maths teachers attending could accrue. The audience could gain benefits associated with listening to others’ research and transforming this knowledge in relation to their own cultural capital. For the presenter, his leadership was evident in the way he encouraged maths colleagues to pay attention to and learn from his research. Also, he himself learnt – was “led” to learn – from his colleagues’ comments and advice. After delivering his research, he had to re-think the focus of his own research as well. He learnt from the teachers, even as they learnt from him. He also had to ascertain how to renew himself. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether and how this process contributed to more ongoing, long-term approaches to teachers’ learning at these teachers’ school sites. While there appeared to be some benefits associated with social and cultural capital accrual, it is difficult to gauge how such processes serve to challenge more short-term approaches to teachers’ learning that continue to be dominant.

7.3.2.3 Exchanges between high schools in relation to Foreign Languages (English)

That teachers at School B were ‘leading’ teacher learning was also evident in the way the school hosted exchange visits involving many delegations coming to visit the Foreign Languages Department Head at the school. This was seen as a result of the accumulation of particular kinds of capital in the form of various prizes and awards:

Our school for gifted students has earned a good reputation nationwide, not only in the province. Many fellow teachers from other schools visited our school to learn experience for a number of reasons. First, it is certain that our school had some strengths and advantages that
they did not have. Speaking in another way, there was the same model of a school for gifted students, but each school has its own special operating model as well. I thought our school has operated in the right direction. This was determined by the outcome, by the achievement announced annually as ranking tables of the performance of its high proportion of students admitted to Universities. Our school was also one of the schools that had the best number of students who won national prizes. When mentioning the schools famous for winning medals, the name of our school was recalled as well. In any list of top schools was the presence of our school... (Foreign Languages Department Head, School B)

From the above excerpt, the symbolic capital of School B was evident in the great achievements the school made, for example, ranking tables of the performance of its high proportion of students admitted to universities, the number of students who won national prizes, or the number of medals in “Olympic” contests held by schools in the South region. As in western contexts where ranking tables of performance have contributed to competitiveness between schools (Ball, 2012), we can see how a high position on these league tables was considered a valued form of capital. The symbolic capital accrued through success in these tests, and subsequent attendance at high ranking universities, and in relation to these national prizes, indicated how a competitive logic permeated these schooling practices. Although not overtly evident within the data, arguably, such practices also reflect the influence of broader practices of global accountabilities in schooling (Lingard et al., 2016).

This regard for the school was also evident in the pride with which the Foreign Languages Department Head described visiting delegations’ comments and responses to the work occurring at the school:

When visiting delegations came to see our school’s model, they were wholeheartedly welcomed...They brought here a lot of questions and the questions were very clearly divided. For questions about management, the directorial board would answer. Questions of expertise would be answered by the Subject Department Heads at the meeting, or Subject Department Heads would meet to exchange, and advise each other. Then they visited labs, and observed how the facilities and equipment in the labs were arranged and decorated. They passed an audio-visual room to observe. If there was one lesson taking place there, it would be more interesting, or they moved to the traditional room. They went but they noted seeing how our students performed in the class, how attitudes, and discipline were revealed. They noted very carefully. Before leaving our school, they usually asked for materials, expertise materials to share. Most visiting schools were schools for gifted students, but there were also schools for mainstream students. Our school enthusiastically facilitated them to the maximum extent. (Foreign Languages Department Head, School B)

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6 An Olympic contest: The contest is held every year to discover and foster the learning and training movement of gifted students in Grade 10 and 11 in the provinces in South Vietnam, in Central Vietnam and Central Highlands. The purpose of the contest is also to prepare teams of gifted students for the national contest for gifted students annually. This is an opportunity for the teachers of schools whose students participate in the contest to exchange professional experience in training specialised classes/ classes for gifted students. This is also an opportunity for gifted students from the provinces, and cities to exchange learning experiences, and become acquainted with Olympic form. The contest consists of 10 subjects: Math, Literature, English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Geography, Information Technology and French.
Here we can see how a proud disposition was clearly evident on the part of this Department Head. His comments reflected ongoing experiences of the success of such visits. This success was evident in the variety of positive comments made by visitors to the school, and the pride this fostered. This pride was evident in descriptions of how the directorial board, the Department Heads and teachers were involved in answering visiting teachers’ questions. Also, even as there was a clear sense of competitiveness evident, the provision of ‘materials to share’ also reveals how forms of objectified capital contributed to the development of social capital through the sharing of these resources. The expertise exchange – social capital – not only took place face to face but also occurred when teachers visited labs and audio-visual rooms to see how equipment in the labs was arranged. Pride in the school also occurred in relation to these teachers observing how students at the school performed in the class, the attitudes, and discipline they revealed. All groups were supported by the school. The contact with the school enabled the cultivation of a form of social capital that was seen as benefiting the teachers who visited, as well as serving as a form of symbolic capital amongst teachers such as the Department Head who took pride in the positive culture fostered by such visits.

School A also made it possible for other schools to exchange experiences and vice versa. Many delegations chose School A as their destination for their plan to gain and develop their learning experiences:

Regarding exchange visits to learn from each other, our school also did, and a number of delegates from other schools within the province and other provinces also visited our school. For example, in the upcoming time of this school year, Pleiku High School is going to visit our school. They want to listen to our report on the school’s measures in recent years, e.g., how to improve the quality of teaching and learning to achieve a ranking in the top 200 high schools in the country... We are always willing to welcome groups for exchanging experience and mutual learning. There were visiting groups through whose questions and difficulties we also discovered were also our difficulties. Generally speaking, we learned from each other. So exchange visits to learn from each other are a good activity. It is the shortest way for us to learn directly, not through books,... There were those who experienced the same challenges, then they helped others very effectively. (Principal, School A)

In this case, the logics of practice evident pertained to exchanging ideas and learning through exchange visits. And as in School B, more performative processes of ranking schools (cf. Ball, 2012) contributed significantly to the esteem generated. The Principal also highlighted that such visits were the shortest way to learn from each other face to face; the social capital generated through this work was considered particularly valuable. However, whether such practices enabled a more educative disposition in a more ongoing way is an open question, particularly given the need to undertake learning initiatives over an extended period of time (Timperley et al., 2007).
7.4 Leading-for-Teacher-Learning Internationally

7.4.1 Support for International Experiences

Leading-for-teacher-learning was also evident in support for teachers to engage in international experiences. This involved exposure to international personnel, in a variety of modes. This included international lecturers modelling English teaching practices, and teachers being supported to undertake both short and long term study abroad. The logic of practices associated with these experiences also reflected the influence of the broader field of power in the form of key policies focused on improving international cooperation (National Foreign Language Project 2020) (Government of Vietnam, 2008), developing a system of high schools for gifted students in the period 2010-2020 (Government of Vietnam, 2010), and a broader strategy for educational development in period 2011-2020 (Government of Vietnam, 2012c). At the same time, such responses also reflected how the international market in English education development was being promoted over alternative forms of English language learning, and how there was inadequate regard for the multiplicity of Englishes in countries outside the ‘core’ of native English speaking countries. This situation highlights what Phan Le Ha (2005) refers to as the ‘fiercely hierarchical relations’ (p. 245) between different forms of English.

7.4.1.1 International lecturer/teacher modelling ‘exemplary’ English teaching

Leading-for-teacher-learning was evident in the form of support for international staff to visit schools to provide the opportunity for teachers to learn how to ‘more effectively’ teach students in English:

The second source comes from effective cooperation. For example, our school establishes a good relationship with a university in New Zealand, so they sent a lecturer here to teach students English in one week. During this time, teachers who were able to arrange time to attend his classes to learn about his language skills, method of teaching and ways of assessing students. (Foreign Languages Department Head, School B)

In this instance, teacher learning was construed as facilitated by exposure to an international native speaker of English. The international lecturers’ embodied forms of capital – namely exemplary capacity in English – were highly valued by Vietnamese schools and government. The sense of ‘international-ness’ itself constituted a valued form of capital. This perpetuates more traditional approaches to English language learning in which native English speakers are construed as superior to non-native English speakers. This explicit advocacy of international speakers of English is part of the ‘native speaker mindset’ (Ngoc Ba Doan, 2016), in which native speakers are seen as more competent as speakers and teachers of English.
Consequently, that these lecturers had international experience was considered important. Perhaps more significant, however, was that this international experience was grounded in a predominantly English-speaking country. It is also interesting to speculate what it meant to have a lecturer assisting teachers to learn English. The academic credentials constituted forms of objectified capital which were valued. Such credentials were available in the person of the lecturer—a form of embodied capital. The scarcity of this “commodity” meant that exposure to these lecturers conferred a degree of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) upon those teachers who had this direct exposure. From the excerpt, and through this experience, we can see Vietnamese teachers were considered to have learnt good methods and skills from these practices. And this process was only possible because of the support of the school principal. In this way, the leading-teacher-learning of this principal constituted a logic of practice which helped reconstitute the nature of learning experiences for these teachers, and perhaps for others who became aware of this opportunity, and in ways that reflected the domination of native-speaker oriented approaches to English, rather than more diverse forms of English. Also, and revealing how the forms of distinction fostered through such a process were always deeply socially embedded, it was also evident that this process was fostered through DOET, and permission of the provincial People’s Committee.

Also, the Foreign Languages Department Head mentioned that it required much time and commitment on the part of members of each of these organisations to contact overseas universities, and involved a number of procedures. For example, the school established good relationships with some international institutions, and organisations. The Foreign Languages Department Head himself contacted and invited the Department Head at a university in New Zealand to School B to give lectures for one week. Again, this reflected the dominance of approaches to English language learning that foregrounded native speakers of English over non-native speakers (Ngoc Ba Doan, 2016). Therefore, the Principal, as well as the Foreign Languages Department Head, were both acting as leaders of very particular forms of learning—learning which advanced native-speaker conceptions of English, and marginalised alternative approaches. This Department Head’s support revealed a habitus grounded in international English experiences, and a high level of esteem amongst colleagues because of these experiences:

In such a small range, it seems that the prestige of my academic knowledge may be perceived. I do not want to show off or show my pride here, but when teachers know that I was trained from a standard-English education environment (you know I did a Master’s program at University of Illinois, USA), they seem to rely on any expertise-related things that I share with them. It is the prestige of academic capacity. (Foreign Languages Department Head, School B).

In this instance, this Department Head explained how his experiences constituted a form of symbolic capital in relation to his colleagues. Thanks to the years he spent studying at a standard-
English foreign university, he attained ‘valued’ capital in the form of a distinctive credential. That this form of capital was so valued reflects a broader ‘native speaker’ mindset (Ngoc Ba Doan, 2016) in which his experiences in an English-speaking country were seen as superior to alternative forms of English spoken in this teachers’ own context. This Head was seen as an ‘effective’ facilitator (of his colleagues) – a leader of the learning for other teachers – by virtue of how he and the other teachers were dominated by more dominant forms of English language learning.

7.4.1.2 Supporting teachers to do short- and long-term study abroad

Finally, there was also some evidence of teachers being supported to undertake various modes of study in international settings. In October 2013, a group of ELT Specialists and teachers (about 14 people) of different levels from some DOETs were sent to the University of Queensland for a one-month short term overseas study. In a sense, such positioning by the government plays into perceptions of native speakers and native speaking contexts as ‘essential’ for further developing Vietnamese speakers’ capacity. This tertiary experience resonates with Ngoc Ba Doan’s (2016) research into Vietnamese teachers in university settings, and how non-native speakers of English are positioned as needing these experiences, flagging perceptions of deficiencies amongst non-native speakers. Even as such a stance may have been construed as a means to build communicative competence, and providing enabling conditions for the development of more ‘authentic’ classroom teaching strategies (Pham Hoa Hiep, 2007), the overarching principle seemed to be that engagement with English speakers in core English speaking contexts was the best way to improve teachers’ English language capacity, and their ability to teach English more effectively to their students.

Advocacy for this experience by those involved, and their efforts to apply their learnings, such as by the ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager of Thao Anh DOET, reflected a disposition to ‘lead learning’ on the part of these educators within these parameters:

Studying a short course at UQ, Australia, is very useful. We studied leadership and how to organise events, etc. I have applied the knowledge acquired at UQ to handle problems when implementing the national FL project 2020. I organised a workshop to train 99 teachers (33 primary teachers and 66 secondary teachers), helping them with the orientation of studying on their own and changing the learning cultures, introducing ‘Three person teaching’ ... introducing the concept “leadership”. At first, it sounded strange and vague and no one answered the question “Are you leaders?”, but later when they heard “you lead yourself, you lead your work, you lead your teaching, you lead your students”, they understood. After several days, many teachers sent the products showing how to carry out their teaching or their creative thoughts to overcome difficulties during their teaching. (ELT Specialist and General Education Division Vice-Manager, DOET)

Again, international experience was highly valued. This experience constituted a form of symbolic capital, made possible by economic capital, and only realised by those teachers who possessed the
requisite cultural capital – including existing capacity in English language expression – to be able to be competitive for selection. The focus upon studying leadership and how to organise events also resonated with policy support for the increased human capital development of the Vietnamese population (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2001b, 2004, 2011b).

Similar to the opportunities above, I was supported to undertake short term study abroad in New Zealand by MOET under the Program for High School Education Development of Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training. MOET appointed and sent about 20 members, including teachers from a number of high schools for gifted students and English Language Specialists of some DOETs in the country to New Zealand for a one-month training course on teacher learning in 2013. The purpose of this training was to improve English language skills and methods of teaching English language. Participants were expected to study and then disseminate information to their colleagues when they returned. I was selected thanks to the “distinction” I possessed – being different from others – through the capital I acquired over time (particularly English language proficiency), and how this was recognised and valued. Previous experiences, achievements of and contributions to leading learning and being led for learning, together with credentials – merits, certificates (e.g., Foreign Languages certificates: B level in French, B level in Russian, IELTS) and degrees (Bachelor of English, Master of Educational Administration) became the passport to have my name put in the list of that group. The Principal at my present school gave me the opportunity and allowed me to attend this training course. This principal’s leadership practices were an example of principal’s support for teacher learning (Hardy, 2010). However, I also recognise that such selection processes serve to limit those for whom such opportunities are available, and continue to feed into perceptions of international experiences as superior to more localised experiences.

In relation to my own PhD, I also recognise that the sorts of reflexive development made possible through Vietnamese students undertaking a research higher degree in an international setting (Hannah Soong et al., 2015), is only available to a very small number of people. I am the only general education teacher in the province who has been allowed to do a PhD internationally under a State scholarship. I am a teacher of English and one of the key teachers in the province. I was permitted, encouraged and sponsored by the Government of Vietnam, the Provincial People’s Committee, DOET and the school to do a PhD in Australia since 2011. Therefore, it is clear to see that this kind of practice is limited to a small number of teachers. Only those teachers with significant forms of symbolic capital, including by virtue of their roles as ELT Specialists, Department Heads, key teachers of English, or teachers whose habitus is clearly reflective of the propensity and capacity to learn (particularly in English), are considered favourably for such experiences.
7.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, a logic of leading learning was evident in the teacher learning practices that occurred beyond individual school sites. The chapter began by describing the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning in the region that influenced teachers’ learning in the two ‘exemplary’ schools, particularly the continued strong influence of teachers undertaking more traditional, short-term ‘in-service’ professional learning workshops and courses. The second section focused on teachers undertaking tertiary studies - including teachers taking intensive courses, particularly in English, and Master’s courses. This section revealed how teachers were under considerable pressure to attain particular forms of certification as evidence of their learning. There was also evidence of how support for teachers to undertake Master’s courses was selective, and concerns about who was considered able to undertake such courses, and who was not considered eligible. The third section emphasised teachers participating in various competitive ‘contests’ against teachers in other schools. Again, these practices were limited to particular formats, and available to selected teachers. Teacher visits were also relatively narrow in orientation, and tended to foreground particular kinds of English language learning to the detriment of other forms. More conservative, individualistic and short-term approaches to teachers’ learning seemed to dominate. The chapter concluded with an account of practices of leading-for-teacher-learning internationally involving an international lecturer modelling exemplary English teaching, and support for teachers to do short- and long-term study abroad. Again, particular forms of English language learning seemed to promoted, to the detriment of others, and opportunities for extended international study were limited to a very, very small number of teachers/educators.

The next chapter, Chapter 8, summarises the overall findings of the study. This includes further explicating the nature of the field of ‘leading-for-teacher-learning’ as outlined through the data analysis, and indicating the main theoretical, methodological and practical/empirical contributions of the research.
Chapter 8. Conclusion

8.0 Introduction

This thesis has explored the practices of “leading-for-teacher-learning” in one province in Vietnam, and particularly in relation to two ‘exemplary’ school sites. In order to understand these practices, it was necessary to study how these practices were performed in multiple contexts, both inside as well as outside these schools.

In terms of leading-for-teacher-learning within schools, these practices related to teaching English through a new ‘pilot’ program, English teachers helping maths teachers, and teachers leading learning in subject departments; the latter including facilitating teachers learning in community in these departments. Leading the learning of teachers also involved engaging/facilitating teachers’ learning in relation to thematic lesson plan designs and theme-based teaching, and teaching teams of gifted students.

Regarding the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning outside schools, these involved teachers leading-for-teacher-learning in the region, and in relation to engagement with international institutions. In the regional context, there were occurrences of teachers engaging in more traditional ‘in-service’ teacher learning practices; this included teachers taking intensive courses, and undertaking tertiary education in regional and national contexts. In relation to international contexts, practices of leading-for-teacher-learning were exercised through the support of international experiences, including international lecturers modelling exemplary English teaching, and support for teachers to undertake short- and long-term study abroad. It was clear that such forms of international experience were deemed particularly valuable, and as conferring distinction upon those to whom they related (Bourdieu, 1984). It was also apparent that a limited number of teachers/educators were able to engage in many of these experiences, and that criteria for participation were rigidly enacted.

Through these varied practices, there was evidence of various forms of support from the different authorities and people involved, and various resources – forms of capital – to enable leading-for-teacher-learning. At the same time, there was also evidence of significant tension and stress as teachers sought to ‘lead their learning’, and that of others. Such pressures and concerns also reflect the influence of specific education policies and reforms, particularly those seeking to cultivate English language learning as a dominant practice amongst teachers and students in schools. These pressures and concerns also reflect how the field of leading-for-teacher-learning was also a site of
contested practices where not only certain people were advantaged, and others were disadvantaged, but where those who were advantaged may also be subject to significant demands and competitive pressures that may militate against more productive learning practices for all. The extent to which individuals and groups are advantaged and disadvantaged reflects the particular capitals accrued as part of the process of leading-for-teacher-learning, and benefiting (or otherwise), from these practices.

This chapter provides a summary of contributions and implications of the research in relation to the research questions. It also outlines the relevant methodological, theoretical and practical contributions of the research, as well as the extent to which the aims of the research were attained and the limitations of the research. The chapter concludes with implications for policy, practice and future research.

### 8.1 Summary of Contributions and Implications of the Research

It is now possible to reflect upon the nature of the contribution of the research, the extent to which the research questions have been answered, and the implications of the research. This is undertaken in light of the conceptual resources informing the research, particularly Bourdieu’s ‘thinking tools’ of field, capital and habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), relevant literature into the nature of literature on teachers’ leading and learning, including in relation to English language learning in Vietnam. To reiterate, the research questions were:

1. What are the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning of administrators and teachers that influence teacher learning in Thao Anh Province, particularly in two so-called ‘exemplary’ schools, and including in relation to English language learning?

2. How do these practices of leading-for-teacher-learning come about in these sites? How are they developed? Who is involved? What resources are involved? What are the socio-political circumstances that influence this leading-for-teacher-learning?

Overall, the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning consisted of a relatively conservative array of influences – of support for short-term, workshop-based approaches, often focused on a narrow conception of English language learning, and often influenced by broader, more competitive practices. However, these practices were also contested, even as there appeared to be considerable support for their continuation. In this sense, the research reveals a broader field of schooling practices characterised by competitive and contested logics, and a field of leading-for-teacher-learning characterised by similarly competitive and contested logics.
It was clear that teachers ‘led’ much of their own learning, including in relation to English language learning. This included in relation to the Pilot English 10 Program. Policy support for such learning was also widely evident, perhaps most obviously through the National Foreign Language Project 2020 (Government of Vietnam, 2008). However, the facilitation/‘leading’ of teachers’ learning was also circumscribed by whether teachers had achieved the required level of attainment of English proficiency/certification. Much of the learning that eventuated was also expressed in the form of more individualistic learning practices, and reflective of how more structured approaches to teachers’ learning is considered as lacking (Borko, 2004). Much learning occurred on teachers own, even as there was support for particular programs and initiatives provided by the District and Ministry. Teachers ‘led’ a great deal of their own learning.

At the same time, and reflecting the contestation that attends the field of leading-for-teacher-learning, there were also instances where teachers were engaged in more inclusive and interactive forms of learning, such as when English teachers in School B sought to assist their mathematics colleagues in developing their capacity to teach mathematics in English. The support provided for mathematics teachers reflected more collaborative logics. However, as part of this process, there was also evidence of how more standardised forms of English language learning were dominant (such as a focus upon pronunciation and grammar), reflecting such processes within Vietnam in relation to English language learning more broadly (Phan Le Ha, 2005). This was in keeping with compliance with dominant foreign language policies, such as National Foreign Language Project 2020, including tensions within this policy for teachers to quickly develop their English language learning capacities, and the dominant use of textbooks as part of English language learning practices more broadly.

There was also overt contestation in relation to pressures of time, and deficit conceptions of teachers who were expected to teach other subjects via English as a medium of instruction. This also involved processes of individualising teachers’ deficits, such as ‘older’ teachers, and teachers of Russian who were seen as failing to transition to the teaching of English as expected by Ministry of Education reforms. This was an example of what Pennycook (1998) refers to as how teachers were racially defined by their relationship with English, with this relationship typically rendered ‘problematic’. This was particularly so for the many teachers who failed to conform adequately with a broader policy context so supportive of the place and value of English language learning to teachers’ learning more broadly, but also unclear about how to coherently foster such learning.
At the same time, during those instances when teachers collaborated for a more substantive focus upon student learning, this was also typically occurring in contexts of strong pressure to ensure improved performance in these ‘prestigious’/‘exemplary’ school sites. While more individualistic logics were challenged as teachers came together to plan their lessons together, and to critique one another’s practice as part of the work of these schools, the competitive logic that always permeated this work added an additional sense of pressure that perhaps detracted from the nature of the efforts to collaboratively lead teachers’ learning, and to benefit from these efforts. The research implies that schools characterised by strong pressures for improved performance under broader globalised conditions in which English language learning constitutes an important logic may not necessarily provide the sorts of learning opportunities that are beneficial for all teachers, or for Vietnamese teachers working in the majority of schooling contexts more broadly.

In relation to the learning that occurred around the ‘special topics’, there was also a considerable focus upon teachers leading their own learning. The demands around teaching special topics constituted an important part of the logics of the field of schooling practices more broadly, and of field of leading-for-teacher-learning more specifically, with teachers openly accepting they should undertake learning on their own to improve their teaching of these topics. This seems to contradict those instances where teachers learned in collaboration with one another (such as English teachers working with maths teachers to enhance the capacity of the latter to teach maths through English as a medium of instruction), and the broad consensus within the literature around the importance of such collaborative practices (Cordingley et al., 2007; Timperley et al., 2007). However, revealing how such logics are contested, those teachers who were fortunate to be members of a department (such as the Biology teachers mentioned in relation to the special projects approach) which did foster a more collaborative approach, experienced a much more systemically supportive and supported form of teacher leadership for learning. The way in which younger teachers were expected to work with more experienced teachers also reveals a field of leading-for-teacher-learning not simply dominated by more individualistic logics.

The nature of teachers’ learning outside of the individual schools also points to the impact of more conservative logics as teachers were encouraged to learn on their own, and of the increasing colonising influence of more dominant conceptions of English language learning with its emphasis upon promoting reductive forms of English (with a focus on pronunciation, grammar, and textbook exercises more generally, for example). While a more critical notion of the appropriation of English is essential (Phan Le Ha, 2005), this was not always evident in the nature of the efforts to lead teachers’ learning in relation to the two schools and the province in which they were located, as
reported in the research. Instead, more conservative logics dominated, inhibiting more progressive practices. Also, more long-term, collaborative forms of teacher learning, oriented towards student outcomes and the monitoring of these (Timperley et al., 2007), were stymied by more bureaucratic logics and a conservative culture of workshop attendance in Vietnamese educational settings.

Furthermore, the tertiary education programmes the teachers engaged in also reflected more dominant practices associated with the attainment of formal qualifications. Intensive courses (particularly for certificates) in English in which teachers participated as part of their studies were characterised by dominant conceptions of English language learning, particularly those associated with Europe and England (e.g. in the form of the CEFR, and Cambridge assessment tests in English). There appeared to be little attention to the forms of cultural knowledge that attended English learning beyond those sanctioned in more dominant contexts – perhaps reflecting a more prejudicial view about English language learning amongst non-native speakers (Ngoc Ba Doan, 2014). Furthermore, while selected teachers may have benefited from participation in Master’s courses, this was also a selective process which was heavily regulated by the District and Ministry of Education. While I recognise that I benefited from this process, I am one of very few people for whom this was the case. The way in which many teachers were construed as older, and as not possessing the capacity for further study, reflects a considerable degree of discrimination on the part of those making decisions about the extent to which teachers should have the opportunity to participate in different learning opportunities. Consequently, seeking how to make such opportunities available to other teachers, and contesting various prejudices associated with conceptions of what teachers are capable of doing, is an area for much further work.

Even when more innovative efforts were apparent, such as the engagement with Professor Ngo Bao Chau, the Fields’ Medallist, such approaches to leading teachers’ learning were relatively short term, and did not reflect the ongoing, genuinely collaborative, learning-culture development approaches found to be beneficial for teachers’ learning in the longer term (Timperley et al., 2007). Even as the social and cultural capital accrued through engaging with Professor Ngo Bao Chau appeared to have benefits for those participating, it is difficult to say to what extent these benefits were ongoing. Further research needs to be undertaken to determine whether and how such practices have long-term beneficial effects upon teacher, and subsequently student, learning.

Finally, support to learn from international ‘experts’ or to engage in further learning opportunities in international settings, reflected forms of leading-for-teacher-learning that foregrounded external expertise, and external experience as superior to learning within teachers’ schools and regions.
Again, while such experiences were beneficial for those who were able to participate in them, the experience of a visiting New Zealand academic as a teacher/expert of English served to further consolidate various forms of a ‘native speaker mindset’ (Ngoc Ba Doan, 2016) that diminish the multiple ways in which English is actually deployed in the myriad of national and regional circumstances in which it is spoken. And opportunities to engage in international study programs, including to undertake a PhD in an international context, may be beneficial for the individuals involved, but appear to be available to very few educators and almost no teachers at all in the Vietnamese context.

Consequently, in relation to the research questions informing the study, it is evident that while there was evidence of more long-term, substantive and ongoing approaches to cultivating engaged teacher learning in relation to the two ‘exemplary’ schools in particular, and in relation to the province more broadly, there was also a great deal of evidence of more conservative practices continuing to be observed and undertaken. Furthermore, in relation to English language learning, while there were efforts to cultivate the conditions for students to engage with English in more substantive ways, there was little consideration for how English language learning can be part of a broader process of colonialism (Pennycook, 1994; 1998), and how English language learning can serve as a form of cultural and linguistic imperialism (Philipson, 2009). And while some teachers may have benefited from some of the experiences on offer, the highly selective, centralised process determining who could participate meant many were deemed as never being worthy to even be considered in relation to the sorts of interventions often supported to effect/lead teacher learning. That is, the broader socio-political circumstances associated with the bureaucratic educational structure in Vietnam, and the continued influence of dominant, centrist approaches to English language learning, had a very significant impact upon who was involved in various practices and processes of leading-for-teacher-learning, and who benefited from them.

8.1.1 Methodological Contributions

This research applied Bourdieu’s methodological approach in relation to practices of leading to help make sense of teachers’ learning. In this way, the research supplements the existing educational leadership literature (including that which draws upon Bourdieu’s theory), particularly the leadership literature pertaining to teachers’ learning.

The methodological contribution of this study involves the deployment of Bourdieu’s thinking tools (habitus, field, capital) to analyse data pertaining to practices of leading-for-teacher-learning, as shown in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. Methodologically, the research reveals how understanding
leading practices requires both an understanding of leadership practices vis-à-vis teachers’ learning as a necessarily contested undertaking, and a reflexive stance on the part of the researcher.

In relation to Bourdieu’s broader methodological contribution of flagging the contestation that attends social practices, the research has sought to identify how leading-for-teacher-learning is a fraught process, characterised by not only an affinity between educators’ disposition and habitus, but also significant discord in relation to broader field relations. Methodologically, it is this contestation between more dominant and dominated positions that the research has sought to recognise more fully. Such contestation is the product of the interplay between the broader field relations within which these practices play out, and the habitus and disposition of key actors within the field, and who both constitute and are constituted by the field. Examples of this contestation include teachers trying to engage with the new English pilot program (Pilot English 10 Program) in a context in which particular conceptions of English are considered a capital of much worth in educational settings, and the broader particularly economic context of Vietnam. This was reflected in teachers’ struggles and confidence with English. It was also evident in the way in which teachers undertaking in-service teacher learning workshops provided by MOET and DOET struggled to secure high-level English certification (C1) – a necessary pre-requisite for teachers working in schools for gifted students, and prestigious schools within the district. Such contestation was also evident in relation to higher education, including the way in which older teachers seemed to be discriminated against vis-à-vis being supported to undertake Master’s courses.

Methodologically, the research has also sought to recognise the role of the researcher in making sense of these practices of leading-for-teacher-learning. To this end, and as part of a more reflexive positioning, I have also sought to make explicit how the broader social process/field relations have influenced my own learning, the leadership practices that have contributed to this learning, and the leadership practices that I have sought to cultivate to enhance the learning of others. That is, the research is not simply an account of practices that have happened to “others” “out there”, but is also an account of my own positioning and conditioning within the broader circumstances that have influenced the leading-for-teacher-learning practices of educators in schools in Vietnam more broadly. I have sought to do this by interweaving my own experiences into the accounts of others’ experiences in relation to myriad leading-for-teacher-learning practices. It is also important to acknowledge that the research presented is always only ever partial, and reflects my own experiences (Lingard & Rawolle, 2013) – including my employment status at one of the schools reported in the research.
8.1.2 Theoretical Contributions

Lingard et al. (2003) commented: “There is very little work in the educational leadership literature that utilises Bourdieu as a theoretical resource” (p. 60). Since this time, the work of (Thomson, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2014) in particular has made a significant contribution to theorising that draws upon Bourdieu’s concepts in relation to leadership studies. However, there remains relatively little work that has sought to draw upon his concepts – thinking tools (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) – to make sense of teachers’ learning in relation to such leadership practices. It is in this domain that the research presented seeks to make a contribution.

Specifically, the thesis has drawn upon Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts of field, habitus and capital in order to better understand the nature of what are described as “leading-for-teacher-learning” practices. The research reveals the complex and contested nature of these practices, the habitus of teachers and formal school leaders involved, the capitals accrued as part of this process, and whether and how these capitals contributed towards improved teacher learning. Theoretically, it is possible to identify what is described in the research presented as a “field of leading-for-teacher-learning”. This field is characterised by support for various forms of leadership of teachers’ learning in schools, including teachers taking the lead in implementing the pilot program in the English 10 program; English teachers helping maths colleagues engage in leading-for-teacher-learning; and examples of teachers leading-for-teacher-learning in subject departments. The examples pertained to teacher learning in community, special topic lesson plans and special topic teaching, and teaching teams of gifted students.

There is also evidence of leadership of teachers’ learning outside of schools. This includes in relation to: the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning in the region, including teachers doing in-service teacher learning at the regional office and other venues selected by DOET; teachers taking intensive courses provided by DOET, MOET, and universities; teachers participating in teacher exchanges to other schools; and teachers undertaking more extended forms of tertiary education. In terms of the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning internationally, this involved teachers listening to an international lecturer modelling exemplary English teaching; and supporting teachers to do short- and long-term study abroad.

Importantly, this field of leading-for-teacher-learning was characterised by contestation over the practices that came to dominate. This included contestation about taking intensive courses, as teachers struggled with being busy with work in their school and families, and over whether and how particular teachers, such as older teachers, should be supported to foster their learning. The field of leading-for-teacher-learning in relation to higher education programmes was also contested.
Barriers associated with foreign language capacity, time, and finance all inhibited teachers’ desire to achieve more cultural capital in institutionalised form. The other practices of leading-for-teacher-learning that were controversial were taking the lead in implementing the pilot program in the English 10 program and teaching maths in English. It is the socially constituted nature of this contestation in relation to teachers’ learning that the research has sought to elaborate.

Bourdieu’s theorising is useful in my research in the Vietnamese context because it enables me to better understand the contestation associated with the nature of practices of leading-for-teacher-learning. Accordingly, the complexities of this process are exposed. This includes tension, contestation, pressures and stress that actors suffered in their practices of leading learning, or being ‘led for learning’ as part of their professional work. Teachers’ habitus, including their proclivity for change, became apparent as part of this process of identifying the logics that characterised the field. The field constitutes teachers and administrators’ dispositions, including new ways of being. This process is always associated with teachers’ accumulation of various kinds of capital, which characterise education in general, and the field of leading-for-teacher-learning in particular.

The application of a Bourdieuan sociological approach reveals the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning as complex and contested, involving tensions, pressures and stress faced by teachers and associated educational professionals as part of their professional work. Through this process, educators’ habitus is revealed as both shaped by and shaping what is described as the field of leading-for-teacher-learning.

8.1.3 Empirical and Practical Contributions

The analysis of the field of leading-for-teacher-learning provides insights into teachers’ habitus, potentially revealing dispositions responsible for practices of leading-for-teacher-learning. By exploring whether and how teachers act as leaders who initiate teacher learning, the research has the potential to provide a productive contribution to understanding current practices of leading-for-teacher-learning. To enhance the influence of the whole field of leading-for-teacher-learning, particular dispositions and appropriate conditions to foster practices of leading-for-teacher-learning are required. The research explores the extent to which this may be the case in two school settings in Vietnam and the nature of practices of leading-for-teacher-learning more broadly.

Leading-for-teacher learning was characterised by particular, dominant practices in multiple contexts, including within the two schools and practices that exerted influence upon those in the schools from beyond the specific sites (outside the schools). The research reveals that within schools, there is a need to consider the optimal conditions and obstacles of leading-for-teacher-
learning, including how best to facilitate pilot programs, how teachers in one department might best help colleagues in another, and how teachers can support one another’s learning in subject departments more generally. These practices of leading-for-teacher-learning pertained to more individual practices, as well as more collaborative practices involving teachers being led for learning by MOET, DOET, schools, subject departments, and collaborative work with colleagues. At its best, this helps ‘create a powerful learning environment’ (Harris, 2005b, p. 262) for teachers. However, the extent to which more collaborative approaches to teachers’ learning were actualised in the long term, is an area for continued scrutiny.

Leading-for-teacher-learning was also influenced by relevant policies, reflecting the broader field of power – including more bureaucratic (administrative) and economic logics. Such logics need to be challenged, particularly when they inhibit a focus upon substantive teacher learning, and the conditions to facilitate – lead – such learning. While teachers were facilitated by support from specialists in DOET, MOET and teachers in the province more generally, teachers’ anxieties were also revealed due to authorities’ demands for particular kinds of learning and expertise improvement, and because of associated work pressure, time and funding issues. This resulted in considerable struggles and intensive concentration for teachers during their daily endeavours to improve to meet the school requirements in particular and education reform in general. The competitive nature of these schooling sites contributed significantly to these pressures and demands.

At the same time, the research reveals a need to consider more carefully practices of leading-for-teacher-learning that seek to influence schools but that originate outside the school sites – regionally and internationally. Particular practices of leading-for-teacher-learning that occurred within the school region in which the two schools were located were associated with: teachers engaged in more traditional, short-term in-service events; teachers taking intensive courses; and teachers undertaking tertiary education. The often conservative nature of these professional learning practices, and how they are facilitated, needs to be explored more fully. There is also a need to seek to better understand how leading-for-teacher-learning is enabled through teachers attending lectures by foreign lecturers modelling exemplary English teaching, and through support for short- and long-term overseas programs. Also, while the international experiences of teachers may contribute to enhancing teachers’ learning, there is also evidence of a field of leading-for-teacher-learning in which a very limited number of teachers are supported in the initiatives available, and of these initiatives being dominated by particular kinds of foci, such as the improvement of English capacity, in particular. Like the practices exercised inside school sites, the practices taking place outside also revealed opportunities in which some teachers benefited but also a variegated field of leading-for-teacher-learning in which challenges of competing demands, time pressures, financial

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problems, perceptions of capacity all influenced the teacher learning that actually transpired. This was also a field in which more dominant, nativist conceptions of English seemed to dominate, and in which there is a need to much more actively critique the nature of the Englishes that are promoted, and that have come to dominate. At the same time as there needs to be a valuing of forms of the many forms of Vietnamese English which are given life in schooling settings, there also needs to be a recognition on the part of native speakers of English to recognise and validate these multiple Englishes (Phan Le Ha, 2005)

There is strong evidence of considerable challenges to efforts to lead teachers’ learning in more inclusive ways, as well as expectations that teachers will address their learning needs on their own. Such stances simply reinforce more doxic approaches to teachers’ leading-for-learning, with their emphasis upon individual teachers learning on their own, and support for those perceived to be more “responsive” to such opportunities. Finding ways to challenge more doxic practices is imperative. The complexity of the nature of leading-for-teacher-learning is evident in how teachers are learning both as individuals, and in collaboration with others, how they feel pressured to perform, but also how some teachers are supported to engage in potentially productive professional learning experiences while others appear to be neglected. In other words, the field of leading-for-teacher-learning is a deeply complex, contested site.

The research is significant beyond the two schools focused upon in the research (and the province in which they are located), making a contribution to the existing literature on leadership practices in relation to teacher learning, not just the leadership practices of formal school leaders (especially principals) – a key focus of attention within the leadership literature – but also in relation to leadership practices of teachers and district personnel more broadly. By focusing upon revealing specific leading-for-teacher-learning practices, the research flags how a myriad of such practices are actually enacted by multiple groups and individuals across and within schools and schooling systems, and how these practices may be productive as well as problematic in their nature and effects.

**8.2 Success and Limitations of the Research**

It is recognised that the research presented focused on a very small number of sites – particularly two ‘exemplary’ schools within a single province in Vietnam. I recognise that while I may have succeeded in providing some insights into the nature of the practices of leading-for-teacher-learning as expressed in relation to these two ‘exemplary’ school sites, further research is necessary to test the preliminary insights into the nature of the leading-for-teacher-learning practices described, including in relation to such schools in other provinces. This requires further research into a variety
of different educational sites – different provinces and different schools throughout Vietnam, and in other national settings. Furthermore, research into leading-for-learning practices within other national settings, particularly where English language learning occupies a similarly important and contested role, would be very beneficial to further elaborate initial insights provided in this research. It is also clear that the stated aim of making ‘suggestions towards improving professional learning communities’ was not able to be undertaken in any substantive way, given the nature of the other limitations indicated about the nature of these teachers’ learning practices in relation to the two schools, and reflecting the challenges that attend the nature of such communities more broadly (Stoll et al., 2006). However, the research does suggest glimpses of possibility in this regard – such as in relation to the Biology Department in which younger teachers were actively mentored by older teachers – but this is an area requiring much further research.

Relatedly, given the specialised nature of the particular schools focused upon in this research, it is also imperative to undertake research into what Maguire et al. (2011) refer to as ‘ordinary’ schools – schools that do not exhibit particular ‘exemplary’ or otherwise noticeably different characteristics from the broader body of schools in Vietnam. The relatively conservative nature of some of the teacher learning practices uncovered at schools that might be expected to be engaging in much more progressive practices perhaps portend more conservative practices of leading teachers’ learning at more ‘mainstream’ schooling sites. However, it is necessary to undertake further research to test such hypotheses. This is an area for further research.

I also recognise that while Bourdieu’s theory of practice provides useful insights into the nature of the dominant and contested practices that characterise what I have rendered here as the field of leading-for-teacher-learning, there are limitations to his research. Given Bourdieu’s concepts have been criticised since their inception (Robbins, 2005), the claims made about practices of leading-for-teacher-learning identified in the research may also benefit from inquiry drawing upon alternative analytical approaches. A variety of post-colonial approaches to theorising the nature of English language learning, for example, could be brought to bear more explicitly on the multi-faceted cultural context that is Vietnam, to better understand how specific processes of linguistic acquisition are lived out in myriad ways.

Furthermore, analysing other instances of efforts to foster English language learning practices amongst teachers in schools would help provide further insights into such practices. Given the importance of English language learning in the schools and province, and within national policy more broadly in Vietnam, and perceptions of deficit approaches in relation to non-native English
speakers in Vietnam (Ngoc Ba Doan, 2016), further inquiry into such practices seem particularly important.

In spite of these limitations, the research does present some detailed insights into the contestation that surrounds efforts to foster teachers’ learning, the politics that surround this work, and the challenges that attend efforts to foster teachers’ learning, albeit in a limited range of sites. The research provides glimpses into a world of leading-for-teacher-learning and evidence of a need for further research into how to foster teacher learning for all teachers, and not just those deemed worthy of attention because of their already-recognised capabilities, and their capacity to learn on their own.

8.3 Implications for Policy, Practice and Future Research

The research suggests a need for policy-making and policy-makers to be cognisant of the effects of more dominant professional learning practices, and how these might be further reinforced by policy prescriptions that are heavily influenced by more neoliberal influences. The research also reveals there is the potential for pushing out and marginalising more inclusive, participatory forms of learning, and forms of learning not considered beneficial for longer term economic development.

The latter is particularly evident in relation to support for English language learning. Other languages and forms of knowledge, and local cultures are at risk when more economic logics become too dominant. At the same time, advocacy for more dominant conceptions of English, without adequate regard for the plurality of forms of actually existing English, and hierarchies of English in the Vietnamese context (Phan Le Ha, 2005), also create anxiety and stress for Vietnamese teachers. Although English is important in the modern world, this does not mean that other languages and cultural traditions should be lost and seen as less important. Given the homogenising effects of dominant language prescriptions, it could be difficult to maintain and protect the distinguishing features of Vietnamese language and cultures when English is integrated into Vietnam society. The reason for this is that language is associated with culture, so when Vietnamese people acquire English, they are also subject to a myriad of Western cultures, and lifestyles. In the provinces in Vietnam where there are many mountainous and remote areas, there are boarding schools for groups of ethnic minority students. There are about 54 groups of ethnic minorities, and different languages. English is now the main foreign language that is taught in schools from primary education (Grade 3). Therefore, there may be a danger that English dominates Vietnamese and other local languages. This may cause language extinction or homogeneity. Further research into the effects of strong policy support for English language learning is necessary.
The continued demand for teachers to lead their own learning is also an area requiring further attention in policy and practice. While resourcing restrictions make it difficult to foster the sorts of more substantive, ongoing teacher learning that should characterise leading for learning practices, the way in which much of teachers’ learning continues to be the responsibility of individual teachers needs further attention. While schooling systems certainly do provide various forms of resources to help facilitate teachers’ learning, teacher learning provision is still regarded as deeply problematic more broadly (Borko, 2004). The practices described here further reveal a need for further research into genuinely inclusive approaches to the needs of all teachers.

In relation to the broader field of power, and effects upon teachers’ learning and leading-for-learning practices, there is a need to be wary about how more neoliberal influences affect educational practices. When Vietnam became an official member of the WTO, this opened a new stage for Vietnam’s economy. Vietnam joined the global village with unified regulations in trade and international service. This provides both opportunities and challenges for Vietnamese businesses within what can be understood as the field of the economy (Bourdieu, 2005). In terms of opportunities, Vietnamese businesses can develop more experience in the management of global trade. At the same time, there are challenges for domestic Vietnamese businesses as they are encouraged to increase competitiveness by improving service quality, enlarging activity networks, and developing human capital in order to compete with big competitors from foreign countries. The effects of these more economic logics are not just felt in relation to business, but also education. Further research into the effects of economic prerogatives, and more individualistic neoliberal logics more broadly, is necessary to explore how such demands influence what is considered most important for teachers to learn, and the ways in which such learning will be led.

Finally, and as mentioned above, there are limitations in the use of Bourdieu’s ideas. The setting of this research is in the Vietnamese context, so Bourdieu’s work can only illuminate so much. There is a need for further research that explores the nature of leading teachers’ learning that draws upon other analytical resources to provide a fuller account of the different influences at play in this work, and particularly as this plays out in ‘southern’ contexts (Connell, 2007), such as Vietnam. There is a need to take a critical view of the western sensibilities and epistemologies framing my research to better understand these practices. Grenfell et al. (1998) argued that “we have seen that a common criticism of Bourdieu is that this makes for a deterministic theoretical approach” (p. 25). While Bourdieu’s approach is useful “to study the manifestations and processes of social distinction and
differentiation” (Grenfell et al., 1998, p. 17), further research is necessary to better understand practices of leading-for-teacher-learning, in context.

8.4 Conclusion

In summary, the thesis has sought to provide a glimpse into the nature of practices of leading-for-teacher-learning at a particular moment in time, and in relation to specific ‘exemplary’ schooling sites in one province in Vietnam. It has revealed that much of this learning is individualistic in orientation, and subject to the broader neoliberal, individualistic and economic demands that impinge upon education. At the same time, there is also evidence of how various forms of institutional support and pressure have exerted influence, exerting considerable influence upon teachers’ learning. These supports and pressures have had sometimes unwelcome outcomes, including a more limited conception of what characterises teacher learning practices, and for whom. This includes in relation to English language learning practices, which have clearly been conceptualised in limited and limiting ways. However, and at the same time, there is also evidence of how the leading-for-teacher-learning practices have also contributed to enhancing teachers’ learning opportunities, even as these may be confined to particular policy prerogatives deemed important at the time. The result is an understanding of leading-for-teacher-learning as a contested site, characterised by competing demands and pressures, and resulting in equally complex and competing outcomes.
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Communist Party of Vietnam. (2013). *Resolution No.29-NQ/TW dated 4 November 2013 of the 8th Conference, the Party Central Committee XI on the fundamental and comprehensive reform in education and training to meet the requirements of industrialisation and modernisation in the context of the socialist-oriented market economy and international integration (Nghị quyết Hội nghị lần thứ 8, Ban Chấp hành Trung ương khóa XI (Nghị quyết số 29-NQ/TW) về đổi mới căn bản, toàn diện giáo dục và đào tạo, đáp ứng yêu cầu CNH-HDH trong điều kiện kinh tế thị trường định hướng XHCN và hội nhập quốc tế"). Ha Noi.


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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

(To be translated into Vietnamese)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
(For director of DOET, principals, school and non-school based administrators, teachers)

The role of teacher leadership in improving teacher learning in high schools:
A case study of Thao Anh Province, Vietnam

The purpose of the research
Thank you for considering participating in the ‘The role of teacher leadership in improving teacher learning in high schools: A case study of Thao Anh Province, Vietnam’ project. The research aims to explore how teacher leadership is practised and influences teachers’ learning/ PD and also explore potentialities and problems in the current leadership practices.

This research is being conducted by Hien Thi Thu Ho as part of the requirements for the PhD degree at the University of Queensland under the supervision of:

1. Dr. Richard Niesche
   Email: r.niesche@uq.edu.au
2. Dr. Ian Hardy
   Email: i.hardy@uq.edu.au

Participation and withdrawal
Participation in this research is completely voluntary. The participants are free to withdraw from this research at any stage without any prejudice or penalty. If any of the participants withdraws from their involvement, all the data she or he has provided will be removed from the data set.

What is involved
The participants in this research are two principals, four deputy-principals, eight subject department heads, 32 teachers from two high schools, and Director/Deputy-Director of DOET of Thao Anh Province, a General Education Division Manager, a General Education Division Vice-Manager and seven specialists of DOET.

Semi-structured interviews of approximately 45 minute-one hour will be undertaken by the researcher at participants’ school sites and place of work. Interviews will focus on individual experiences of leadership practices in relation to teacher learning and professional development, and of the conditions productive of current teacher learning leadership practices. School and systemic policies and strategy documents will also be collected and scanned for evidence of these practices within specific schools. When possible, staff meetings, department meetings, professional
activities, and workshops will be attended and observations will be conducted. Feedback will be provided to participants at the conclusion of the data collection phase if requested.

**Risks**

Participation in this project is voluntary. The participants are not obliged to participate, and if you do participate, you can withdraw from the research at any time, and without fear of penalty or adverse consequences. You do not need to provide a reason for withdrawal. This research will involve teachers and administrators in indicating their awareness, attitudes, perceptions and practices of teacher leadership in relation to teachers’ learning and professional development. The teachers and administrators will be interviewed in their place of work. Besides, staff meetings, department meetings, professional workshops and activities will be observed by the researcher in schools. The purpose of interviews and observations is to address the research questions. Individuals are not identified; therefore, there is no foreseeable risk.

**Confidentiality and security of data**

All aspects of the research, including results, will be confidential. Only the researcher named above will have access to information about the participants. All data will be collected, stored, and used with care. Specifically, pseudonyms instead of the participants’ and schools’ real names will be used. Also, the collected data will be kept confidentially and safely in computer files and folders that can only be accessed with a password or kept in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Education, the University of Queensland. The information about the participants will be kept separately from the data. Only the researcher can access the identified data. Individual participants will not be identifiable in the thesis and published reports.

**Ethics Clearance and Contacts**

This study has been cleared by one of the human research ethics committees of the University of Queensland in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines. You are of course, free to discuss your participation in this study with with me or my supervisors. If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Officer on 3365 3924.

If you would like to know about the outcome of the research, you can contact me at thuhienqhqn@gmail.com after 2015, and I will send you a brief summary of the findings of the research.

If you agree to participate in the research, please sign the attached consent form. Please retain this sheet for your information.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Best regards,
Hien Thi Thu Ho
PhD student
School of Education
University of Queensland
Phone: 0470033735
Email: thi.ho5@uqconnect.edu.au or thuhienqhqn@gmail.com
Appendix B: Information Letter to Director of DOET

School of Education
Brisbane Qld 4072 Australia
Telephone: +61 7 3365 6550
Fax: +61 7 3365 7199

INFORMATION LETTER TO DIRECTOR OF DOET

The role of teacher leadership in improving teacher learning in high schools:
A case study of Thao Anh Province, Vietnam

To: Director of the Department of Education and Training of Thao Anh Province,

My name is Hien Thi Thu Ho. I am currently a PhD student at the School of Education, the University of Queensland, Australia. I am seeking permission to conduct my PhD study.

The title of my study is ‘The role of teacher leadership in improving teacher learning in high schools: A case study of Thao Anh Province, Vietnam’

The research aims to explore how teacher leadership is practised and influences teachers’ learning/ PD and also explore potentialities and problems in the current leadership practices.

I can be contacted on (+84) 0563813194, or thuhienghqn@gmail.com

My supervisors are:
1. Dr. Richard Niesche
   Email: r.niesche@uq.edu.au
2. Dr. Ian Hardy
   Email: i.hardy@uq.edu.au

This study has been cleared by one of the human research ethics committees of the University of Queensland in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines. You are of course, free to discuss your participation in this study with me or my supervisors. If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Officer on 3365 3924.

The participants in this research are two principals, four deputy-principals, eight subject department heads, 32 teachers from two high schools, and Director/Deputy-Director of DOET of Thao Anh Province, a General Education Division Manager, a General Education Division Vice-Manager and seven specialists of DOET.

Semi-structured interviews of approximately 45 minute-one hour will be undertaken by the researcher at participants’ school sites and place of work. Interviews will focus on individual experiences of leadership practices in relation to teacher learning and professional development, and of the conditions productive of current teacher learning leadership practices. School and systemic policies and strategy documents will also be collected and scanned for evidence of these practices within specific schools. When possible, staff meetings, department meetings, professional activities, and workshops will be attended and observations will be conducted. Feedback will be provided to participants at the conclusion of the data collection phase if requested.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. The participants are free to withdraw from this research at any stage without any prejudice or penalty. If any of the participants
withdraws from their involvement, all the data she or he has provided will be removed from the data set.

All aspects of the research, including results, will be confidential. Only the researcher named above will have access to information about the participants. All data will be collected, stored, and used with care. Specifically, pseudonyms instead of the participants’ and schools’ real names will be used. Also, the collected data will be kept confidentially and safely in computer files and folders that can only be accessed with a password or kept in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Education, the University of Queensland. The information about the participants will be kept separately from the data. Only the researcher can access the identified data. Individual participants will not be identifiable in the thesis and published reports.

I do hope that you will give me permission to conduct my research in two high schools in Thao Anh Province and at DOET.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Best regards,

Hien Thi Thu Ho                     Dr. Richard Niesche
PhD student                        Principal supervisor
Appendix C: Information Letter to Principals-As-Gatekeepers

(To be translated into Vietnamese)

THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND

School of Education
Brisbane Qld 4072, Australia
Phone: +61 7 3365 6550
Fax: +61 7 3365 7199

INFORMATION LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

The role of teacher leadership in improving teacher learning in high schools:
A case study of Thao Anh Province, Vietnam

To: ………………………………………., Principal of ……………………………High School,
   My name is Hien Thi Thu Ho. I am currently a PhD student at the School of Education, the
   University of Queensland, Australia. I am seeking permission to conduct my PhD study.
   The title of my study is ‘The role of teacher leadership in improving teacher learning in
   high schools: A case study of Thao Anh Province, Vietnam’
   The research aims to explore how teacher leadership is practised and influences teachers’
   learning/ PD and also explore potentialities and problems in the current leadership practices.
   I can be contacted on (+84) 0563813194, or thuhienqhqn@gmail.com
   My supervisors are:

1. Dr. Richard Niesche
   Email: r.niesche@uq.edu.au
2. Dr. Ian Hardy
   Email: r.niesche@uq.edu.au

This study has been cleared by one of the human research ethics committees of the University
of Queensland in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines.
You are of course, free to discuss your participation in this study with me or my supervisors. If
you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact
the Ethics Officer on 3365 3924.

The participants in this research are two principals, four deputy-principals, eight subject
department heads, 32 teachers from two high schools, and Director/Deputy-Director of DOET of
Thao Anh Province, a General Education Division Manager, a General Education Division Vice-
Manager and seven specialists of DOET.

Semi-structured interviews of approximately 45 minute-one hour will be undertaken by the
researcher at participants’ school sites and place of work. Interviews will focus on individual
experiences of leadership practices in relation to teacher learning and professional development,
and of the conditions productive of current teacher learning leadership practices. School and
systemic policies and strategy documents will also be collected and scanned for evidence of these
practices within specific schools. When possible, staff meetings, department meetings,
professional activities, and workshops will be attended and observations will be conducted.
Feedback will be provided to participants at the conclusion of the data collection phase if
requested.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. The participants are free to withdraw
from this research at any stage without any prejudice or penalty. If any of the participants
withdraws from their involvement, all the data she or he has provided will be removed from the data set.

All aspects of the research, including results, will be confidential. Only the researcher named above will have access to information about the participants. All data will be collected, stored, and used with care. Specifically, pseudonyms instead of the participants’ and schools’ real names will be used. Also, the collected data will be kept confidentially and safely in computer files and folders that can only be accessed with a password or kept in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Education, the University of Queensland. The information about the participants will be kept separately from the data. Only the researcher can access the identified data. Individual participants will not be identifiable in the thesis and published reports.

I do hope that you will give me permission to conduct my research in your school.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Best regards,

Hien Thi Thu Ho                    Richard Niesche
PhD student                        Principal supervisor
Appendix D: Consent Form for DOET Personnel

(To be translated into Vietnamese)

CONSENT FORM
(For DOET Personnel)

The role of teacher leadership in improving teacher learning in high schools:
A case study of Thao Anh Province, Vietnam

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include participating in an interview with the researcher based on and providing the researcher with policy documents related to the issues discussed in the information sheet;
- I understand that my interview will be audio-taped
- I understand that only the researcher will have access to this tape
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand there is no foreseeable risk;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the researcher or the advisory team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in her thesis and published reports will not contain my name and my school’s name or identifying characteristics;
- I understand that I can contact the University of Queensland Ethics Officer on 3365 3924) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the project.

Name: ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Signature: …………………………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………
Appendix E: Consent Form for School Personnel

(To be translated into Vietnamese)

CONSENT FORM
(For School Personnel)

The role of teacher leadership in improving teacher learning in high schools:
A case study of Thao Anh Province, Vietnam

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include participating in an interview and observations with the researcher based on and providing the researcher with policy documents related to the issues discussed in the information sheet;
- I understand that my interview will be audio-taped and observations will be audio-taped if necessary.
- I understand that only the researcher will have access to this tape
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand there is no foreseeable risk;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the researcher or the advisory team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in her thesis and published reports will not contain my name and my school’s name or identifying characteristics;
- I understand that I can contact the University of Queensland Ethics Officer on 3365 3924 if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the project.

Name: …………………………………………………………………………………

Signature: ……………………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………
Appendix F: Protocol for the interviews with 40 teachers in two schools which include department heads and teachers

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

(Interview questions for department heads and teachers)
Date: …./….2013
Time:
Place:
Interviewee:

Warm-up:
- Make greeting to the interviewee.
- Present the purpose of the interview: I would like to know about (a) your conceptions of teacher leadership, (b) your teacher leadership practice, and (c) the influences on your implementation of teacher leadership in school.

1. How do you define the term leadership?
2. Are teachers leaders? Why/why not?
3. How would you describe the leadership style of the principal?
4. How would you describe the leadership style of teachers? Is it a promising form of leadership that should prevail in schools?
5. How might teacher leadership be different to that of the principal?
6. Does the principal support teacher leadership? Examples?
7. Are teachers able to influence decision-making not only at the level of the subjects that they teach but also at the whole school level?
8. What sorts of PD activities do teachers undertake?
9. What are the leadership practices of administrators and teachers? How do they influence teacher learning?
10. How does teacher learning practice come about in the school? How is it developed? Who is involved? What resources are involved?
11. How do these leadership practices in teacher learning influence teacher pedagogies and student learning? How do high school teacher leaders initiate/promote teacher professional development?
12. How do principals and others in formal leadership positions initiate/promote teacher professional development?
Appendix G: Protocol for the interviews with the two Principals and four Deputy- Principals.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

(Interview questions for the Principals and Deputy- Principals)

Date: …../…./2013

Time:

Place:

Interviewee:

Warm-up:

- Make greeting to the interviewee.

- Present the purpose of the interview: I would like to know about (a) your conceptions/ perceptions of teacher leadership, (b) teacher leadership practices in your school and how they influence teachers’ learning and teacher professional development, (c) your expectation about these practices in school, and (d) your support for teachers in your school.

Questions to be asked:

1. How do you define the term leadership?
2. How would you describe your leadership style?
3. Are you familiar with the term teacher leadership, and if so how would you define it?
4. Do the teachers in your school demonstrate forms of teacher leadership? Can you provide any examples?
5. How do you foster teacher leadership in your school?
6. Are there barriers for teachers to exercise forms of leadership to improve their expertise?
7. What sorts of PD activities do teachers undertake in the school?
8. What are the leadership practices of administrators and teachers? How do they influence teacher learning?
9. How does teacher learning practice come about in the school? How is it developed? Who is involved? What resources are involved?
10. How do these leadership practices in teacher learning influence teacher pedagogies and student learning? How do high school teacher leaders initiate/promote teacher professional development?
11. How do principals and others in formal leadership positions initiate/promote teacher professional development?
12. How do you expect your teachers implement teacher leadership in improving teaching and learning in your school?
13. What do you think about your teachers’ understanding/capacity and skills in practising leadership in teaching and learning improvement?
14. What have you done to support them in practising/implementing/exercising their teacher leadership in teaching and learning improvement?
15. To what extent do your teachers have a right in making decisions on exercising their role of leadership in teaching and learning improvements in your school?
Appendix H: Protocol for the interviews with nine officials from Provincial Department of Education and Training, including Deputy-Director of Provincial Department of Education and Training, a General Education Division Manager, a General Education Division Vice-Manager and ELT Specialist, and other six Subject Specialists whose responsibility is to manage teachers’ capacity and expertise development.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

(Interview questions for the officials at Provincial Department of Education and Training)

Date: …./…./2013

Time:

Place:

Interviewee:

Warm-up:

- Make greeting to the interviewee.

- Present the purpose of the interview: I would like to know about (a) your conceptions/perceptions of teacher leadership in high schools, (b) teacher leadership practice and its role in developing teachers’ capacity and expertise in high schools in the province, (c) your expectation/guidelines/directions about teachers’ leadership practices in high schools in the province, and (d) your support/actions for fostering/promoting the role of teacher leadership in improving teacher professional development.

Questions to be asked:

1. How do you define the term leadership?
2. How would you describe your leadership style?
3. Are you familiar with the term teacher leadership and if so how would you define it?
4. Do the teachers in your province demonstrate forms of teacher leadership? Can you provide any examples?
5. How do you foster teacher leadership in your province?
6. Are there barriers for teachers to exercise forms of leadership to improve their expertise?
7. What sorts of PD activities/teacher learning do teachers undertake in the province?
8. What are the leadership practices of administrators and teachers? How do they influence teacher learning?

9. How does teacher learning practice come about in high schools? How is it developed? Who is involved? What resources are involved?

10. How do these leadership practices in teacher learning influence teacher pedagogies and student learning? How do high school teacher leaders initiate/ promote teacher professional development?

11. How do principals and others in formal leadership positions initiate/ promote teacher professional development?

12. How do you expect teachers to implement teacher leadership in improving teaching and learning in your school?

13. What do you think about provincial high school teachers’ understanding/ capacity and skills in practising leadership in teaching and learning improvement?

14. To what extent do high school teachers have a right in making decisions on exercising their role of leadership in teaching and learning improvements in high schools?

15. What have you done to support them in practising/ implementing/ exercising their teacher leadership to foster their learning and professional development?