Fundamental differences exist between the nature of schools and universities as organisations and the roles of teachers and academics within them. These shape members’ understandings about the purposes of educational research and the process of knowledge generation. Consequently, the purpose of school-university partnerships is subject to different interpretations and this is challenging for a partnership, creating both benefits as well as tensions when the differing demands and expectations of school and university life and their impact on the generation of knowledge are not acknowledged.

(Baumfield and McLaughlin, 2007)

Introduction
This paper has its roots in past work on this partnership and in thinking about joint enquiry between school-based and university-based colleagues (Baumfield and McLaughlin, 2007: Little 2002). Researchers and scholars have pointed out that close study of collaborative practice between university-based and school-based colleagues is a neglected area. We have undertaken such a study by recording and transcribing monthly meetings where joint research is planned and debated. This paper aims to illuminate the interactions and processes involved in the collaboration between schools and the university in the SUPER Partnership from the perspective of university staff. School-based colleagues have undertaken a parallel study. In particular, the dynamic between the group members meeting at the Faculty building is a focus of study. The work is framed as a case study into a Third Space in order to see if this is a useful concept and because of our initial thinking that this concept captures some key qualities about the endeavour of collaborating on research. First, in the concept is a recognition that individuals draw on multiple discourses to make sense of the world; second, third space involves a rejection of binaries such as practitioner and academic knowledge, and theory and practice and finally, third space can involve the integration of what are often seen as competing discourses in new ways (Zeichner 2008).

We are seeking to explore the nature of a third space and to identify the issues raised from research collaboration between school and university staff. We have been influenced by previous empirical work that has emphasised the powerful role of the school as a social context and how the processes so intrinsic to research, for example, sharing around practice, making
practice visible, critical discussions, dealing with the ambiguity of research and making the familiar strange are all ones that are very demanding for teachers (Little, 1982, 1990a & b, 1999, 2002). An appreciation of the policy imperatives and the possible romanticisation of communities of practice combine to make this ‘a timely moment to unpack the meaning and consequences of professional community at the level of practice’ (Little 2002, p.937). We wanted to appreciate the previously unexplored practices of close collaboration of this kind and explore the inherent tensions and rewards. We will address two main questions in this paper:

1. What are the key elements of joint enquiry in a third space (from the university’s perspective)?
2. What are the challenges, tensions and benefits of working in the third space?

The ‘third space’ involved
The space involved or studied is a monthly meeting between the teacher research coordinators (TRCs) and the critical friends from the Faculty of Education. The TRCs are usually senior members of the school community who have responsibility for the coordination and development of school-based research in their context. The partnership also runs a Master’s course for the schools involved and some members of the group are also members of the Master’s group. Another recent development was that the head teachers wanted to join the enquiry group for one meeting per half term and one of the transcripts is of that first occasion with the TRCs, head teachers and critical friends all together. The critical friends are members of the Faculty who pair with the school’s TRC and they work together. There are 8 schools and the Faculty in the partnership, which has been in existence for ten years, and has had a changing membership. There is a range of experience of the partnership within the enquiry group: some members of the group have ten years’ membership and some are new this year. The meetings are to focus on and explore a joint research project on pupil engagement, which has been ongoing for four years. This group has been reformulated in the last four years and decisions were made first, to collaborate on a joint project meaningful to all involved and second, to run the meetings as a community of practice or enquiry since it was felt that the meetings had become too administrative over time. So there was a conscious decision to shift emphasis. This is important since it explains some of the interaction.

There was also a conscious decision to engage in self-study. This clearly is complex since we are the participants and the researchers at many levels. We have dealt with the complexity of this by attempting to engage in multiple readings and to garner multiple viewpoints. This best captured by the notion of crystallisation (Richardson 2003), a complex reality illuminated by being viewed from many angles and through many different lens. This paper represents one of those viewpoints. The meetings last all morning and we tape record as much as we can i.e. the whole group discussion is always recorded and we try to record a sub group discussion when we can. All have given consent to this and have given permission to be identified by initials. The tapes are transcribed by an external agency. We are drawing on 3 of the transcriptions of 12 in this paper. The sections we have chosen to transcribe i.e. the whole group sections of the meeting, has some implications for the voices heard and the nature of the interaction, since it is a whole group meeting of approximately 12 people and sometimes 20. One of the transcripts was of two sub group discussions as well as a whole group session. Several readings of the selected transcripts were made by the authors and initial findings were discussed together. After initial readings for familiarity, we focused on which members of the groups were
speaking to gain a sense of whose voices were heard. We also focused on who was responding to each voice and what the purpose of each exchange was. Codes were created for issues of interest seen in the data, including types of power being accessed, type and impact of influence. Emerging themes are presented here, although it is acknowledged that the analysis is not yet complete and the nascent ideas will need to be tested further, in particular by extending the analysis to the other TRC group meeting transcripts.

The aim of the SUPER partnership is to explore the generation and application of useful educational research and the group meeting we view as a community of practice i.e. a group of people ‘who share a concern, set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis’ (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002:4). The community is doing its enquiry work but also quite consciously trying to reflect on the learning and the processes as we go along. This self-consciousness makes a difference to the discussions at certain points and will be returned to later. The four concepts we explored the transcripts with are those of border territory learning, identity and power, since these were concepts we synthesised from our preliminary reading on the concept of third space (Bhabba, 1994) and communities of enquiry and practice (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002.)

The framework we began with is outlined in Table 1 below.
Table 1: Analytical Frame: Interrogating the Third Space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who’s talking?</th>
<th>Border Territory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tone and language</td>
<td>Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposes and perspectives</td>
<td>Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Who’s responding?                                 |                   |
| Inter-relations                                    |                   |
| Roles and identities                               |                   |
| Access to communities and groups                  |                   |
| Confidence                                         |                   |
| Reflexivity                                        |                   |
| Legitimacy                                         |                   |

| What’s happening?                                  |                   |
| Scaffolding learning and facilitating learning    |                   |
| Leadership of research                             |                   |
| Border crossing                                    |                   |
| Learning                                           |                   |
| Linking                                            |                   |
| Community building                                 |                   |

The key elements of the joint enquiry group

So, what is the nature of the enquiry activity within this space (from the university’s perspective)? It is space in which all colleagues are engaging with each other’s territories and both are working together in this space, which is in the University, and in the schools involved. We have found the idea of border territory and crossing in association with the concept of a third space to be particularly helpful in the way that it emphasises difference, shifting conditions and the strangeness of the new terrain. The borders can be the parameters of cultural meaning and identities. They represent the edge of ‘maps of knowledge, social relations, and values that are increasingly being negotiated and rewritten as the codes and regulations which organise them become destabilised and reshaped’ (Giroux 2006:51) and in this context, a border crosser has been described as ‘a person moving in and out of borders constructed around co-ordinates of difference and power’ (Giroux 2006:51). In the context of our research, we have begun to analyse transcripts of TRC meetings with a focus on the extent to which the participants can be said to be engaged in border crossing activity, or displaying border crossing identities. We have discussed if this is perhaps too radical a notion to help illummate the work but felt it was appropriate to acknowledge the potential difficulties inherent in attempting a
collaboration beyond the cultural norms of different constituents and in territory unfamiliar to many.

**Border Territory and Identity**

There are different borderland territories. From our initial, partial analyses, the border crossing can be identified in the ways that school colleagues struggle to cross cultural borders and lead research in their schools. They could be said to inhabit a borderland within their schools as they take the language and structures of practicing research and attempt to lead colleagues in the endeavour.

It is incredibly difficult. There was a very good article we were given for the MEd about creating research questions and I have given that article to people in the Inquiry Group. So since Friday two people have given me a question, the rest are ignoring my emails and I haven’t had time to go and see anyone. There’s just, there’s a large number of people in my Inquiry Group which is a positive thing, and they are enthusiastic. But it’s, I’m in a bit of a crisis situation. I’m not quite sure if I can manage all these people, basically. [BMo]

In this borderland, they sometimes work in forms of isolation, but more commonly in collaboration with others, including the head teacher and their critical friend. This can be frustrating for the TRCs as they attempt to meet a range of responsibilities, perhaps as TRC, as a line manager, or as a MEd student.

If people are going to take ownership for that and lead it themselves then it’s giving them the tools to do that and developing research with colleagues beyond the Teaching and Learning Group in the future as well. And that all fits my thesis, because I’m doing the MEd as well. It’s all about collaboration so it’s been really interesting. It wasn’t going to be about collaboration but since leading this group it has been. [HC]

At the meetings, they frequently describe how they practice strategies learned from one another or remind themselves of the oft-quoted mantra that the development of a research culture is a process, and a slow one.

They could also be said to inhabit a borderland in the meetings on occasions, as they learn about other published research and learn about the strictures of research design. They discuss ways in which they are attempting to bring competing agendas together when they lead research.

So what we're doing is that we have identified our small group of disengaged girls and where we've got to at the moment, because actually the... kind of our deadline for the end of this term and the deadline that we're working to with NCSL, which isn't long after that, kind of fits together quite well, is that we've identified the students within our institution. So we've identified our Year 9, the exit youngsters, if you like. We've done some preliminary work with those students to explore why it is they do feel disengaged with school. Very similar feedback to that which we had when the survey was conducted.
And there are implications there for the teachers, because we're still getting from them exactly the same sort of notions that we had before. [DG]

Their accounts of their work in the meetings become clearer and more analytical as they refine them and have their work affirmed. The meetings are arguably safe environments and they are encouraged to take risks and learn to be comfortable in a research process.

...the thing that’s emerged for me is that I actually have some quality time to sit down and just talk it through. [CC]

This is in contrast to the high stakes, target driven environment that often is the school. They are increasingly open about the value of academic work for reflection and inspiration.

It was also inspired by going to the Carol Dweck lecture which she did when she was over here a couple of years ago now is it? She came over to Cambridge and John let me have the day off school to go and she was absolutely inspirational in her work. And I felt that she was saying the things and giving the evidence for what I’d always felt as a teacher. [JR]

Each of the meetings has a different shape and structure according to the time of the year and the matters at hand. We have increasingly tried to ensure that research discussion takes precedence, but operational matters such as arranging the annual SUPER conference and the administration of the survey in schools can sometimes dominate the proceedings. On those occasions, the University staff inevitably dominate and there is evidence of border retreating. School colleagues become quieter and the discourse is less dialogic. On one occasion, head teachers joined the meeting. The very large group was organised into two smaller discussion groups. The accounts, conversations and challenges in those smaller groups were particularly rich and the voices of school colleagues dominated. The discussions between colleagues within their schools and without was lively and discursive. There was talk about the substantive learning from the research into pupil engagement and about the strategic leadership of the research process in schools. This had the feel of everyone being in a border territory. Everyone was seeming to be learning something from somebody else and the roles of questioner and listener were shared equally amongst participants. The contributions from TRCs was particularly robust and reflective at this meeting.

I think it’s a willingness to take a few risks as well and to evaluate very carefully afterwards. You know, so you are collecting the data. And I think school improvement and research are so inter-linked. [JR]

One of the things I think we were just saying at the end was that when the research is being carried out I think what one of the determining factors, or one of the things that shapes it, is if it’s being carried out in a school where the staff, there is a vibrant researching community, staff are interested in actually finding things out actively within the classroom, and children are used to being asked and used to actually being listened
to in that way. That must in a sense make a difference. It isn’t just the information that you collect. [SM]

One head teacher, one of the strongest advocates for the work, quietly posited:

It shouldn’t be about how we make it fit the Cambridge piece of research. It’s actually how we make the Cambridge piece of research fit our priorities. [JC]

It is less clear generally how University colleagues can be said to inhabit border territory. The meetings take place at the University Faculty building. The meetings are led and managed by University colleagues and there is a sense of responsibility for leading the work. Much of the contribution from University colleagues is arguably about shaping the discourse and bringing colleagues across borders. There is a discomfiting element to this in terms of power and dominance, although the contributions are well intentioned and framed to empower the leader of research managing the borderland territory.

Actually showing impact in education is unbelievably difficult but, and, but you are being encouraged and held accountable for it all the time. So I understand that and I think at some point it would be quite useful for us to talk through, you know, what are the issues in your context or the processes and procedures that you’re having to use and how they impact on thinking about research in schools. [CM]

One exchange in particular demonstrates the discomfort of the border territory and attempts to negotiate it collaboratively, though not necessarily equably.

CC But we’re being told in schools that unless it has an impact you shouldn’t be doing it. Unless it has a direct impact on the lesson, on learning.

AD And pupil progress is a big word at the moment.

CM Well what you need to know is that studies of practitioner research show that it does have an impact and the most profound impact is on teachers.

We consider that analysis of the transcripts with a focus on border territory is a useful tool to illuminate the struggle and discomfort. Border territory has been identified as a place in which ‘the terrain of learning becomes inextricably linked to the shifting parameters of place, identity, history and power’ (Giroux 2006:51).

Identity
The issues of identity are clearly intertwined with notions of border territories. The participants use ‘we’ to mean very different memberships, roles and responsibilities within their contexts and within the group. They are senior managers or teachers in their schools or university settings, they are team leaders of enquiry groups, they are members of the TRC group, they are
learners or teachers/supervisors on an Masters course, they are collaborators with the members of the enquiry group. They often have other relationships within their local contexts too. They sometimes speak as teachers responding to the policy context and sometime as researchers with permission to reflect and question. They will use a range of strategies to negotiate these various identities in different contexts. One head teacher talks of ‘subterfuge’ in developing the research culture without saying the word, which lead to a fulsome discussion around whether to describe research activity as research or not. There are tensions between the contexts, the discourses and the identities in those contexts, which are played out in the third space. Some activities central to enquiry such as critical debate seem to be easier for some members of the group since they are more central to their roles and identities. However, these tensions are often articulated in these transcripts and managing the tension is often debated. This seems a very important aspect of boundary crossing and managing the transitions. So there is a learning about which discourse to use in which context and the third space is a space in which many discourses can be used and reflected upon. There is a long discussion about the words research, performance and impact as well as what one of the teachers calls ‘playing word bingo’ i.e. identifying and using the latest in phrases in terms of educational policy making.

**Learning**
The second element of the framework was learning and here we were exploring the learning that was occurring in the enquiry group. What sort of learning, how and from whom were central questions.

*Learning from others within the TRC meetings*

There is evidence within the transcripts of learning taking place across and between different members, namely:

- from faculty to TRCs
- from TRCs to TRCs
- from TRCs to university colleagues.

University colleagues at various points make explicit attempts to keep a focus in the meetings on learning and are transparent with TRCs about what they see as a major purpose of their research of the meetings:

[...]

So we have no learnings about research then or issues? [CM. T9, p14]

If I can interrupt again, it’s for your benefit really. But one of the things that we were also... we’re concerned with in this group is our learning about how to develop research in school context. So the management of it is equally as important to us as the projects. [CM. T10, p5]

[...] we’re trying to learn about the processes we use that are helpful, what happens here, the sorts of learning, issues to do with partnership. [CM. T11, p2]

University colleagues also attempt to keep a focus on reflection and learning with a view to supporting future ways of working which might support the partnership as can be seen in this
contribution by JW and RM in the context of a discussion about a survey being administered by all the schools:

And to some extent those colleagues who did it before the re-run is also a re-run of the process, and worthy of reflection and consideration, and all the things you’ve raised... There will be colleagues like yourselves doing it for the first time in this context and some people doing it for the second time. You know, so what did you learn about doing it last time? What ways are there that could be done differently? [JW. T10, p22]

I think we need to have a discussion about that once it’s also been done in this forum so we can keep this sort of that... Because that will help us [RM]

University colleagues also urge and encourage TRC colleagues to be explicit in order to share thinking wherever possible in order to facilitate learning:

And what’s important is that you make those decisions self-consciously, so we can hear the processes that you went through to say we’re going to do it differently. [JW. T10, p28]

A clear faculty role in the meetings is also that of offering support and guidance wherever possible to TRC colleagues as the latter share their experiences of, and reflect upon, what they are learning from the process of leading and managing research in their schools. For example, here BMo is helped by a university colleague (CM) to take stock of what she has learned despite her difficulties:

BMo There’s just, there’s a large number of people in my Enquiry Group which is a positive thing, and they are enthusiastic. But it’s, I’m in a bit of a crisis situation. I’m not quite sure if I can manage all these people basically.

CM So just to rephrase... so your, one of your key issues is how to help your focus group focus down, clarify and plan.

BMo Mm hm. [T9,p3]

Implicit in such exchanges, we suggest it is reasonable to assume, is the TRC learning from University colleagues how to tackle issues and apparent dilemmas that may seem overwhelming. In another example, we see how faculty reinforce and emphasise learning conveyed by a TRC in her reflections upon her school research through key comments:

So two very important things. One is scale [...] small scale is good. [...] And secondly, I think very important to try and think about our research methods as running alongside what we’re already doing rather than add-on, and try and make it as developmental as possible. So you know like beginning to change the agenda of the meeting or the nature of the discourse in the meeting or whatever is I think really important. So we’ll think about that too. [CM,T9, p8]
Learning during and within the TRC meeting is also evident in this comment as the TRC refers to previous input from CM (our highlight):

I think I’ve had a research question in my head, that you have to have a research question, but as you said it could be a focus or an area, it doesn’t have to be a question as such. [BMo, T9, p.16]

Here a new TRC member expresses explicitly what she has learnt from attending the meeting:

[ . . .] what I have learnt by being here today has given me greater clarity on the huge black hole of stuff that I don’t know, so that’s really been good. I had been peripherally involved at [School Name] and did know something about it but I’m just beginning now to get a sense of the layers and the complexity and what I really need to get a grip of . . . [SM, T9, p23]

In another meeting, SM explicitly asks for advice in her desire to learn from faculty and other TRCs about processes for recruitment for the Masters course:

TRCs at various points also refer to the key role played by their university critical friends:

[ . . .] Ros produced some fantastic ideas for resources [ . . .] [BMo, T9, p2]

[ . . .] I work closely with Bethan and she’s been supporting me greatly in terms of where I’m going with this. [AD, T9, p13]

TRCs also refer to using research methods or approaches they have specifically learned about from faculty members. For example, here a TRC refers to her use of a research diary:

[ . . .] And I’m trying to capture the data that way using your idea of, you know, is this diary of use to me? Well it is when I look back but I didn’t think it was at the time. [CC, T9, p8]

The importance of the TRC meeting as a space for reflection is also evident in the transcripts:

JW [ . . .] Chris told us what it was she wanted to learn and what it is she’s doing and summed it up really well. And for me that’s an example of how, speaking for myself, because within the Faculty this is the sort of stuff we do all the time, I’m often guilty of making an assumption about it being clearer and easier than I think it feels as a visitor and I was hoping, you know, it would be useful just… Because I didn’t tell Chris anything other than to encourage the fact that actually she did have

CC That’s what I mean by the quality time. It’s allowed me to order things. I feel, you know when you feel that you’ve got all these plates spinning out there. I feel like I’ve got one plate spinning at the moment, in the direction in which I’m going, for a couple of weeks at least. [group laughter] [T9, p14]
Here there is evidence of a TRC learning from multiple sources, namely previous SUPER research and comments made by a TRC colleague earlier in the meeting:

That’s why I’ve noted down the well-being for engagement and achievement because that just goes ‘kerching’, perfect because their well-being is compromised in different ways. So tracking back and trying to bring all these three things together, from the original survey, our students, and it was a theme across all schools, really put the relationships with teachers at the heart of their engagement themes at school. So what we are now manoeuvring to look at is whether we can bring all these things together. [DG. T9, p5]

TRCs also use the meeting space to reflect upon and share their learning with colleagues as demonstrated here:

One of the key things I’ve learnt is that it’s not that people want to cover, they don’t actually want cover, they’re saying no I don’t want my lessons covered, I don’t care whether you arrange with CLT for 10 hours, we just don’t want our lessons to be covered. So it’s been a bit of a learning curve in that some staff have actually said, ‘Yeah, I’m fine. Come and observe me. That’s not the issue. I’m not worried about people being in my classroom, I just don’t want to leave my class because the relationships will be affected if I miss a lesson to go and watch someone else’s’. I do think workload has been a massive issue. [HC, T10, p11]

There is also evidence of a university colleague learning from TRCs. Here comments by a TRC prompts CM to have an idea for a future way of arranging a future meeting in order to encourage and facilitate sharing and learning from SUPER head teachers:

CM And what you’re conversation has made me think about is how useful it would be to have a session in one of the joint sessions of the Heads where we talk about the different ways in which head teachers think about and develop this process of/

AD I think Howard has done it very very, very subtly and cleverly.

CM And he’s pretty good at it.

AD Yes. It’s not the/

CM It would be very powerful to share those I think, amongst us with the Heads. [T9, p12]

Issues and dilemmas related to learning

A number of issues emerge from the transcripts related to difficulties and dilemmas of supporting and developing learning in school-based research. Lack of time, the considerable
pressures of other school responsibilities and commitments and lack of access to materials expressed by TRCs who are not following the Master’s course are all evident in various degrees.

BMo’s account of the struggle she has had with managing her research enquiry group suggests that school-based learning cannot be assumed to have been embedded amongst her teachers despite her considerable direction and input:

After that meeting we went off extremely keen and whenever I saw people in the corridor they said, “Oh yeah, no, no, it’s really interesting, I’m very interested in my project.” I sent out an email last Friday saying, you know, please can you tell me the focus, you know, what exactly… You know how to do research methods now, you’ve got some ideas, what is your question? I’ve been asking people what their question is since July. [BMo,T9, p2]

In future work, we also recognise the potential fruitfulness of exploring the theme of learning in our transcripts further through the lenses of key concepts such as ‘situated cognition’, ‘distributed cognition’ and ‘communities of practice’ (Brown et al 1989, Lave & Wenger, 1991, Putnam & Borko, 2000). How, for example, does the physical and social context of the TRC meeting in the location of the faculty impact upon any learning that takes place? How does the ‘discourse community’ (Resnick, 1991) of TRCs and University members operate where learning is concerned? As Putnam and Borko (2000: 5) observe, ‘learning is as much a matter of enculturation into a community’s ways of thinking and dispositions as it is a result of explicit instruction in specific concepts, skills, and procedures (Driver et al, 1994;Resnick, 1988; Schoenfeld, 1992)”.

Power
Earlier we set the question, What are the challenges, tensions and benefits of working in the third space? One of the most challenging areas is the exploration of matters of power. A third space is often understood as a location for exploring issues of dominance, power and emancipation. The theme is one that has been explored in research on schools-university partnerships too (Baumfield and McLaughlin 2007: Miller 2001) In our debates it has become one that has generated very different perspectives and readings of the transcript material. In the first part of the analysis we consider the types of power different participants bring to TRC group meetings. The questions raised and how issues of power are played out within the third space of TRC group meetings is then explored.

Types of power brought to the third space
Yukl (2006) makes the distinction between the power associated with a particular position and the personal power an individual may have access to, when considering power in relation to organisational leadership. The role of TRC is essentially one of leadership; the leadership of research in a specific school and therefore Yukl’s framework can be usefully applied to the current context. The office of TRC endows the TRCs with a particular type of power; the position power associated with that role within the school. However, the amount of power conferred may vary according to context. This is evident within the group and is largely
associated with the status of the TRC role within the school. Most TRCs are senior members of staff in school, however in one school the role is occupied by a main scale teacher (BMo). This has implications for how the TRC can work within the school. BMo, reflecting on her work over the year and, in particular, how she has worked with colleagues commented:

‘I don’t know whether that’s because that was the only one [role] open to me as just a Maths teacher. I was very much a facilitator rather than sort of a leader or a dictator or anything like that. So then I’ve just, maybe, because I’m not SLT maybe I don’t quite know whether it’s my style.’

[BMo, T11, p. 45]

BMo makes it clear she does not feel she has the power to tell colleagues what to do as an ordinary teacher, which she may very well feel able to do were she a member of the senior management group. Yukl notes that different facets of position power have been identified in the literature including reward, coercive, legitimate, information and ecological (control over environmental resources) and in this excerpt, BMo appears to be referring to the legitimate power that comes with a senior management position in school. However it can be seen that BMo is not without position power, as she is able to reward teachers who work with her through small payments for attending the extra meetings after school associated with the pupil engagement project in recognition of the time commitment. Furthermore, although not emanating from her directly, the role holds coercive power as some of the teachers involved have involvement in the project written into their performance management targets. Her perception of her position power may therefore be at odds with those of other people within the school, particularly the head teacher who believes she has devolved power for this role to BMo through the reward and coercive mechanisms. Overall, it would appear that the TRC role should wield substantial position power within the school context, as one of the SUPER head teachers, attending the joint TRC/head teachers meeting surmises:

‘Originally we did think that the TRC would have a close link to the leadership team so that could [be] part of the policy driver.’

[JC, T 11, p. 44]

However, this position power relates to the context of TRCs working with colleagues in the school context. The situation is somewhat different in the third space created by the University and SUPER schools working together. Here, their position power is rather less clear, as roles within the group are not explicitly enshrined in a clearly communicated hierarchical arrangement typical of school management structures. In theory they have considerable position power, as the SUPER schools have bought into the SUPER partnership and essentially are paying for the University colleagues’ time through funding provided by the schools to the MEd programme. In this respect the University is a servant to the schools. However, TRC position power is not particularly evident in the meetings analysed. This could be partly because TRCs are accountable to their schools, and in particular their head teachers through the line management structure. SUPER head teachers meet the University team in a separate series of meetings not included in the current analysis, where matters such as the partnership funding are discussed, so TRCs may feel disempowered to dictate direction within the TRC group meetings believing this is the business of head teacher SUPER meetings. The amount of clout TRC colleagues have by way of their position is therefore somewhat ambiguous in the TRC.
group meeting. The situation is complicated further in the joint TRC head teacher meetings, one of which is covered by the current analysis, as TRCs are then subordinate to their head teachers at that meeting.

Personal power resides with individuals rather than positions or roles and is related to personal characteristics. In the context of leadership, Yukl demarcates expert and referent power. The former refers to expertise, largely gained from experience, whilst the latter relates to personality attributes such as charisma and persuasive skills that others admire. Within the group and considering expert power in relation to knowledge of SUPER, three colleagues have been associated with SUPER for a number of years and are long-serving TRCs so clearly have developed knowledge and understanding in the role, hence might be viewed as having expert power to bring to the third space represented in the TRC group meetings. The university colleagues have experience of being both a teacher in a school and in the academy. In addition, three further TRC colleagues are current MEd students and are developing expertise as researchers through their academic studies, so within the school context might be seen to have expert power in relation to their research role. Two TRC colleagues are new to the SUPER partnership so at present could be said to have considerably less expert power in relation to SUPER. Referent power will be discussed further later in the context of third space but, we, as the University team, would like to express the view, accepting that this is a value statement, that all our TRCs have referent power in that they are dynamic and well-liked colleagues.

Turning now to a consideration of the power available to the members of the University team, it is apparent that they have access to different levels of position power associated with their roles within the Faculty and different levels of expert power related to their prior involvement in the SUPER partnership. One of the authors (CM) not only is a Deputy Head of Faculty, but has also been involved with the SUPER partnership since its inception and is explicitly acknowledged as the leader of the University team and indeed more widely within SUPER as the leader of that partnership. She, therefore, has both position and expert power to draw on. Another colleague (JW) has had close associations with SUPER for a number of years so also has considerable expert power available, and although she is a less established member of the Faculty is seen within SUPER to have a significant role as acting course manager for the SUPER MEd programme which confers position power. The other two members of the team (BM & RM) are relatively new to SUPER so have more limited expert power available in relation to SUPER, although both are experienced researchers. Power conferred on account of research expertise, as will be discussed below, is significant. The position power of the two newer members of the team within SUPER is more limited, as both are seen as have subordinate roles relative to their University colleagues in this context, although their roles more widely within the Faculty are quite different.

We see a group of TRC colleagues with differing levels of expert power but unclear position power interacting with University colleagues with considerable expert power relating to their expertise in research and in some cases long-established involvement in the SUPER partnership and, in two cases, recognisable position power. The transcripts also show episodes where TRCs are content with this power allocation and ascribe many aspects of effective action to the critical friends. This is met with discomfort and challenge by the university colleagues.
BMo  Ros produced some fantastic ideas for resources and Gunel and I also sort of had our little slot so/
RM    It was collaborative.
BMo  It was collaborative. Ros came along with lots of lovely handouts.

We now turn to raise some key questions about how this plays out within the third space represented in TRC group meetings.

**Power Play in the Third Space**

The debates around power and domination in our team have focused upon the roles, responsibilities, time taken up in the space, exertion of influence, discourses used and which ones are seen as dominate. Matters of organisation such as the setting of the agenda and responsibility for the conduct and management of the meetings rests with the university. The meetings of the partnership which consist of the head teachers, TRCs and university colleagues have debated these matters and the school based colleagues have wanted the university to take the lead and to co ordinate matters. Is this acceptable? Is this a feature of power or pragmatism? The arenas for decision making and the processes of decision making are implied in these transcripts. The questions raised regarding the allocation of roles and responsibilities are key ones but seem to matter more to some colleagues. The seeming acceptance by the TRCs is also one that needs further debate. The issues of power and domination are ones that are of great concern and sensitivity to the university members. Why is this and what do school-based colleagues really feel about these matters? Is the reality of schools and universities and the resources available such that the schools want the university colleagues to act in these ways or not?

How are matters of status and experience handled within the third space? The University colleagues and the MEd colleagues have been inducted in to the discourses of academic language and thinking. They have more experience of research and also have experience of being school teachers. There are numerous power differentials within the group. How do these play out? How should this play out in the third space where giving voice to different views and aiming to generate new knowledge, unhampered by traditional boundaries, are aspirations. Achinstein (2002) has explored matters of conflict within community and concluded that conflict is inevitable, as are power differentials and varying degrees of influence and experience. She argues it is the state of the community and its ability to tolerate conflict that is one of the key indicators of health and sustainability. Both Stenhouse (1979) & Gramsci’s (1967) worked on the notion of the community of enquiry as a ‘deliberative college’ arguing that it had the following characteristics: be face-to-face; local; criticism is collegiate; directed towards mutual learning; engages in a rigorous struggle to avoid habits of dilettantism, improvisation, oratorical and declamatory solutions; and includes writing notes and noting criticisms. Feelings of challenge and discomfort are likely to be present. These are demanding processes and ones where matters of trust, risk and power are central.

**Final reflections**
In this final paragraph we reflect upon the original purposes of the paper i.e. to explore the usefulness of the concept of a third space for the interrogation of our joint enquiry work in this group; to illuminate the activity and to identify further data analysis and implications for practice. The concept and the categories we have used in the preliminary analysis have proved useful. They have highlighted the nature and possible effect of the activity in the group. We can see that there is learning and research focused activity. We have questioned the learning that is occurring for the university group and whether their service role has precluded the amount of explicit discussion about their learning. We can identify the actions that are taking place and these have become highly related to issues of power, identity and purpose. There are clearly particular features of the group that are useful to the members, it allows a freedom to interrogate because it is a third space. One could argue that the conscious awareness of this as a third space and the active construction of this as a research focused space have been the key factors. This awareness has made the participants dig deeply into their practice and has promoted collaborative activity. The collaborative activity is important and allows members to work more tightly together. It is also difficult. The tensions between the discourses and pressures in the first spaces of the members are apparent but the open discussion of these is important and a tension management device. Along side the concepts we have used in this preliminary analysis others emerge as significant (and they feature in the debates about communities of practice): they are the nature of relationships, context and history. These emerge as very significant to perceptions and understandings. The induction of new members then becomes an issue as does the potential restriction of history.

One of the aims of our enquiry group and of those who promote the idea of a third space is the notion of developing the possibility of creating new knowledge and ways of working, in our case around useful educational research. The extent to which this is happening and the tension with the service role for the university is a major issue to emerge from this analysis. We could be said to have laid the conditions for this as a first step and to have done this by actively and consciously constructed a group focused on collaborative enquiry. Having a common research focus cannot be underestimated as a facilitator here. Overall the third space as a concept offers many new ways of viewing practice in such groups and one we will explore further.

References


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