Ange Fitzgerald · Graham Parr
Judy Williams *Editors*

Re-imagining Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education

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Springer

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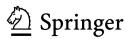
Narratives of Learning

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Foreword

Embracing Complexity in Teacher Education in the Face of Endless Simplification

> It is generally acknowledged by all those involved—university educators, practising teachers, education departments and beginning teachers themselves—that no pre-service training can fully prepare new teachers to perform at their full capacity from their first day at work. This is not a reflection on the quality of new teachers or on the standard of pre-service training. It is a recognition of the complexity of teaching and of the large number of variables (such as type of school, socio-economic and cultural background of students, school 'ethos', extent of support from colleagues and principal, etc.) affecting a teacher's performance. This being the case, induction programmes have a vital role in ensuring a smooth transition for beginning teachers from university trainees to competent practitioners. (Commonwealth of Australia 1998, p. 204)

In terms of teacher education, the *leitmotif* of our current policy moment in Australia is 'classroom readiness' (as highlighted in the 2015 Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group report, Craven et al. 2015). Like quality, it is hard to argue against classroom readiness: under what circumstances would we wish for 'unready' teachers to be placed in the nation's classrooms? Think of the children! But a brief check of the rear vision mirror reveals that this preoccupation is a relatively new one.

The quotation above is taken from the report of a senate inquiry into the status of the teaching profession conducted under the Howard Liberal-National Coalition Government in the late 1990s, known as *A Class Act*. At the time, an understanding of the complexity of teaching meant that no beginning teacher could be thought to be universal 'classroom ready' at the outset of their career. Indeed, to do so would assume that initial teacher education was preparing pre-service teachers for standardised, cookie-cutter school environments where circumstances, and thus preparation, could be easily anticipated and 'locked down'. Fast forward 20 years, and a lack of this kind of 'classroom readiness', however, ill-defined, is used as a tool to declaim the poor quality of both prospective teachers and teacher education.

Taking the long view, it is not hard to see how we got here. Increasing complexity and uncertainty has long been recognised by sociologists as driving societies toward 'risk management' (Bourke 2005; Power 2007), and in educational terms this has seen a global rise in efforts toward standardisation of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and teachers' practice. Consider the rise of national curriculum, standardised testing, teaching standards and dogma regarding the teaching of phonics, to name but a few, all of which constitute attempts to lock down the educational process in the face of recognised complexity, and manage risk. Interestingly, sociologists of trust working in different fields have long observed the symbiotic relationship between risk and trust (Misztal 1996; Tejpal et al. 2013), wherein 'trust cannot exist in an environment of certainty; if it did, it would do so trivially. Therefore, trust exists in an uncertain and risky environment' (Bhattacharya et al. 1998, p. 461). In these times of increased 'risk governance' (Renn 2008) in education, it is worth considering the implications of such risk management in relation to social trust in education processes and professionals.

In many ways, contemporary scuffles over 'classroom readiness' constitute yet another series of debates around the age-old key question of curriculum, namely 'what knowledge is of most worth?' (Spencer 1859), this time played out in relation to teacher education curriculum. The irony is that truly classroom ready teachers for the twenty-first century might not necessarily carry with them a pre-conceived body of knowledge at the outset of their careers. Certainly, they would have a broad understanding of the interplay between society and education, of human development and learning, of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and their own role in the shaping of all three for their schools and students. While they might possess a good 'starter' knowledge of curriculum content, more importantly they would possess the skills to quickly 'come up to speed' on those areas of curriculum content they have less intimate knowledge of. Further, they would possess a high tolerance for ambiguity, endless curiosity about teaching and learning, mental agility, capacity to work productively with colleagues who hold vastly different perspectives to theirs for the benefit of student learning, patience, empathy, creativity, a constantly critical orientation, expert problem-solving skills and the list goes on. In mounting a case for a new way of thinking about 'teaching quality' in 1990, Lawrence Stenhouse argued that 'the acquisition of subject knowledge and technical skills are necessary conditions of good teaching, but do not characterize the difference between good teachers and others operating at minimally acceptable levels of competence' (Stenhouse 1990, p. 2). The role of teacher education, then, might be thought of as reaching beyond these necessary but not sufficient conditions to support teachers to develop orientations, dispositions and understandings that will help them to adapt their subject knowledge and technical skills to the benefit of their students in each and every context in which they work over the course of their careers.

Over 15 years ago, Marilyn Cochran-Smith issued a warning to teacher educators to be vigilant in embracing the complexity of teaching and resisting the tendency to oversimplification and reductionism in relation to 'good teaching'.

> Teaching is *unforgivingly complex*. It is not simply good or bad, right or wrong, working or failing. Although absolutes and dichotomies such as these are popular in the headlines and in campaign slogans, they are limited in their usefulness. They tacitly assume there is consensus across our diverse society about the purposes of schooling and what it means to be engaged in the process of becoming an educated person as well as consensus about whose knowledge and values are of most worth and what counts as evidence of the effectiveness of teaching and learning. They ignore almost completely the nuances of 'good' (or 'bad') teaching of real students collected in actual classrooms in the context of particular times and places. They mistake reductionism for clarity, myopia for insight. (Cochran-Smith 2003, p. 4)

The contemporary catch cry of 'classroom readiness' smacks of this kind of reductionism—the idea that good teaching can be distilled into a set of descriptors or competencies able to be deployed by 'classroom ready' graduates on day one of their first year of teaching. Good teaching is always about relationship, and the basic tenets of productive teaching and learning relationships take time to develop, as does the professional capacity of teachers to develop such productive relationships time and time again with different cohorts of students.

The second problem with our current discourse of 'classroom readiness' is the endless (not to mention pointless) dichotomies it produces and works with. Theory pitted against practice (classroom readiness is intensely 'practical'); 'new' against experienced teachers (sometimes with one group preferable, at other times the other); teachers against teacher educators (practitioners against ivory-tower dwellers). Again, these dichotomies represent an oversimplification of things that are enormously complex. The reflexive and important relationship between theory and practice, remembering Kurt Lewin's claim that 'there is nothing so practical as a good theory' (1951), is undermined by the dichotomizing of theory and practice, while dichotomies that seek to divide groups of educators on an arbitrary basis such as their length of service or the context of their practice work against the development of real collaboration for the benefit of students, and ultimately society. Furthermore, such dichotomies generally represent an attempt to find a simple solution to identify policy problems, whether the quality of teacher education, pre-service teachers or schooling writ large.

This book speaks back to these discourses in powerful ways. It takes as a starting point the idea that professional experience is more than a 'placement' designed to promote classroom readiness: that professional experience plays a particular role in the development of teacher professional identity, teacher knowledge and teaching skills; and that professional experience, collaboratively designed and enacted, can constitute a 'third space' between schools and universities in teacher education. Furthermore, at a time when 'partnerships', particularly between universities and schools around professional experience, are mandated but scarcely supported on a system level, the narratives of practice within this book highlight a range of innovative and creative professional learning partnerships that function to the benefit of pre-service teachers, in-service teachers and teacher educators.

The book points to the crucial 'boundary work', 'relational work' and 'identity work' of professional experience in preparing beginning teachers who are truly 'classroom ready'. In relation to 'boundary work', the authors posit new ways of

working 'in partnership' in teacher education that in their very being challenge old and stultifying dichotomies, opening up new possibilities for learning in the 'third space' (Zeichner 2010) between university and school. In focusing on 'relational work', the authors challenge us to think about the role of professional experience in teacher development beyond those 'necessary but insufficient conditions' for good teaching identified by Stenhouse above, through the development of generative inter-generational and inter-cultural learning for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Finally, in relation to 'identity work', the authors explore the role of professional experience in supporting the *becoming* of teachers and teacher educators, with their personal narratives representing what Connelly and Clandinin (1999) have referred to as 'stories to live by', the building blocks of teacher professional identity.

Together, the chapters and the narratives they contain constitute an argument for embracing complexity and rejecting oversimplification in teacher education at this important juncture. The authors hold that the 'work' of professional experience within teacher education, whether 'boundary', 'relational' or 'identity' or most usually, a combination of all three, is a challenging, messy, human business that in its very essence denies simplification. They challenge all of us involved in teacher education to think beyond simple conceptualisations of 'classroom readiness', to embrace, and prepare our students for, the beautiful complexity of teaching.

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Contents

Chapter 1
Re-imagining Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education

Graham Parr, Judy Williams and Ange Fitzgerald

Abstract This opening chapter is written by the book's editors. They set out the historical, cultural, policy and research contexts for *Re-imagining professional experience in initial teacher education: Narratives of learning*, and present a rationale for the collection at a time when teacher education in Australia, as elsewhere, is attempting to deal with significant policy pressures. The chapter offers a definition of professional experience that underpins all of the chapters that follow, and proposes a conceptual and methodological framework for engaging with those chapters. Each of the editors contributes a short autobiographical narrative to convey some of their personal and academic backgrounds as teacher educators and to illustrate some of the powerful ways narrative can be used to represent and inquire into professional experience. The chapter concludes with brief summaries of all other 11 chapters of the collection.

Why This Book? Why Now?

The last two decades have seen a gradual erosion of confidence, at least as far as politicians and policy makers are concerned, in the capacity of university-based initial teacher education (ITE) programs to prepare the next generation of teachers. This has prompted governments to introduce wide-ranging reforms of ITE. In the US, these reforms have included significant deregulation of teacher education, promoting the establishment of independent teacher education programs that do not involve universities at all (Zeichner, 2017). In England, the contribution of universities to initial teacher education has been significantly reduced by a government directive that pre-service teachers (PSTs) undertake substantially more of their 'teacher training' in schools, so that they can then better focus on developing their 'core teaching skills'

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(Carter, 2015). In Australia, where the authors and editors of this book work, there has been a similar increase in mandated school-based practicum hours for PSTs. This was one of many recommendations of *Action now, Classroom ready teachers*, a government funded report on ITE by the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) (2014).

One key theme of *Action now, Classroom ready teachers*, consistent with recent international reports, is the importance of ensuring graduate teachers are 'classroom ready'. This theme is driven by an enthusiastic belief in the power of standards and standardisation of ITE programs to improve the quality and consistency of teacher education across Australia. And yet 3 years after the publication of *Action now*, the notion of 'classroom ready' is still being hotly debated. What does 'classroom ready' actually mean? What does the preparation of 'classroom ready' teachers entail? How will the standardisation of initial teacher education programs and practices, or pre-service teachers spending more time in one school, ensure graduates are to 'ready to teach' in the culturally diverse classrooms of Australian schools? Additionally, White, Bloomfield and Le Cornu (2010) have asked whether a preoccupation with 'classroom ready' graduate teachers ignores the importance of these graduates being *school* and *community* ready.

Re-imagining professional experience in initial teacher education: Narratives of learning takes up these questions, and responds to calls to undertake more rigorous research into professional experience (e.g., Le Cornu, 2015), by telling authentic scholarly stories about professional experience in ITE. The stories reflexively describe and critically analyse the learning that emerges from a range of professional experience (PE) programs and initiatives in and around Monash University in association with its partner institutions and communities. Our primary focus is on the professional learning of academic and professional staff, and on school-, community- and industry-based mentors associated with pre-service teachers' professional experience. Occasionally, this extends to the professional learning of pre-service teachers as well. Our analysis is shaped by the belief that professional experience constitutes a range of collaborative activities, relationships and partnerships involving close interaction with professional teachers and institutions (not just schools), and that it should be motivated by a set of ethical imperatives for preparing the next generation of teachers who are needed to teach all children in a culturally diverse world.

Working with this belief, the book highlights tensions in the ways policy, practice and theory understand professional experience in initial teacher education. Through presenting and analysing their experiences, the authors tease out these tensions, and discuss how professional experience in and around one Faculty of Education can contribute to the development of pre-service teachers' identities, knowledge and skills. The 're-imagining' in the book's title refers to a shift beyond a narrow understanding of professional experience as short-term practicum (although this, too, can be improved) to one which includes a diversity of educational experiences and partnerships that assist pre-service teachers to learn to teach, to appreciate the extraordinary complexity of the profession they are about to enter, and to develop their professional identities as teachers.

It is significant that most chapters of the book focus on collaboration, partnerships and/or mentoring on and across the borders that separate schools, community 'centres of learning', industry and universities. Different chapters inquire into different ways that Monash University is engaging with the teaching profession, both within more traditional practicum programs and in other settings with pre-service teachers, university-based teacher educators and externally based professionals. Authors describe a range of innovative programs, arrangements and approaches that are responding to public and political concern about quality in teacher education, the role of educational partnerships in teacher preparation and the personal and professional learning gained from such opportunities. The stories they tell reveal a multiplicity of experiences, challenges, successes and insights of academics and professional staff in one university's faculty of education (along with their educational partners) as it re-imagines professional experience in ITE.

At a time when political and public trust in initial teacher education is faltering, we believe it is important to be sharing rigorously theorised stories of professional experience. *Re-imagining professional experience in initial teacher education: Narratives of learning* informs policymakers and other sceptics of the valuable work universities and their partners are already undertaking to enrich and improve the professional experience of pre-service teachers in ITE. The book illustrates, and presents for critical scrutiny, ways in which universities like Monash are responding to calls for a well-supported, clearly focused, research-based program of professional experience. We hope that readers might be encouraged to develop their own new understandings of professional experience, and appreciate the benefits of an expanded understanding of professional experience in their institution.

How Did This Collection Come About?

We, the three editors of this book, collaborated on a previous edited collection about initial teacher education with Springer, *Narratives of learning through international professional experience.* That book used narrative to explore the nature and experience of international professional experience (IPE) for pre-service teachers, as well as the Australian teacher educators and educational partners who led these experiences in different geographic settings (Fitzgerald, Parr, & Williams, 2017). Our long-term involvement in, and commitment to, IPE programs and partnerships in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, was a key driver for that collection. So, too, with this collection, where the focus expands to encompass all aspects of professional experience in ITE, including some radical developments in the field.

As teacher educators in Monash's professional experience program, the three of us have played a number of teaching and leadership roles over the past 15 years. Judy and Ange, for instance, have held the senior leadership position of Director of Professional Experience and Partnerships, and Graham has been Director of Secondary Teacher Education courses. Also, we have visited and observed pre-service teachers on school placement; liaised with mentors or coordinators of practicum

placements in schools when things were not going well; negotiated new and alternative professional experience arrangements with school leaders, within Australia and internationally; and worked with partners in school, community or industry to develop alternative conceptions of professional experience. In all of these activities, we have appreciated the centrality of professional experience in its different forms in the formation of the next generation of teachers.

Given our belief as editors in the value of narrative in representing and critically investigating aspects of professional experience, we feel it is important to share here some more information about our backgrounds, in the forms of stories of our involvement in professional experience. In the next section, we each present a brief narrative window into our past, showing how our biographies have informed our interest in, commitment to and passion for professional experience. Judy reflects upon her time as a primary school teacher supervising a student teacher when her past education lecturer from Monash University paid a visit to her classroom to observe that 'student teacher' in action. Graham then recalls an early memory as a teacher educator observing a pre-service teacher teach on a practicum placement, and building a professional dialogue with her about her teaching. Finally, Ange ponders (in her strategic role as Director of Professional Experience) feedback from pre-service teachers showing how much they value professional experience time in schools during their teacher education degree. We begin with Judy's narrative.

Judy's narrative: *"You should do what I do!"*

A lecturer from my *alma mater* (Monash University) was visiting my primary school classroom, and observing the pre-service teacher whom I had been 'supervising' for the past week or so. The word 'mentoring' wasn't used in the late 1980s, a time when 'student teachers' undertook 'teaching rounds' to demonstrate their effectiveness as classroom teachers. This particular lecturer had been my lecturer 10 years previously. I remembered her lectures being full to overflowing, as students flocked to her classes to hear her passionately teaching about our future careers—as primary school teachers. Now, she was in my classroom, working with the next generation of beginning teachers. I cannot recall the details of our conversation, but I must have expressed an interest in the process of supervising student teachers in my classroom, and how interested I was in their learning. This might have gone beyond the usual conversations she'd had with other supervising teachers—I am not sure. But I remember this conversation leading to her exclamation that I should "do what I do"—work in a university to teach about teaching.

As it turned out, my career trajectory *did* lead me to doing what that lecturer was doing—working with pre-service teachers, both at university and in the field, during their professional experience placement. When I entered the academy, I was allocated teaching roles that directly supported pre-service teachers on placement, including visits to their classrooms to observe and converse about their teaching. Over the years I also taught in units that supported pre-service teachers in their journey into the teaching profession. While the teachers, principals, pre-service teachers and children working and learning in schools have always been an important part of my personal and professional identity, as my career as a teacher educator progresses, I have come to see that working with the profession doesn't always have to involve the practicum.

The term 'professional experience' has grown to encompass more than merely the 'practicum' or 'placement,' and as my role at the university begins to shift away from working directly with schools, I understand that I can still be part of the essential work of teachers and teaching in other ways.

I still teach in units that directly support pre-service teachers learning about their teaching. But I now often find myself talking to and mentoring the next generation of teacher educators—novice academics, graduate research students (some of whom are teachers in schools), classroom teachers looking for a career shift into academia, professional staff supporting pre-service teachers in schools, and co-teachers straddling the boundaries of schools and universities. Involvement in the professional experience of pre-service teachers is not limited to the practicum. And while I miss being directly involved in working with teachers and children in schools, by necessity, my perspectives have broadened to encompass a range of ways in which our pre-service teachers can engage *in* and *with* the profession, to become the next generation of teaching professionals.

Graham's narrative: *The 'luxury' of knowing students we visit on professional experience*

In my early years as an English teacher educator at Monash (after 14 years as an English teacher in secondary schools), I used to travel to 30 plus schools every year to observe 'student teachers' from my 'English methods' classes on 'teaching rounds'. I loved that work. It was one of the privileges of being a teacher educator to be able to spend time in such a wide range of schools and classrooms. The language, the policy landscape and the institutional infrastructure for organising professional experience were very different then. The nature of my own work as a teacher educator was also very different. Like Judy, opportunities to observe pre-service teachers in schools are much rarer for me now. I make shorter and fewer visits to fewer practicum schools than I did then. I regret that.

When I first began visiting student teachers on teaching rounds in 2001, I was always observing students from my own classes at university. Also, I had the 'luxury' of spending *time* in the school to converse at some length with that student before and after the observed lesson. This meant that the feedback I wrote during the lesson could be more conversational than evaluative. My focus could be on promoting a probing professional conversation with my student about his/her teaching rather than imagining I could fly into the classroom, observe a lesson, offer an objective evaluation, and then fly out as quickly as I had flown in.

In preparing for the writing of this narrative, I found comments I wrote in 2004 for Celia (not her real name), an English student teacher on a teaching round in the second semester of her Diploma of Education. In our pre-lesson chat, Celia had shared with me her unhappy experience of revision lessons when she was a secondary student where *her teacher* did most of the revising and students sat around bored witless! To prevent this happening in this practicum lesson, Celia planned to divide her Year 10 students into collaborative groups, provide them with carefully chosen quotes and prompts from the literary texts they would be writing about in their upcoming exams, and invite them to compare and contrast these texts.

My commentary on Celia's lesson began as follows:

> It's early in the day. The students are chatting happily as they spill into your classroom. You engage very naturally and sociably with them as they take their seats, greeting a few stragglers with a gentle 'hurry up.' They respond as you'd hope – they realise the class is about to begin. The rapport that you have developed with this group before today is evident in these initial exchanges. And yet you can easily shift into and out of a slightly more peremptory tone: 'Anyone who hasn't submitted this homework … I'll see them after class.'

It was a decisive start to the lesson, although the rest of my notes suggest that what followed had its ups and downs for Celia. Nevertheless, I recall that my extended professional learning conversation with her after the lesson was rich and diverse.

Back in 2004, as an early career teacher educator, I probably took for granted the 'luxury' of already knowing the students (like Celia) I observed 'on rounds'. I took for granted that I had ample time to build a conversation with them around my observations of their teaching. That

would change as teacher educators were forced to become more 'efficient' in the way they used their time. This is a change in my work as a teacher educator that I deeply regret. On a more positive note, my awareness of other possibilities for weaving diverse professional experience/s into teacher education courses and programs has also changed—in exciting ways….

Ange's narrative: *Teacher educators in the driving seat for change*

Recently, I spent a number of hours carefully reading the qualitative feedback that our initial teacher education students shared through the official university channel (Student Evaluation of Teacher and Unit—SETU) about their professional experience units. One of the joys of being the Director of Professional Experience in the Faculty! This feedback was framed around two key questions—Which aspect(s) of this unit did you find most effective?; and Would you suggest any changes to enhance this unit in the future?—and was in light of having completed a recent practicum in a centre or school. Resoundingly, regardless of course or stage of course, professional experience was the focus of their answers to both questions. Students unequivocally appreciated the opportunity to have time on placement, and they wanted more of it.

> Being in a school environment was far more effective than a university setting. Fair to say I learned more in these 10 days than in a year of university (2nd year student, B.Ed. (Primary and Secondary Education))

> More professional experience could never be a bad thing! (3rd year student, B.Ed. (Secondary Education))

> Having the opportunity to apply what I've learned so far in an actual workplace setting (1st year student, M.Teach (Early Years Education))

Comments like these cause pause for thought.

It is certainly not uncommon or a new phenomenon for education students to identify that more time in schools might help combat their feelings of being underprepared for the realities of the classroom. My conversations with our students in recent years have suggested that many are opting to undertake casual relief teaching or casual education-related work initially rather than apply for permanent school or centre positions as a way of gaining more teaching experience and classroom confidence. It is interesting to consider these thoughts in relation to my recent conversations with centre and school leaders about what they are looking for in graduates. One recounted how with over 120 applicants for one graduate position at her school, they needed to have ways to narrow the field given that all have completed an initial teacher education degree with a set amount of professional experience. Voluntary experiences and casual work involving children and young people, such as swimming instructing or after school care or other forms of teaching in the community, were seen as key ways to 'stand out from the crowd'.

In teacher education courses, it is clear that professional experience is an important aspect of learning the craft of teaching. It is obvious that hands-on opportunities to learn in situ matter. But in my current role I see that these opportunities need to be weighed up against minimum requirements for teacher registration as well as structural and financial constraints that exist within schools and faculties of education. Regardless, it has become increasingly clear to me that engagement with professional experience needs to come from more than just practicum placements. It means getting creative and capitalising on no-to-low-cost ways to connect with the profession in ways that are targeted and contextualised. And it is us—teacher educators—who are in the driving seat to instigate this kind of change. We need to embrace opportunities to bring different ways of thinking about and participating in professional experience into our practices to better support the development of future teachers.

Using Narrative to Represent, Analyse and Re-imagine Professional Experience

One of the benefits of telling our own stories as we have above is that we are able to clarify and make more explicit our otherwise blurred identities as co-authors. For a brief time, at least, we interrupt the combined voice that characterised the opening pages of this chapter to present individual voices as teacher educators, researchers and collaborating editors of this collection. This 'interrupting' allows us to reveal the histories and attitudes of three individual academics who are actively reflecting upon their experiences in existing professional experience programs and imagining what professional experience in ITE might look like into the future. By narratively situating our work on this book in a particular place and historical context, we can provide insights into ITE that are not present in the anonymously compiled box and whisker plots, histograms and tables of statistics in the Initial Teacher Education Data Reports, for example, published every year by AITSL (e.g. AITSL, 2017). In other words, there is much that narrative-based research can investigate and communicate that traditional quantitative studies of ITE can never achieve—such as exploring the relational work of professional experience and teasing out personal perspectives on this experience. We want to take this opportunity to state our belief that any commitment to improving professional experience in ITE, and promoting "a more informed debate about the direction of ITE in this country" (John Hattie, quoted in AITSL, 2017, p. 1), should pay attention to a wide range of insights and research methodologies.

Indeed, our vision as editors of this collection has placed great store in the way narrative can both represent and critically explore experiences and relationships from different perspectives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Parr, Doecke, & Bulfin, 2015). The chapters which follow present rigorously theorised stories authored by teacher educators, mentors and professional staff whose professional experience/s are crucial in preparing the next generation of teachers to enter the teaching profession. Where other recent publications about professional experience have provided a 'handbook' approach, offering pre-service teachers valuable information about how to succeed in their professional experience or practicum, *Narratives of learning through international professional experience* eschews this option. Rather, we use narrative-based methodologies (such as critical autobiography, self-study, autoethnography and narrative inquiry) to represent and probe the challenges and opportunities of developing new and alternative approaches to professional experience in initial teacher education. We have purposely left it to authors of each chapter to articulate what particular traditions and theories of narrative in research they are drawing upon in their writing, and how narrative mediates their investigation and the knowledge they are sharing.

How Is Professional Experience Re-imagined in This Book? Three Key Themes

In the usual parlance of teacher education literature, the term 'professional experience' refers to the compulsory practicum placements or field experience of an initial teacher education program. In Australia, this currently involves a minimum of 80 days for undergraduate courses (usually 4 years, full time study) and 60 days for graduate courses (1.5–2 years, full time study). For the days when pre-service teachers are located in schools, early childhood settings or other educational centres (usually in Australia, but sometimes overseas), they are mentored or supervised by experienced teachers or industry professionals. These mentors are required to provide a report on and evaluation of the pre-service teacher's 'performance' in the classroom (or other setting), which becomes part of the university's final judgement of whether a pre-service teacher is 'ready to teach' at the conclusion of their degree. These are the accredited requirements set down for professional experience offered by Australian teacher education providers (AITSL, 2015), and in most chapters of this book they are the starting point for re-imagining professional experience. For example, some authors' re-imagining involves consideration of what can be improved in more traditional practicum arrangements (such as in the area of school-based mentoring, and mentoring which is genuinely shared between school and university-based educators). Others illustrate what is possible when a faculty of education reaches out to and collaborates with a wider range of settings and partners for pre-service teachers to *undertake* their professional experience fieldwork—such as in the community or in industry. Still others re-conceptualise professional experience that does not rely on students *travelling to a professional experience*, as it were, but rather the professional experience is deeply embedded within a campus-based teacher education programs (for instance in co-teaching arrangements).

Across these different approaches, a number of key themes can be seen emerging and playing out in particular and sometimes similar ways. Three of the most frequently addressed themes are often referred to as forms of work—(i) boundary work; (ii) relational work; and (iii) identity work. We offer, here, a brief introduction to these interrelated themes and their significance to the book overall, before going on to summarise the chapters that follow, and their connection with these themes.

i. *Boundary work*

Darling-Hammond (2009) and Zeichner (2010) have poetically (and now famously) described the disconnect between academic coursework and 'fieldwork experiences' as the Achilles heel of initial teacher education. And they have advocated for 'new hybrid spaces' that 'more closely connect' these dimensions of pre-service teacher education (Zeichner, 2010, p. 89). Many of the chapters in this book can be read as positive responses to this advocacy. We see authors thinking differently about, and often re-conceptualising, what they frame as professional experience. Much of their 'thinking differently' involves working on and across traditionally assumed 'boundaries' between campus-based learning and 'professional experience' (usually

assumed to be in schools). Each chapter is enlivened with examples of how this different thinking can be implemented in practice. The carefully theorised research stories shared in this collection bring to life what might be achieved in terms of engaging and rigorous teacher education practice. And yet the authors do not shy away from identifying the challenges of this boundary work, such as when the required innovative work does not fit neatly into the bounded existing roles of teacher, teacher educator or pre-service teacher.

Some chapter authors have highlighted that they now see their role as teacher educator as a negotiator between different stakeholders, and they describe how they have had to negotiate between competing demands in an unfamiliar environment. They find themselves ducking and weaving through options of *who* they might be and *how* they might be in this previously uncharted space. Zeichner (2010) captures this sense of being 'neither here nor there' in contemporary teacher education through imagining what he and others have called the 'third space'. In this collection, the notion of the third space signals a rejection of clear cut binaries (such as between theory and practice, or between practitioner knowledge and academic knowledge) and opts for a shift from an either/or perspective to an integration of a both/also view. Zeichner challenges those of us involved in initial teacher education to throw off the shackles that confine us to more conventional teacher education spaces that we might feel obliged to work in—these might be in academic coursework or in professional experience placements or both—and to embrace more hybrid roles as leaders and facilitators in pre-service teacher education.

In a similar vein to the construct of the third space, Aikenhead (1996) and Giroux (2005) have referred to a paradigmatic shift in exploring the notion of border crossing or working in border spaces. This work also involves negotiation. Giroux (2005) made reference to the notions of 'mingling (and) clashing' (p. 2) as a way of making sense of the encounters that happen as individuals and/or groups move across boundaries that traditionally demarcated the different teacher education spaces. Examples of mingling and clashing are evident across many of the chapters here, as authors describe the efforts of teacher educators and others to negotiate their way to deeper learning in these hybrid spaces and to new emerging identities. As we have identified previously (Williams et al., 2017), 'the process of mingling (and making sense of that mingling) and clashing (and seeking to resolve these clashes) is a crucial part of … professional learning and development' (p. 8). We believe an appreciation of the positive outcomes of boundary crossing is crucial in any attempt to re-imagine professional experience in ITE.

ii. *Relational work*

Being a teacher educator in a university environment involves a diverse range of work. We must undertake research, administration/service, and for most teacher educators, teach pre-service teachers. Much of this teaching takes place in university classrooms and lecture theatres, but for many, teaching involves reaching out beyond the university walls to engage with the teaching profession, schools and other educational providers, parents and communities, all with the aim of educating pre-service teachers about what it means to *be* a teacher, and not just how to *do* teaching. The

difference between *doing* and *being* is one of the more important themes emerging from these chapters. While professional experience can be seen in terms of its organization, artefacts, practices, programs and graduate outcomes, the chapters in this collection highlight just how important relationships are in the process of learning to *become* a teacher. The relationships include, but are not restricted to, the following: relationships between pre-service teachers and teacher educators; relationships between pre-service teachers and professional staff; between school-based mentors and university-based teacher educators; between teacher educators and their university colleagues; and between the university and schools and other community partners.

Kitchen (2005a, b) described 'relational teacher education' as 'a reciprocal approach to enabling teacher growth that builds from the realisation that we know in relationship to others' (2005a, p. 17). Further, he believed that his own relationships with pre-service teachers helped him to understand who he was as a teacher educator. He stressed the importance of relational work in teacher educators understanding and improving their own practice; understanding the landscape of teacher education; displaying respect and empathy to all involved in teacher education; helping pre-service teachers face and manage their own challenges; and, critically, being receptive to 'growing in relationship' (Kitchen, 2005a, p. 18). All the chapters in this collection have elements of this relational work in them, and in their various ways underscore the importance of relationships in the work of professional experience. Mentoring, partnerships, collaboration and collegiality, and community involvement—all of these facets of professional experience are built on notions of respectful relationships, trust and some degree of informed risk-taking. As in any relationship, there is no guarantee of success, and participants need to trust themselves and each other when facing the inherent challenges that relational work involves. Each narrative in this book explores the challenges in, and the learning arising from, professional experience relationships. They take the notion of relational work in professional experience beyond the practicum and the constraints that this sometimes involves, to a deeper understanding of the professional and pedagogical relationships that underpin the learning of all involved. When the relational dimensions of professional experience are fully understood and appreciated, arrangements are more likely to be created or organised so as to optimise reciprocal learning experiences that can only flourish where respectful relationships exist—which is, after all, what teaching is all about.

iii.   *Identity work*

It is widely recognised in the literature that initial teacher education is a journey of 'becoming' during which the pre-service teacher's beliefs and identity are radically transformed. The journey begins—as Feiman-Nemser (2001) and Britzman (2003) observe—well before a pre-service teacher enrols in a teaching degree: all experiences in school and other education spaces leading up to a teacher education degree have contributed to the pre-service teacher's emerging sense of him/herself as a potential educator. All being well, this identity continues to emerge and become throughout a teacher education course and indeed through a teacher's career or a teacher educator's career. But in the period when students are enrolled in an initial

teacher education course, and especially when they are connected with some element of professional experience (in a school, university, community or industry setting), that transformation can be particularly intense.

At one level, the transformation involves a dynamic shuttling between the pre-service teacher's identity as a student studying in a university and his/her identity as a teacher learner and classroom practitioner, with professional and ethical responsibilities for the young and impressionable school-aged students in his/her care. At another level the pre-service teacher is working out how to operate in different roles in different educational spaces, sectors, institutions and communities, each with its own distinct histories, cultures, practices and discourses, and yet with some things in common. He/she is moving back and across multiple boundaries that provisionally demarcate these spaces, sectors, institutions and communities, working out *who to be* and *how to be* in them. In time, he/she must find a way to bring together sometimes disparate selves: a home self and a university self; a university self and a school self; a self as teacher of one discipline (or even one class) and a self as teacher of another discipline (or class); a self who can work with one professional mentor and with another very different mentor; and a self that can *be* differently in different educational settings. The dynamic movement between these selves—what many authors in this collection refer to as 'identity work'—can reinforce or disrupt or destabilise a sense of one's identity. This collection argues that such movement is a crucial dimension to one's learning and development in the professional experience dimensions of a teacher education course.

The chapters that follow illustrate how university-based academics and professional staff, and school-, community- and industry-based mentors, all of whom seek to support and enable pre-service teachers in their professional experience and learning, are obliged to know and appreciate the complexity and nuances of pre-service teachers' identity work. Importantly, the book argues that these teacher educators and education professionals are themselves engaged in complex identity work, shuttling between, combining and creating different identities, moving across boundaries, negotiating contrasting cultures, spaces and communities. It is challenging, often under-appreciated work, which requires particular expertise, as the stories in this collection testify.

Gee (2000) offers a helpful hermeneutic to make sense of this identity work. He argues that identity is both an individual and a social construct; that it is created and negotiated, rather than being discovered or freely chosen; and it is always provisional, in the process of becoming. Identity, for Gee, is mediated with respect to the following influences or perspectives: (i) one's biology/genes; (ii) the institutions in which one has worked; (iii) the discourse communities within which one has operated; and (iv) the practices one has engaged in with particular 'affinity' groups (Gee, 2000). The stories told by authors in this collection, whether they explicitly invoke Gee or the discourse of identity work, nevertheless illustrate how these influences play out in their identity work. This identity work has never been more important than now, when standards-based reforms increasingly seek to determine not just what teachers should *do* but how they should *be*. More than 10 years ago, Bauman (2004) described the world of liquid modernity, where some individuals find their identity

work can be acutely restricted, to the point where they feel 'burdened with identities enforced and imposed [on them] by others' (2004, p. 38). Many authors in the past decade have alerted us to the danger of this in educational spaces. This book strongly articulates authors' concerns with the trend in standards-based reforms to impose standardised identities on teachers and teacher educators. However, the following chapters are distinctive in their commitment also to exploring the ways in which teacher educators, pre-service teachers, school-based mentors and university-based professional staff are positively responding to this trend.

Outline of the Book

Our division of the other 11 chapters of this collection into three parts is prompted by our firm belief in the salience of the above three themes in any proposed re-imagining of initial teacher education. However, we want to make clear that the themes should be read as richly interconnected, not as clearly delineated categories. We have grouped each chapter in one of the three parts depending on which theme it spoke to most directly, but we acknowledge that all chapters demonstrate some connections with all three themes.

Part 1. *Professional experience as boundary work*

Part 1 opens with an investigation into the professional learning of a team of teacher educators, in an innovative partnership program, called the 'Monash Casey Teaching Academy of Professional Practice' (TAPP). In 'Stories from the third space: Teacher educators' professional learning in a school/university partnership', Judy Williams, Simone White, Rachel Forgasz and Helen Grimmett use narrative cases and third space theory to analyse moments that triggered deep reflection and learning about what it is to be a teacher educator involved in a collaborative university-school partnership.

Reporting on a different form of partnership, this time with industry, Jane Kirkby, Kelly Carabott and Deborah Corrigan tell the story of how pre-service teachers and their teacher educator mentors collaborated in a partnership with a professional football club. Their chapter, 'Beyond classroom walls: How industry partnerships can strengthen pre-service literacy teachers' identities', investigates how the 'Read like a Demon' program provided the pre-service teacher volunteers with experiences that strengthened their understanding and practices as teachers of literacy.

Sarah Hopkins and Penny Round's chapter, 'Building stronger teacher-education programs to prepare inclusive teachers', describes an innovative professional experience program with a very different industry partner. The authors present three narrative-based studies of pre-service teachers, who were differentiating their teaching of literacy to young adults with intellectual disabilities at Wallara (a disability service provider), under the mentorship of the teacher educator authors.

The last chapter in Part 1 sees Jennifer Rennie reporting on a newly designed Indigenous professional experience placement in the Northern Territory of Australia.

She draws on the autobiographical writing of four pre-service teachers, to show the importance of building positive respectful relationships at every level between Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders in the placement. 'Going remote: Narratives of learning on an Indigenous professional experience placement' additionally shows how this Indigenous placement was designed and experienced as part of the larger reconciliation project in Australia.

Part 2. *Professional experience as relational work*

This section of the book consists of three chapters. It opens with 'Mentoring practices and relationships during the EAL practicum in Australia: Contrasting narratives', which explores the stories of pre-service teachers of English as an Alternative Language who experienced their practicums in very different ways. Teacher educators Minh Nguyen and Graham Parr highlight the complexity of the intellectual and relational work enacted by two mentors with their allocated pre-service teachers. And they argue for the importance of mentors valuing the experiences and knowledge that pre-service teachers bring to their professional experience.

Next, John Pardy and Kristin Reimer report on an innovative initial teacher education program in which retired teachers mentored pre-service teachers, not only about teaching as a practice, but also as a career and a profession. 'Generations of learning: A professional learning experience' shows how these intergenerational mentoring conversations and interactions can be mutually beneficial learning for mentor and pre-service teachers now and into the future.

Finally, in 'What is finger knitting? Chinese pre-service teachers' initial professional experience in Australian Early Childhood Education,' Haoran Zhang, Anne Keary and Julie Faulkner explore professional experience from the perspective of an international pre-service teacher. In this narrative-based chapter, Sue, a student from China studying early childhood education, comes to appreciate the complexity of experiencing the classroom as a teacher for the first time in an entirely unfamiliar social and educational context.

Part 3. *Professional experience as identity work*

The third part of the collection begins with 'Bringing the profession into university classrooms: Narratives of learning from co-teaching primary mathematics', co-authored by Sharon Livy, Johnson Alagappan, Tracey Muir and Ann Downton. Drawing on a series of written and oral narratives, and the perspectives of two critical friends, the authors explore the co-teaching experiences of a Monash-based teacher educator and a school-based primary teacher. They unpack the benefits and challenges of bringing practitioners from school classrooms into university classrooms to co-teach in a pre-service program.

A companion to Livy et al.'s work is Graham Parr, Fleur Diamond and Scott Bulfin's chapter, 'Co-teaching as praxis in English initial teacher education'. In this chapter, the authors use extended autobiographical narratives to explore their innovative approach to school-university partnerships. Their team-based approach promotes an alternative conception of professional experience, one that challenges the

conventional positioning of a secondary school teacher in a co-teaching program. One innovative feature of the program was its research agenda, where the team inquired into the influence of standards-based education reforms on their co-teaching.

In 'Back to the future: A journey of becoming a Professional Practice Consultant,' Ondine Bradbury reflects on her first year in the newly created role of Professional Practice Consultant for initial teacher education placements. Using miniature poems she wrote during that year, Ondine traces back to her earlier experiences as a pre-service teacher and then a mentor of pre-service teachers, to show the complex dimensions of her work in this new role and their shaping effects on her identity as a professional staff member and educator.

Rounding off the collection, Ange Fitzgerald's autobiographical narrative, '(Re)navigating the classroom as a teacher educator', traces the growth in her professional identity as she transitioned from a school teacher to become a teacher educator, and then returned to the primary school classroom as a facilitator in a pre-service teaching program. Ange's transition reveals her challenges in teaching a science education unit in a school rather than on-campus in a university. She goes on to explain how this experience helped her to see her identity as a science teacher educator in new ways.

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Part I
Professional Experience as Boundary Work

Chapter 2
Stories from the Third Space: Teacher Educators' Professional Learning in a School/University Partnership

Judy Williams, Simone White, Rachel Forgasz and Helen Grimmett

Abstract In this chapter, the authors, as teacher educators, present a narrative account of the professional learning they gained from their involvement in a school-university partnership, which focused on the provision of the professional experience component of an undergraduate initial teacher education (ITE) course. The authors outline the context and aims of this 'third space' partnership, then recall significant events/moments that triggered deep reflection and learning about what it is to be a teacher educator involved in collaborative partnerships with schools to provide innovative professional experiences for pre-service teachers. They found that the collaborative nature of the partnership helped them to reassess the purposes of professional experience in ITE, and their role in its provision. The collaboration was generative in terms of the structure and organisation of the practicum, the pedagogical strategies developed, and the professional relationships that were established. The authors argue that, despite the challenges, school-university partnerships are essential to the successful implementation of productive and sustained professional experience for pre-service teachers.

> I have heard people talk about 'partnerships' as if they are easy. 'Just build partnerships', they say, as if it is like putting two pieces of a simple puzzle together. In my experience they are anything but, and I continue to wonder and learn about the fragile, powerful, messy and beautiful existence of partnerships. (Simone)

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Introduction

In this chapter, we present first-hand narrative accounts of the professional learning experiences of four teacher educators who participated in a school/university partnership—the Monash Casey Teaching Academy of Professional Practice (TAPP). In these narratives, we explore our learning as individual teacher educators in response to critical moments or events that occurred during our 2-year involvement in the TAPP, and the implications of our stories for teacher education and professional experience more broadly. The TAPP project was located within a wider policy agenda, in which both Federal and state governments in Australia required more formal and sustained partnerships between university faculties of education and schools to address the perceived divide between 'theory' and 'practice'. The Australian Government TEMAG report (2014), *Action now: Classroom ready teachers*, stated that

> Higher education providers and the teaching profession must together embrace the opportunity to fully participate in a reformed, integrated system of initial teacher education…Providers, school systems and schools are not effectively working together in the development of new teachers. This is particularly evident in the professional experience component of initial teacher education, which is critical for the translation of theory into practice. (pp. viii–ix)

In addition, the Victorian Government has been keen to encourage stronger partnerships between universities and schools in the provision of professional experience, and to widen stakeholder involvement in teacher preparation. For example, in line with national standards developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), and as part of the accreditation of initial teacher education courses in Victoria, universities are now required to develop courses that incorporate 'the perspectives of stakeholders such as employers, professional teacher bodies, practising teachers, educational researchers and relevant cultural and community experts' and 'include staff who have ongoing or recent school-based experience and early childhood experience where relevant' (AITSL, 2015, p. 11). The TAPP project (see Forgasz, 2016; Grimmett, Forgasz, Williams, & White, 2018) was a response to this appeal for greater cooperation between schools and universities in relation to teacher education. It involved nine schools (three secondary and six primary) working with Monash university to improve the preparation of pre-service teachers through a developmental learning model (see White, Forgasz, Grimmett, & Williams, 2017a, http://www.partnershipprojects.info/).

While the policy imperative was an incentive for the collaborative development of the pedagogical models created within the TAPP, the research literature also strongly suggests that such partnerships are valuable in their own right for the professional learning of all participants—pre-service teachers, teacher educators and school-based mentors alike. While policy attention is often paid to the learning of the pre-service teachers and the changing role of mentors in school-university partnerships, few studies highlight the professional learning of university-based teacher educators as they navigate the 'third space' (Zeichner, 2010) between the school and university. It is to this focus that we therefore turn our gaze and interrogate a series of critical

incidents that we have each framed and analysed as narratives of professional learning. The stories told here provide personal accounts of key markers of change in our professional learning as we worked within the TAPP project. In sharing our stories, we draw insights into ways in which teacher educators learn, and how they might work more inclusively within the partnership policy context.

Understanding the Partnership Policy Context: What Role for Teacher Educators?

School-university partnerships are not new in the Australian and international literature, but they can differ in the approaches taken, ranging from 'hub' schools as seen in Scotland (Donaldson, 2011, p. 8) to residencies and clinical schools in the United States (NCATE, 2010). All are a response to the perennial questions about how to best prepare teachers and the place of experience in their learning (White & Forgasz, 2017). School-university partnerships, one might argue, have always existed in some way or another, due to the very nature of learning to teach across multiple sites. What is new in the Australian policy context is the mandating of partnerships in initial teacher education (ITE) for accreditation purposes (AITSL, 2015). This move follows the English model whereby government legislation from 1992 onwards made it mandatory for ITE providers to offer pre-service courses with schools, thus making partnership a 'core principle of provision' (Furlong, Campbell, Howson, Lewis, & McNamara, 2006, p. 33).

Prior to this imperative, the policy landscape in Australia had been more about promoting and encouraging partnerships, with various levels of investment and involvement from schools and universities (White, Tindall-Ford, Heck, & Ledger, 2017b). The shift from incentivising to mandating partnerships by policy makers has placed a greater focus and responsibility on universities to document their partnerships in order to provide evidence. Questions are now being asked as to what constitutes evidence of such a partnership. For example, is a formal written agreement sufficient, or is evidence of a long-term sustainable relationship required? Other questions focus on the various stakeholders involved, for example, the level of responsibility and accountability required by those involved in the partnership. Other questions asked include: 'What is the role of the supervisor or mentor teachers who work with pre-service teachers in the school?' and, 'What role might the university-based teacher educators play in the development and maintenance of the partnership?'.

The TEMAG review specifically named classroom teachers as key stakeholders in the partnership reform agenda, stating

> To ensure new teachers are entering classrooms with sufficient practical skills, the Advisory Group recommends ensuring experiences of appropriate timing, length and frequency are available to all teacher education students. Placements must be supported by highly-skilled supervising teachers who are able to demonstrate and assess what is needed to be an effective teacher. The Advisory Group strongly states that better partnerships between universities and schools are needed to deliver high quality practical experience. (TEMAG, 2014, p. 7)

For classroom teachers, this policy comes at a time of increasing testing and account-ability measures, which has resulted in many teachers being reluctant to take on the growing supervisory and assessment requirements as part of accreditation processes. University-based teacher educators, on the other hand, are not named specifically in any partnership policy documentation and are notably absent from any formal role in partnerships. For the partnership to exist, however, university-based teacher edu-cators must be involved and so their role is seemingly implied in the documentation as having a responsibility to develop and foster the partnership, but with little to no direction in how this might be achieved. In an ever-increasing accountability and evidence-based culture, teacher educators need greater understanding of the policy context, and they need to participate in the partnership as genuine 'partners'. We use the opportunity provided by this chapter to explore the TAPP project as a partnership model that fostered significant professional learning of teacher educators involved.

Stories from the Third Space: Teacher Educators in Partnership

In response to the policy context outlined above, the Monash Casey TAPP was funded by the Victorian Department of Education and established in 2015, initially for a 2-year period. The project used innovative models and pedagogical strategies for placement of pre-service teachers in TAPP schools, support from school-based and university-based mentors, and a research agenda around the professional learning of all participants. Innovations included trialing alternative formats for placing pre-service teachers with mentor teachers (i.e. in a co-teaching triad model, where two pre-service teachers and a mentor teacher co-plan, co-teach and co-evaluate the learning program of a classroom together; or in a community/cohort model, where a cohort of pre-service teachers are allocated to a cohort of mentor teachers, creating a community where mentors shared responsibility for the learning of the whole group), and explicitly introducing and developing a shared language of teacher education pedagogical strategies with the mentor teachers (for details, see White et al., 2017a).

The narratives in this chapter focus particularly on critical moments that stemmed from the following sequence of events over the course of the project. To initiate the project, key personnel from each school and Monash came together for a two-day retreat to share our various visions of what might be achieved in reimagining our approach to professional experience. Monash teacher educators also introduced aspects of research on teacher education, including key theoretical and pedagog-ical ideas such as the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), making the tacit explicit (Loughran, 2002), developing unified concepts of teaching/learning (Grimmett, 2014) and co-teaching/co-generative dialogue (Roth, 2002), that we hoped might inform the development of these new approaches. Simultaneously, a logistical problem arising in the faculty's professional experience office provided an urgent impetus for developing an approach that could place a large number of

first year students in observation-focussed placements that would still be meaningful and educationally sound for their development as pre-service teachers. A subsequent half day seminar held at the university provided further presentations about the community/cohort model (Forgasz, 2016) and co-generative dialogue (Roth, Tobin, & Zimmermann, 2002), which we felt would be useful strategies to help new pre-service teachers understand the complexity of the teachers' practice that they were observing. This seminar was then followed up by another half-day professional development and planning session for groups of mentor teachers from each school who were to be involved in this new approach. At this session, participants experienced simulation co-generative discussions (co-gens) based around the use of a variety of sample observation schedules. They then had an opportunity to plan and share ideas of how they might utilise, modify or create their own observation schedules and enact the community/cohort model and co-gens in their own school contexts.

When the placement was underway, the university-based research team visited several of the schools to talk to students and mentors about their experiences, and to participate in co-gens led by the school-based mentors. Another retreat was held at the beginning of the second year of the project to reflect on and share progress so far and to plan the next steps. As can be seen in the narratives presented below, and in much of the feedback gained from mentor teachers, the retreats were significant turning points in the professional relationships and learning of all participants. They presented a unique opportunity for university-based and school-based educators to spend a sustained and uninterrupted time together, in both formal workshops sessions and informal conversations over meals, discussing what pre-service teacher learning is, and could be, and how our respective knowledges and experiences could work to together to achieve this. In many ways the retreats were an example of a 'third space' of professional practice, and now we explore further the theoretical framing as a backdrop to the narratives.

Theoretical Framing: Working in a Third Space of Professional Practice

Third space theories offer appropriate theoretical frameworks for teacher educators in focusing attention on the in-between spaces where schools and universities connect in the course of Professional Experience partnership work. One particularly significant third space work in initial teacher education scholarship is that of Zeichner (2010). In it, he popularised the application of third space theory to argue for a particular kind of approach to initial teacher education in which teachers in schools and teacher educators in universities cross pedagogical and institutional boundaries in order to work together to improve the education of pre-service teachers. He argued that

> third spaces involve a rejection of binaries such as practitioner and academic knowledge and theory and practice and involve the integration of what are often seen as competing discourses in new ways—an either/or perspective is transformed into a both/also point of view. (p. 92)

Zeichner (2010) cited the work of different third space theorists in developing his understanding of third space: Bhabha (1990, 1994), Mitchell (1995), Soja (1996), and Gutiérrez in collaboration with various co-authors (Gutiérrez, 2008; Gutiérrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995). In their critical review of the application of third space theories to professional experience scholarship, Forgasz, Heck, Williams, Ambrosetti and Willis (2017) observed that while all three third space theories have in common "the political act of disrupting both unified and binary ways of seeing through the introduction of a 'third' possibility," they are otherwise subtly yet significantly different in terms of their "philosophical assumptions, underpinnings and purposes" (p. 35). As explicated by Forgasz et al., Bhabha's postcolonial third space of hybridity theorises identity, describing the place in which one resides when one identifies wholly with neither one identity nor another, instead, dwelling uncomfortably in the tension in-between. Meanwhile, Gutiérrez's third space refers to an aspect of classroom dynamics in which improvised, dialogical exchanges between teacher and learners enable the sharing of knowledge and power, thereby challenging dominant, official discourses which assume a range of hierarchical distinctions. Finally, Soja's Thirdspace refers to the new possibilities that open up when any pair of apparent binaries is disrupted by the introduction of another alternative through the act of *thirding-as-othering*. In this chapter, we draw inspiration specifically from Soja's (1996) Thirdspace, applying it as the theoretical frame for understanding and unpacking our professional practice in the TAPP project.

As explained by Soja (1996), the act of thirding-as-othering draws significantly on the philosophies of Lefebrve, who objected to 'the deadening of dialectial reasoning in conceptual dualisms, in the construction of compelling binary oppositions that are categorically closed to new, unanticipated possibilities' (pp. 30–31). For Lefebreve, explains Soja (1996), '[t]here is always the Other, a third term that disrupts, disorders, and begins to reconstitute the conventional binary opposition into an-Other that comprehends but is more than the sum of two parts' (p. 30). Teacher education is perennially plagued by precisely these kinds of supposed binaries—for example: theory versus practice, university versus school, teaching versus learning about teaching, teacher versus teacher educator, and mentoring versus assessing—-during the professional experience itself. Perhaps this is why thirding-as-othering, with its promise of another alternative, was so conceptually appealing to us.

From this thirding-as-othering emerges Soja's (1996) Thirdspace which he describes as having the following defining qualities:

> a knowable and unknowable, real and imagined lifeworld of experiences, emotions, events, and political choices that is existentially shaped by the generative and problematic interplay between centres and peripheries, the abstract and concrete, the impassioned spaces of the conceptual and the lived, marked out materially and metaphorically in *spatial praxis*, the transformation of (spatial) knowledge into (spatial) action in a field of unevenly developed (spatial) power. (p. 31)

Many of these defining qualities of Soja's Thirdspace also describe significant characteristics of the kind of partnership we were striving to achieve in the TAPP project. We were particularly interested in examining, rebalancing and thirding-as-othering the relationships between centre and periphery, and between abstract/conceptual/theory

and concrete/lived/practice. As a postmodern geographer, Soja's interest in the *spatiality* of human life was particularly helpful to us in conceptualising partnership work in general, and our TAPP collaboration in particular. Soja's (1996) description of 'the impassioned spaces of the conceptual and the lived, marked out materially and metaphorically in *spatial praxis*' (p. 31) is especially pertinent to professional experience partnership work since the binaries so commonly articulated in relation to such partnerships are housed—both materially and metaphorically—in either the domain of the university or the school. In the TAPP project, we were certainly curious to build another *space* to house our collaboration.

We recognise one such third space in the work of Reynolds, Ferguson-Patrick and McCormack (2013), who built on Bourdieu's spatial metaphor of 'fields' of cultural production to describe the challenges of working in the space between schools and universities. Reynolds et al. evocatively described the teachers and teacher educators who collaborate in school-university partnerships as 'dancing in the ditches', having to 'get out of their comfortable meadows or fields…and interact in a number of different areas that needed some space, not just a simple climbing of walls or crossing a border' (p. 310). Whereas Bourdieu describes separate fields of production which are demarcated by clear borders, the ditches described by Reynolds et al. open up another possibility. For us, these 'ditches' offer one example of the third space that opens up in the thirding-as-othering of the binary of school/university in powerful partnership work. Reynolds et al. (2013) explored the implications for teacher educators' practice and professional identities when working with schools to promote teacher professional learning, and concluded that 'the teacher educators and teachers forged new pathways of working together. Boundaries of responsibility were continually tested. It was not a very comfortable space for all involved' (p. 317). The professional identities of the teacher educators were continually negotiated and re-assessed in light of their work in schools with teachers, a situation that we also encountered during our time working within the Monash Casey TAPP, as our narratives go on to reflect.

Narrative Inquiry: Outlining the Research Design

To understand the TAPP third space more deeply, stories have been constructed by the four of us as teacher educators. These narratives offer a way of making explicit our individual and collective professional learning. As noted by Murray and Male (2005), teacher educators need to develop a process of making the personal assumptions, beliefs and practices, which make the individual a successful practitioner in schools, explicit and open to analysis. Narrative inquiry is one way to do this. It offered a means to explore the written and/or oral stories of the lived experience of participants (ourselves) in a particular cultural or social context, and 'are a way in which individuals make sense of themselves and the world' (Wells, 2011, p. 4).

In this chapter, we present a series of narrative accounts of our experiences of working collaboratively with colleagues in schools to create and sustain a third-space of professional practice in relation to the provision of professional experience for Monash pre-service teachers. We maintain that the TAPP was a third space of professional practice, in which we and the teachers in schools worked collaboratively to develop a program of professional experience for one particular cohort of pre-service teachers. To develop the narratives, we met to discuss key moments and critical issues in our participation in the TAPP project, and what these meant for our professional learning as teacher educators. After this discussion, we each constructed a narrative account of one particular 'critical moment' or event that triggered deep reflection on the TAPP partnership, and on our professional learning emerging from that experience. After each narrative was drafted, we shared them orally, provided feedback to each other, and began discussing common ideas or themes that emerged across the four narratives. We then redrafted and reshaped our narratives to clearly explicate our experiences, our personal professional learning, and the issues raised for professional experience and school-university partnerships more broadly. While there were shared understandings across the four narratives, it was also evident that each of us had experienced working in this third space in unique and very personal ways. Each of the narratives presented in this chapter provides a 'snapshot' of learning, and illustrates the challenges, complexities and opportunities for teacher educator learning in a third space of professional practice.

Our Narratives of Learning

Simone—Welcoming All Perspectives to the Partnership Picture

> We need to place 155 1st year, double degree pre-service teachers now and we want you to do this as part of the new TAPP project!

Oh, I had forgotten. In my excitement of knowing I would be leading the TAPP partnership project, and all the ideas I had in my mind about what we could do from past lessons learnt, here was another perspective I had not fully embraced. So come on in 'placement crisis.' You too are welcome at the diverse table that makes up the partnership policy imperative. I have heard people talk about 'partnerships' as if they are easy. 'Just build partnerships', they say, as if it is like putting two pieces of a simple puzzle together. In my experience they are anything but, and I continue to wonder and learn about the fragile, powerful, messy and beautiful existence of partnerships.

In thinking differently about partnerships I have been drawn to the work of British artist, David Hockney who, to better understand what he wanted to portray, took multiple photographs from very different angles. For example, if he was seeking to paint a person sitting on a chair, then the chair, the floor, the ceiling and the various parts

of the person, all from close and far perspectives, were vital to really capturing the essence of the image. He found that by arranging these images on the wall together—often in overlapping and messy ways—then the multiple frames together told a richer picture. Thus the 'joined up technique' was born. Like Hockney, I saw the building and sustaining of partnerships as a similarly complex puzzle of interconnected and sometimes overlapping perspectives, with new parts and pieces continually revealing themselves, so that at each time, you are compelled to *re*frame, *re*view and *re*consider the whole picture to better understand the parts. There are so many voices and parts to study, from human and, indeed, non-human perspectives. From my previous partnership learning, I already understood that it is just as important to consider the practicum timetable as 'an image', as it is to listen to the student, the principal, the pre-service teacher or the Dean. The realisation that we would have to solve a placement crisis, and find a way to place an extremely complex cohort of first year pre-service teachers, was, in some ways, just another perspective from which to view the unique and rich tapestry of the TAPP project. At the same time, I admit to feeling some dismay at the challenge ahead. We had not even had the chance to imagine what kind of utopian models we might create when the university placement officer gave us the mandate to use the TAPP to solve the 1st year crisis.

Like Zeichner and other teacher education researchers, I seek to work in the transformative spaces between school, universities and communities. These spaces are far more uncertain, risky and challenging as they shift power, hierarchy and the knowledge base away from universities to shared and contested spaces between. At the partnership table, there sit a number of voices—in many ways all equal representatives, but sometimes certain voices are louder. Like the voice of the placement officers desperate to place, or the voice of the school principal desperate to recruit new graduates, or the voice of the pre-service teacher who needs to attend their cross-Faculty classes. Other voices come from 'objects' like the university timetable or the school daily routine. Each voice has its story and all of these views need to be respected and understood as important by the many others at the table. I felt that the best way to tackle the placement crisis was to take all voices and perspectives seriously by inviting all stakeholders to come together for a two-day retreat. By bringing the various perspectives to the table and welcoming them, letting them each explain their woes, and then asking the whole group to creatively solve the problems, we could together create something that could work. For many stakeholders, the two-day retreat was the first chance for multiple perspectives to be shared and heard. What was powerful was that people listened and learned from each other. Yes, there were stories shared of blame but it appeared the more stories we shared, the more all stakeholders were able to understand the complexity and multiplicity of the placement picture from multiple perspectives.

Out of our placement crisis emerged an innovation that worked largely because it was developed out of an inclusive approach that was respectful of the many voices of the people who would ultimately enact it. As a leader, I learned that finding and funding the time and space to come together to look at teacher education from many perspectives is central to powerful partnership work. Then, once people have had the chance to understand the collective issues, stepping back and allowing the

opportunity for creativity and innovation to flourish becomes the next step. At the time of writing this narrative, I am convinced that we need new ways and approaches that bring the multiple stakeholders together and share the many perspectives and build a 'joined up' approach that positions us to be able to be responsive and innovative at the partnership table. In this way, partnerships are 'joined up work'.

Judy—Teachers and Teacher Educators Working Together: Inter-professional Dialogue and Understanding

I was attending the two-day TAPP retreat in the hills outside Melbourne. The aim of this retreat was to establish a shared vision of professional experience, to discuss what the TAPP project would involve, and to learn about each other's school and university contexts. My presentation on that first afternoon focused on the potential for our collaborative work to contribute to the development of the mentor teachers' professional identity. I introduced some of my research, especially around the idea of working in a third space of professional practice, but as I was presenting, I became increasingly aware of the potential gulf between us. Although the teachers were keen to work with us, I was concerned that some of them might be a little sceptical and uncertain about working with people from academia, a concern that was later borne out in our research when one of the mentor teachers said that she was there to help 'fix' teacher education, and to show those academics what the real world of teaching was all about. For the teacher educators, it was a chance to share what we do in the academy but also to let the teachers know that we understood and respected their work; after all, the four of us were school teachers in a past life. The teachers, however, had very little idea about what we did in the university as teacher educators—what we taught in our courses, how we organised professional experience, and how we conceptualised pre-service teacher learning and growth. This information was all a part of the morning's presentations and discussion.

As I was presenting my ideas about third spaces of professional practice, I was suddenly struck by the thought—how do these mentor teachers perceive me? Do they believe that a shared vision is really possible? Did this talk about shifting professional identities, new perspectives on learning to teach, negotiating relationships, communities of practice and the like, really resonate with them, or were they more concerned with how their students back at school were coping without them? As it turned out, that retreat was a game-changer in regard to our partnership over the next two years, as many of the mentor teachers told us how pivotal it was in giving them a glimpse into university-based teacher education, and theoretical ideas that underpin our vision of pre-service teacher learning. They had little knowledge of this, apart from their own experiences at university, because no one had taken the time to explain it to them. Our TAPP partnership was critical in creating a shared space of professional learning and understanding, and the opportunity to forge positive professional relationships between us and the teachers, and among the teachers

themselves. The retreat, and the subsequent TAPP activities strengthened for me how important interpersonal and inter-professional dialogue, relationships and collaboration are in developing and sustaining school-university professional experience partnerships.

On a personal level, working within the TAPP helped me to create and maintain a link to the realities of school life that I had begun to feel was slipping away in my academic work. Working with schools and teachers had always given meaning to my work as a teacher educator, however, this link had begun to diminish in recent years as my teaching focus and administrative work had begun to change. *Who am I as a teacher educator if I don't work with teachers, pre-service teachers and children in schools?* My involvement in the TAPP project helped to reignite my connection to the place where I had spent the first 25 years of my teaching career—schools. It was not only important for me personally, but it highlighted the importance of these connections for the other teacher educators and for the teachers and pre-service teachers in schools. It became possible to envision professional experience as a partnership of equals—educators in different teaching contexts, with different experiences and perspectives, but working together to share knowledge, learning, challenges and opportunities. This all sounds wonderful, but in reality, significant obstacles remain. Once open and respectful dialogue is established, the challenge is then to sustain this partnership into the future, for the benefit of all. TAPP was a funded project for a limited period of time. How does a school-university partnership of such rich and diverse expertise begin and flourish in times of financial constraints and imperatives such as '*just get the students placed!*'.

Rachel—Pulling Back the Curtain on Learning About Teaching

It was the day of our two-day retreat. Helen and I were leading a session called 'teachers' work and the work of mentoring.' My aim for the session was to introduce to our teacher colleagues some of the fundamental tenets of developing and enacting teacher professional knowledge that drive our work at the university. I invited them to consider our challenge in teacher education: that most people come to their teaching degree thinking that they already know how to teach, that most people's conceptions of teacher knowledge and action are incredibly simplistic and do not take account of all the invisible moment-to-moment judgements and decisions that teachers make in any moment. I used the metaphor of the duck, gliding apparently effortlessly over the water until you get a look at their legs kicking frantically beneath the surface. I likened teaching to ballet dancing, which requires extraordinary skill and technique to execute every single manoeuvre. With ballet, the more expert the performance, the less visible the technique, and the more effortless the performance appears. Teaching is much the same, I proposed. Behind just about every classroom action, there is an extraordinary amount of skill, technique, planning, split-second decision-making,

and moment-to-moment analysis that makes up the invisible work of really good teaching. I invited them to imagine learning to dance ballet just by watching and copying a professional in action. I suggested that learning to teach just by observing and imitating a proficient mentor wouldn't get you very far either; that *doing* a performance of 'teacher' isn't the same as *being* a teacher.

I used a scene from the Wizard of Oz to think about mentoring work. That classic scene when Dorothy finally gets her audience with the wizard who appears as this enormous hologram over billowing smoke and his voice booms over crashing drums, '*I AM OZ, THE GREAT AND POWERFUL.*' This is one way that mentors think about their work with pre-service teachers, I explained, and that the mentor teacher is set up, to some degree, as that wizard, while the pre-service teacher is expected to learn by mimicking their magic. Later in that scene, Toto, the little dog, runs off and pulls back this curtain to reveal the actual wizard. He's a doddering old man, fussing with a bunch of controls and you see him dithering around and stuttering into the dangling microphone, '*Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain.*' I put it to our colleagues that an essential part of the mentoring process is to 'do a Toto' and 'pull back the curtain' to reveal all of the complex planning, thinking, decision-making, and weighing of options that goes into every moment of teaching. That was a bit of a watershed moment. I know it was, because 'pulling back the curtain' became the shared language that our school-based colleagues used thereafter to talk about the process of making explicit their tacit knowledge of teaching. When we conducted research interviews with members of their extended teams, they were talking about pulling back the curtain too, about making visible the invisible work of teaching.

As I talked about the nature of teacher professional knowledge—its complexity, its invisible layers, and how readily it is misrecognised as simple and straightforward—I remember heads nodding, slowly at first and then more vigorously, people smiling knowingly at me and at each other. Here we all were: seeing and being seen in the fullness and richness and depth of our work as teachers. Up until that presentation, I think I hadn't fully understood what is meant by the tacit nature of teacher knowledge. Only then did I begin to see the degree to which some of my teacher colleagues had internalised the undervaluing of the complexity of teacher professional knowledge, and underestimated the skilfulness of their own professional practice. I sensed their surprise, too, that as a teacher educator I might understand anything about the realities of teachers' work, let alone that I might consider myself a teacher, or that I might so deeply value their expertise.

Helen—When Theory Comes to Life—'Am I Doing It Right?'

It is about 4.30 at the end of a busy school day and the group of pre-service teachers gather their items, take their coffee cups to the dishwasher and leave the staff room. The TAPP mentor, who just ran the co-generative dialogue session that I observed, thanks me for coming and asks, 'Was it all right? Is that what it is supposed to look like?' I assure her it was great, but in all truth, I realise I have no idea what it is

'supposed' to look like, and I'm pretty sure if you had asked me what I thought it would be like I probably would not have described something exactly like I had just seen. Were there things that could be improved? Sure. But were there things beyond expectation? Definitely. It starts me thinking about why she would even assume that there is a 'right way', but then I remember my own experience…

(*Some months earlier, at the mentor teacher PD and planning day*)

I've just taught 15 teachers a singing game. Despite some initial reluctance and nervousness from the teachers about singing in public, to my relief they actually joined in and the excitement of the game has relaxed the group and created laughter and easy chatter. Now I have to switch tacks and lead a co-gen discussion with the other half of the group who had been observing this short teaching segment. I'm the one who is nervous now. Partly, I am a little nervous that they will be critiquing my teaching ability, but mostly I feel nervous that I want to be providing a good model of what a co-gen discussion should look like. What questions should I ask? Will I be able to be responsive to their contributions? How can I encourage everyone to contribute? What if no one says anything? How can I push the conversation into deeper, meaningful reflection? What does a 'good' co-gen look like anyway? Can I do it right? With everyone waiting for me to start, I realise I have no choice other than just to give it a go and see what happens.

…

While I have always believed that theory is only useful when it is realised in practice, my learning from these 'critical moments' is that bringing theory to life is an uncertain and messy process. I now see that the value of theory is not that it provides ideas that must (or even can) be realised perfectly, but that it provides ideas which act as a starting point for 'having a go'. It is the principles of a theoretical idea that guide our attempts at our own practice, but what emerges in reality is not necessarily right or wrong, or even developing towards one preconceived idea of right. To hold theory as static ideas, that can be reproduced from place to place, diminishes its creative and generative value. What has been created in the TAPP project by introducing theoretical ideas is a shared understanding of what we are trying to achieve and a shared language for being able to discuss this. However, the eye-opening learning for me was that what people actually create when they start working with these ideas is often completely different in each context. Furthermore, it is not that any one of these realisations is closer to being 'right' than any other. People create what is right for them at that point of time, in that particular context, with the available resources and skills they have. Over time, their practice can continue to develop and improve, but each manifestation of the practice will not necessarily develop into one preconceived 'right' form.

I've learnt there is value in letting go of ideas about what is 'right', because what gets created when different people work with ideas in different ways can often be far beyond any one imagining of 'right'. Theory provides explanations that help build understanding of possible starting points, yet it is frequently held up as the 'ideal' or end-goal to be strived for. I have learnt that although it is human nature to worry about whether we are doing something right, things get far more interesting when we

decide just to give something a go and see what happens from there. The challenge in presenting theoretical ideas to others is in helping them to realise that I have no expectations of what is the right way to carry these out, just a trust that we can create something worthwhile.

What Did We Learn from Our Participation in the TAPP?

Reading across our four narratives, it is clear that through our involvement in the TAPP project, we each accessed valuable professional learning about partnership work and about our roles as teacher educators within it. Viewed through the lens of Soja's Thirdspace, however, our narratives offer much more than individualised accounts of teacher educator professional learning. Each of our narrative explorations highlights a different binary that is commonly experienced in professional experience partnerships and, through a kind of thirding-as-othering, each narrative offers another possibility for undertaking an aspect of partnership work and a glimpse of what might be achieved as a consequence.

Simone's narrative about the challenges of establishing and sustaining a school-university partnership highlights the familiar professional experience binary of pragmatic versus pedagogical imperatives. The logic of this binary sees various stakeholders positioned as driven by either the pragmatic need to place pre-service teachers at any cost, or by a pedagogical concern about the quality of the experience. In the case of the TAPP, this unhelpful binary was dissolved as Simone led the partnership stakeholders through a process of sharing and hearing one another's priorities and perspectives. This process might also be read as a collaborative act of thirding-as-othering. In her narrative, Simone wrote about the vital importance of considering institutional, logistical and personal stakeholder perspectives and imperatives. She used the image of Hockney's 'joined up' approach to describe what it might look like to surface and consider multiple perspectives of the complex picture that is a professional experience partnership. Simone's evocation of the multiple—and sometimes irreconcilable—perspectives that are revealed through this 'joined up' approach reflects Soja's (1996) description of Thirdspace as 'capable of being seen from every angle, each standing clear, but also a secret and conjectured object, filled with illusions and allusions, a space that is common to all of us yet never able to be completely seen and understood' (p. 56). Simone understood that each stakeholder had a unique set of priorities that was governed by the particular perspective from which they viewed the partnership. She also understood that inviting the stakeholders into a Thirdspace of 'joined up' perspectives would give the partnership its most promising hope of success.

Judy's narrative illustrated something of the effectiveness of Simone's joined-up Thirdspace in action from a participant perspective. Judy described how making time and space for respectful inter-professional dialogue and relationship-building enabled a shared vision and understanding of what professional experience should and can be, and how these underpinned the success of the TAPP school-university

partnership. Judy's narrative also frequently referenced the spatial binary of university versus school. She made various references to schools, where her school-based colleagues usually work, and the university, where she, likewise, undertakes her normal work. She described her diminishing familiarity with the daily realities of schools as sites of learning and, similarly, her colleagues' unfamiliarity with the ins and outs of university-based teacher education. These repeated allusions emphasised the either/or of these two mutually exclusive physical sites of pre-service teacher learning. Interestingly, the two-day retreat which is the setting for Judy's narrative is located neither at a university nor at a school. In this very real physical Thirdspace, an imagined Thirdspace opens up too, one in which university-based and school-based colleagues begin to relate to each other as professionals, with similar and different experiences and expertise, but nonetheless, as equal partners in the education of future teachers. In this sense, Judy's narrative draws our attention to the powerful real and imagined spaces (Soja, 1996) in which all partnership work transpires.

Rachel's narrative was set at the same two-day retreat as Judy's. Like Judy, Rachel told a similar story of changing relational dynamics between us as teacher educators and our teacher colleagues. Rachel's narrative spoke into the binary of teacher educator versus teacher, who, in many ways, are the respective embodied representations of that most notorious of binaries in teacher education: theoretical versus practical knowledge about teaching. Rachel described her efforts to share some of her teacher education pedagogies with her teacher colleagues and how, in the process, she articulated an appreciation of the complexities of teacher professional practice, which in turn created a sense of comradery and mutuality. In this sense, Rachel's narrative disrupted the binary of teacher educator versus teacher in an act of thirding-as-othering which revealed another alternative for each respective player: the simultaneous emergence of the teacher educator/teacher and the teacher/teacher educator. These 'and/also' (Zeichner, 2010) roles powerfully acknowledge that teacher educators are also always teachers, and, that in their mentoring and assessing of pre-service teachers during the professional experience, teachers are also teacher educators. This act of thirding-as-othering also attacks the core assumption of the teacher educator as theorist and the teacher as practitioner, which only serves to diminish the expertise of both. Dismissing the teacher educator as an out-of-touch theorist while simultaneously devaluing the teacher as a technician-practitioner divests each of their authority, leaving the determination of what constitutes teacher professional knowledge outside the profession itself. In this sense, rejecting the teacher educator versus teacher binary and identifying instead as teacher educator/teacher and teacher/teacher educator respectively may constitute an example of Soja's (1996) '*Thirdspace of political choice*' in which 'a radically new and different form of *citizenship* (*citoyennete*) can be defined and realized' (p. 35).

If Rachel's narrative tackled the theory versus practice binary in a roundabout way, then Helen's addressed it head on. Her professional learning about theory versus practice is particularly powerful because it pushes our thinking beyond familiar conceptions such as praxis and other ways of reframing the relationship of theory and practice as one of theory-in-practice and into a different conceptual space. It is clear from her narrative that Helen already understood the relevance of theory

to practice, and was, indeed, committed to the praxical application of theory in practice. Despite this, Helen's narrative revealed how these conceptions continue to position theory and practice as binaries. It further surfaced her core assumption that theory is commonly seen as a static set of ideas that one either gets right or wrong when put into practice. Interrogating and shifting this assumption may be read as an act of thirding-as-othering since it transformed Helen's understanding of both theory and practice, opening up a Thirdspace in which theories (ideas) for practice are tools for generating and refining new context-relevant versions of (ideas about) practice. Soja (1996) writes that '*[e]verything* comes together in Thirdspace: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history' (p. 57). The Thirdspace of theory practice opened up in Helen's narrative offers a powerful example of precisely this kind of 'all-inclusive simultaneity' (Soja, 1996, p. 57).

Conclusions

Our narratives highlight the importance of respectful, collegial relationships in developing professional experience programs, which were ever-present in the numerous occasions on which we met together as the TAPP team. The TAPP project also enabled models and pedagogies of professional experience to be collaboratively envisioned, developed, enacted and evaluated. This recognised the value of both university and practitioner knowledge in the education of teachers, and it provided a model for how the so-called 'theory/practice divide' can be bridged, or at least lessened if not completely overcome. This project provided research-based evidence of how school-university partnerships can be developed into the future, and highlights the need for goodwill, collaboration, and institutional structure and support on all sides (universities, schools, governments) to ensure quality professional experiences for pre-service teachers. Learning about ourselves opened our eyes to the learning journeys of the pre-service teachers and the mentor teachers. It became apparent that regardless of our position in the professional experience space, we all face similar challenges such as understanding how theory informs practice, and how to navigate the messy, complex work of learning about teaching and learning—something that we argue is best done collaboratively, drawing on the strengths that the diverse partners bring to the relationship. As Reynolds et al. (2013) found, the work in this space is in a constant state of flux, and requires teachers and teacher educators to 'forge new pathways of working together' (p. 317). The narratives presented in this chapter illustrate how important it is for participants in school/university partnerships to have the time and space to work and learn together, and to achieve the hybrid spaces and the flattening of hierarchies that Zeichner (2010) maintains would represent a 'paradigm-shift in the epistemology of teacher education programs… [and a] shift toward more democratic and inclusive ways of working with schools and communities…' (p. 89). We

believe that our TAPP partnership, and the professional learning that it enabled, is one such way in which such a new 'epistemology of teacher education' can emerge.

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Chapter 3
Beyond Classroom Walls: How Industry Partnerships Can Strengthen Pre-service Literacy Teachers' Identities

Jane Kirkby, Kelly Carabott and Deborah Corrigan

Abstract In this chapter, we investigate how a particular partnership between a faculty of education and industry may provide pre-service teachers with experiences that strengthen their understanding of literacy and, as a result, enhance their practices as teachers of literacy. We draw on our work in the 'Read Like a Demon' program, a partnership with the Melbourne Football Club in Victoria, Australia, which aims to increase upper primary students' engagement in independent reading. Our focus though is on the professional learning and identity work of the pre-service teachers (PSTs), who volunteered to participate in the program. Through listening to the stories of the participants, we show how working in alternative sites to schools can provide PSTs with opportunities to evaluate their professional knowledge and reflect on the influence of political and theoretical landscapes on their practice. The PSTs participating in this program identified an increased confidence both in working with a multi-literacy lens and in appreciating literacy as an everyday, situated practice.

Introduction

In an ever changing and complex landscape of teacher education reform, with increasing levels of accountability for teachers, new and innovative practices and pedagogies are needed to support beginning teachers entering the workforce (Kriewaldt, Ambrosetti, Rorrison, & Capeness, 2018). Accountability measures, such as a recent call in Australia for pre-service teachers to be 'classroom ready' when they graduate (TEMAG, 2014), can be seen as situated within wider debates surrounding pre-service teachers' (PSTs') competence, particularly in the area of literacy teach-

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ing. Compulsory personal literacy and numeracy testing for all teachers, debates to raise the ATAR scores for entry into education programs and the media's relentless coverage of perceived poor performance of Australian students in literacy (see also Parr, Diamond and Bulfin, in this collection) add to the complexity and heightened sense of turbulence within literacy teacher education. This leaves university educators needing to respond to policy demands without compromising the theory–practice nexus that is critical for reflective teachers of literacy.

Government-funded reports on initial teacher education, such as *Action now: Classroom ready teachers* (TEMAG, 2014), traditionally characterise PST learning as clearly divided between university course work (which provides theory) and blocks of school-based professional experience (which provides opportunities for practice). However, this demarcation can potentially lead to a disconnection between theory and practice (Darling-Hammond, 2012, 2016) as PSTs struggle to see either the worth of theory or how theory relates to practice in classrooms, or they wonder why research driven practices are not being implemented in schools. In addition, this approach to teacher education can result in fragmentation of knowledge and skills within courses, with limited or no attention to helping PSTs make connections between theory and practice (Kosnick, Menna, Dharamshi, & Miyata, 2017). Furthermore, Kosnick et al. (2017) caution that isolated and decontextualised ways of teaching literacy in initial teacher education can potentially impede PSTs' ability to see the 'big picture of literacy' (p. 61). This begs the question of how university-based teacher educators can ensure PSTs finish their degree 'classroom ready' to enter a complex professional landscape.

We three authors, teacher educators and researchers in Monash University's Faculty of Education, came to the writing of this chapter having worked together in the kind of innovative university-industry partnership program that might offer useful answers to this question. The program was called 'Read Like a Demon' (RLAD), and our experience with it leads us to believe it can empower PSTs to view literacy practices through creative and critical lenses. This chapter will show how the PSTs we worked with in the program believed their participation had a positive impact on their own identity as pre-service teachers of literacy, and how it improved their confidence to explore different pedagogical practices, including a much broader range of literacy practices.

The 'Read Like a Demon' Project

The 'Read Like A Demon' (RLAD) project is an ongoing collaborative partnership between Melbourne Football Club (MFC) and Monash University. In the study we report on in this chapter, two of the authors, Kelly and Jane, worked closely with the pre-service teachers, while the other author, Debbie, acted as a critical friend, facilitator and champion of the partnership. The project was aimed at primary school aged children in Years 3–6. It was designed to present Australian Football League (AFL) players as engaged readers in order to promote reading as a valuable life

skill for the Grade 3–6 children, to encourage independent reading for pleasure and to facilitate varied literacy practices. Several connections with players were designed through face-to-face school visits and digital presentations. The project aimed to stimulate independent wider reading in the young people and to provide Monash PSTs with an opportunity to engage with a voluntary professional experience program, which is additional to, and different from, their mandated school-based professional experiences. These placements range from 10 to 20 days in length, providing a total of 80 days of professional experience across the teacher education course. The project ran across much of the academic year, with varied experiences on offer to strengthen pre-service teachers' professional knowledge, broaden their view of pedagogical practices and build their confidence. In the project, the pre-service teachers were positioned as competent colleagues, with Kelly and Jane acting as critical constructivist mentors (Wang & Odell, 2002) to guide, challenge and extend the PSTs' work through ongoing professional discussions.

Monash PSTs (in the second, third or fourth year of their undergraduate double degrees) were invited to participate in some or all of the program's elements depending upon their availability and interests. Jane and Kelly noticed that the combination of high interest and professional accountability for the work completed resulted in high levels of motivation to produce innovative work of a high quality. Units of work that the PSTs have created for work with selected texts or animated book reviews were published on the program's website, which can be accessed by experienced teachers in schools. This is in contrast to the usual approach to unit development in teacher education degrees, which sees work submitted for assessment but unlikely to be shared with professional colleagues or peers.

The focus in the program was on literacy as an everyday, situated practice, with Kelly and Jane promoting reader engagement as the key objective in the PSTs' work. This motivated the pre-service teachers to consider how they could foster literacy learning in inspiring ways. Their work on the project included: facilitating the writing and publication of Grade 3–6 children's work; using innovative literacy practices such as augmented reality to engage readers in literature analysis; designing and implementing an engaging literacy focused activity at the 'Gala Day' for 250 students at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG, the home ground for the Melbourne Football Club); and creating innovative digital content such as videos of literature conversations with football players and using animation software to create multimodal literacy texts (see examples in Figs. 1 and 2).

To participate in this program, the PSTs needed to have a strong understanding of effective literacy practices. For example, when supporting the football players in their visits to schools, PSTs needed to ensure that they had a deep understanding of the text the players would be reading. They also needed to be able to interject carefully during the discussions so that the focus remained on the players' literacy contributions. The PSTs' contributions to the program were expected to be of the highest quality and they were encouraged to engage with their PST colleagues, and the authors, in critical professional discussion during planning and after implementation of each aspect of the program in which they have participated.

Fig. 1 Screenshot of the opening of a multimodal reflection about *The bad guys*, by Aaron Blabey. This was created by reluctant readers in the RLAD program, supported by PSTs using the app 'Go Animate'. Images courtesy of GoAnimate, Inc.

Fig. 2 Screenshot from a digitised book report template created by a group of PSTs in the RLAD program. The template is interactive and allows students to respond to questions such as 'what is a setting?', while reflecting on the book using Luke and Freebody's (1999) four resources model

Industry-Based Partnerships

Industry-based partnerships such as the 'Read Like a Demon' Program can offer pre-service teachers a space to develop their professional knowledge and identity free from the constraints of formal performance evaluation, which can limit their ability and willingness to explore ideas and practices. Sachs (2001) suggests there are two dominant discourses in the teaching profession, managerial and democratic. Both discourses have significant impact on pre-service teachers' practices during their professional experiences, and they have a strong influence on teacher identity as well, but in different ways. The managerial discourse is laden with accountability regimes, such as high-stakes testing (which has implications for how teachers implement

the curriculum—i.e. how much teaching time is devoted to preparation for these tests?) and professional standards (which can lead to uniform teaching practices rather than teaching that is focused on enhancing learning). Sachs (2001) suggests that the influence of the managerial discourse sees a desire for "designer teachers who demonstrate compliance to policy imperatives and perform at high levels of efficiency and effectiveness' (p. 156). This managerial discourse is evident in the current TEMAG agenda, with pre-service teachers striving to comply with a set of professional standards in their work in classrooms, which may or may not be supportive of students' particular needs in that classroom.

The democratic discourse, on the other hand, promotes collaborative work between all education stakeholders. In this discourse, teachers can work together to contribute to a field of knowledge that reaches beyond their classrooms to the broader community (Sachs, 2001) and, this connection can increase the complexity, depth and relevance of their work. This democratic discourse reflects the potential of industry partnerships, with pre-service teachers making connections between their university work on literacy learning, their classroom experiences and the wider conceptualisation of literacy as an everyday, situated practice.

One approach to bridging the apparent disconnect between teacher education and school classrooms can be through pre-service teachers engaging in professional practices where the context of the teaching and learning is more important than centrally generated educational outcomes in deciding what and how to teach. Industry-based partnerships that enable pre-service teachers the necessary time and space to negotiate these complex aspects of their work, and their professional identity, supported by an extended mentor relationship, are widely seen as a valuable addition to teacher preparation (Ricks, 1996; Kolb, 1984).

Shaping Identities as Teachers of Literacy

Teacher identity is a multi-faceted concept that emerges along personal and professional dimensions, and is temporally situated in different contexts (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Mockler, 2013). For all primary school teachers, their identities as teachers of literacy are important to their broader teacher identity. According to Rodgers and Scott (2008),

> Contemporary conceptions of identity share four basic assumptions: (1) that identity is dependent upon and formed within multiple contexts which bring social, cultural, political, and historical forces to bear upon that formation; (2) that identity is formed in relationship with others and involves emotions; (3) that identity is shifting, unstable, and multiple; and (4) that identity involves the construction and reconstruction of meaning through stories over time. (p. 733)

Furthermore, Rodgers and Scott state that 'teachers should work towards an awareness of their identity and the contexts, relationships, and emotions that shape them, and (re)claim the authority of their own voice' (p. 733). This has implications for the work that is done in teacher education courses.

Hargreaves (1998) points out that teachers' work is complex, difficult and demanding, and that teachers are required to engage in 'intellectual' and 'emotional' work as well as organisational work (i.e. organising and exercising some control of their own work). Such a broad frame can be used to investigate what it means to be a professional teacher in a variety of contexts and from a variety of perspectives. All aspects are vital in the development of the pre-service teacher's professional identity. Focussing on only one or two of these aspects does not address the multiple demands on a teacher's professionalism and can hinder the development of PSTs' professional identity. The TEMAG (2014) report's emphasis on developing 'classroom ready skills' ignores the importance of the intellectual and emotional work of teachers. The impact of this disconnect between teacher education programs focussing on all aspects of teachers' work and the reality as addressed in professional standards, coupled with the demands of managing in complex workplaces, can result in pre-service teachers losing sight of the deeper understandings they have developed through their teacher education courses. This shaping of teacher identity, especially PSTs professional identity that occurs in response to the interplay between beliefs, knowledge and situational pressures (Palmér, 2016) needs careful attention and development rather than a checklist approach, such as is often encouraged in relation to professional standards.

Bullough (1997) and Korthagen (2004) highlight that teacher identity is of vital concern in initial teacher education as it is teacher identity that forms the 'basis for meaning making and decision making' (Korthagen, 2004, p. 21) about pedagogic practice. As university-based teacher educators work to bring together the theoretical frameworks and policy-driven practice, they set up the conditions for PSTs to begin to consider the personal and professional tensions that may arise in school settings. Given that literacy is increasingly positioned within a contested and politically charged discourse of professional reform, PSTs' reflection helps them to develop an authority of voice that is often referred to as 'identity work' (Mockler, 2013). Therefore, the current discourse of professional reform and debates surrounding literacies and the resultant impact on teacher identity cannot be ignored (Adoniou & Gallagher, 2017; Korthagen, 2004; Mockler, 2013; Sachs, 2001).

Literacy Learning and Teaching

An important facet of PSTs' literacy identities is a deep understanding of literacy practices, of how literacy develops, and of how as teachers they can pedagogically teach and support literacy learners. To continue to explore how industry partnerships can powerfully contribute to literacy teacher identities, a discussion about the complexity and shifting nature of literacy in the twenty-first century is needed.

History has shown that defining literacy is a contentious issue. Definitions of literacy are fluid, dynamic, and exist within changing political, social and historical paradigms (Green, Cormack, & Patterson, 2013). Our study is set within a body of

socio-cultural literature that understands literacy to be situated and a social practice (e.g. Auld, Doecke, & MacGilp, 2014; Barton & Hamilton, 2000), and this social practice consists of a range of complex and contextualised communicative practices. This literature sees literacy as more than just a set of decontextualised reading and writing skills. The notion of skills has expanded to be considered as components of multi-literacies (Bull & Anstey, 2010; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Kress, 2003; New London Group, 2000) that are used in particular ways in particular contexts and vary across these contexts. It is what people do *with* multi-literacies and this action speaks back to the very heart of literacy as socially embedded acts of meaning making (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Knobel & Lankshear 2014).

This focus on meaning making also broadens the construct of literacy to include the evaluation, synthesis and creation of multimodal texts that contain gestural, visual, spatial, linguistic or aural modalities (Bull & Anstey, 2010; Kress, 2003; Walsh, 2010). Consequently, literacy for twenty-first century education policy could be defined as a set of communicative acts which enable users to encode, decode, interpret, respond to, and derive and create meaning from a myriad of print, visual, oral, nonverbal multimodal texts (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2014).

The definition of literacy proposed in 2012 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) appreciates the points we have been making above about the complexity of literacy in the twenty-first century (Andreas, 2012). However, the OECD definition also explicitly recognises the dimensions of curiosity and motivation, which are not evident in the Australian Curriculum definition. This captures an aspect of literacy teaching and learning that some consider to be missing in the current outcomes-based learning agenda across the world (Wrigley, Lingard, & Thomson, 2012).

The current enthusiasm for outcomes-based learning, and improving student performance in standardised tests, can overshadow the embedded complexity of literacy as it is presented in curriculum documents. For example, in Australia Donnelly (2014) suggested that in an effort to improve international literacy testing results, teachers should return to a 'chalk and talk', 'back to basics' approach that he links to China's successful standing on measures such as the PISA and TIMMS scales. Cautionary words about decreasing the scope of learning to that which is measured and deskilling teachers surfaced around the time that there was renewed interest in outcomes-based education (Smyth & Dow, 1998) and continue today (Doecke, Auld, & Wells, 2014; Wrigley et al., 2012). Teachers of literacy in this climate of accountability and reductionist pedagogies (Luke, 2005, p. 353) need a highly developed understanding of literacy in order to move their practice beyond bounded classroom contexts to enact a much richer understanding of literacy as meaning making. From this position, they can question the technocratic approach, which is part of the dominant educational discourse as one that sees improvement 'reduced to improved test results and an upward form of accountability… disconnected from pleasure and purpose' (Wrigley et al., 2012, pp. 9–98). These tensions in practice are not new (Auld, Doecke, & MacGilp, 2014), although some researchers do argue that they have intensified in

recent years (Stillman & Anderson, 2015). This study suggests that PSTs need to navigate these as part of the identity work they do.

Study Methodology

The research component of the project comprised a small-scale, qualitative study, which generated rich situated stories about participation in the program, and it allowed for multiple connections between the researchers and the PST participants over time. The overarching research question for the study was: *How did voluntary engagement in the Read Like a Demon program impact on PSTs' knowledge, confidence and sense of identity as teachers of literacy?* Teacher identity is an emerging personal, professional construct of anticipated self, and is continually negotiated in educational contexts. Therefore, a qualitative approach was selected to gather and interpret rich data. University ethics approval was gained from Monash University's Ethics' Committee prior to the commencement of the program.

Our research question required us to draw from a range of different data sources (interviews, an on-line open-ended survey, and written reflections) over time, with this data including personal and professional stories of participation in the program. In order to ensure trustworthiness of the data and analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), we monitored the processes of data generation throughout the process. Elements of trustworthiness included sustained engagement with the PST participants (Creswell, 1998; Maxwell, 2010); drawing on the researchers' extended experience in education partnerships, enabling an increased understanding of the culture (Patton, 2002; Willis, 2007); and the use of participants' transcripts to provide rich, thick description (Creswell, 1998; Greene, 2010; Maxwell, 2010).

In recruiting participants for the study, we began by publicising the project through Monash's Faculty of Education Facebook page and in short face-to-face presentations during cohort lectures in the campus-based course. Following this, we called for written expressions of interest from PSTs who wished to be involved in the project. These submissions suggested high interest levels for the project and all PSTs were invited to attend an online introductory session. Attrition occurred at this point as some PSTs did not attend this first meeting. During the session PSTs were invited to work collaboratively with Kelly and Jane to participate in activities and develop new resources as part of the project. Participation in varied aspects of the program was dependent on PSTs' availability and numbers fluctuated across the course of time. Jane and Kelly selected particular PSTs to create the digital book chats based on their demonstrated literacy knowledge through contribution to the project.

The initial use of semi-structured individual interviews and group interviews in 2016 was very successful in generating stories about the PSTs. This was extended in 2017 to include an on-line, open-ended survey and written reflections linked to a professional learning session run by Kelly and Jane. All participant data documents were assigned pseudonyms to de-identify PSTs involved in the research. Ultimately, the data set included seven online surveys, eight semi-structured individual interviews,

three group interviews and twelve written reflections over the two-year period. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

We used Polkinghorne's (1995) 'analysis of narratives' approach to make meaning from the stories in the data. Through all of this our main focus was on better understanding how the experience of participating in an industry-based professional experience impacted on the pre-service teachers' knowledge, skills and identity. Our meaning making was underpinned by our own reading and experience about the value of such programs for PSTs' professional learning and identity work. All documents—that is transcripts, surveys and reflections—were analysed inductively for emergent themes. These were professional confidence, literacy learning knowledge, agency and openness to critical reflection. Individual documents were read by the team independently. Any stories considered as demonstrating increased professional knowledge or awareness of self as a teacher of literacy were highlighted and discussed by the researchers. Through this process, we were able to identify some commonalities across participants, as well as providing opportunity to note and discuss particular examples that offered a different perspective (Kramp, 2004).

We adopted what Chase (2005) refers to as 'the researcher's authoritative voice' (p. 664) as we interpreted the participants' words and stories to identify themes. Our discussion of these themes in this chapter draws on multiple, lengthy stories of PSTs' experiences and their reflections upon these experiences. We also explicitly include our own voices as researchers, as we offer our interpretations of their stories. We recognise that interpretation, like all meaning making, has subjective dimensions, but we also consider Richardson (1995) who suggests that to silence the authorial voice 'not only rejects the value of sociological insight but implies that somehow facts' exist without interpretation' (p. 215). In this chapter, we restrict our discussion to three major themes with regard to professional knowledge and identity work. We refer to them as 'Stories of …': increased confidence; expanded content knowledge; and critical reflection.

Discussion

Stories of Increased Confidence

Overwhelmingly, PSTs reported a positive impact of their involvement in the project on their confidence, and subsequently, their teacher identity. For some, there was a moment where they shifted to seeing themselves as teachers rather than students. Along with this shift in identity PSTs also commented they were surprised at how much literacy knowledge they held and gained confidence in expressing this to the industry partners.

The democratic approach (Sachs, 2001) where teacher educators and PSTs worked as equals allowed a sense of freedom from managerial, outcome-based measures. Consequently, this enabled PSTs to develop confidence in their own abilities that may

not have been as possible during traditional styles of professional experience. The repositioning of PSTs as competent practitioners through Sach's (2001) democratic approach had a positive influence on their teaching identity. This is evidenced by Zoe's comment in an interview at the end of her involvement in the program: 'I think it has been good for my confidence. It was a relief that someone believed in me and that I could do this'.

Danielewicz (2001) highlights the importance of the social and collegiate aspect on positive identity development in teachers. This was often evident in the stories James told about seeing himself as part of a collegiate profession. In particular, he spoke about his involvement in 'that community aspect of the school life rather than just focusing on my classroom'. He went on to explain how he began to appreciate the ways in which his participation in the program enabled him to see the

> bigger picture and that you get people involved and also the idea of collaborating with my peers has been strengthened … We were all learning together and we had that sort of expert advice … Also, Jane and Kelly were learning with us and helping us through it, creating the resources…

James' story here is typical of the way most participants came away from the RLAD program feeling valued as fellow teaching professionals. This is in strong contrast to the tenuous position PSTs are in during traditional professional experience placements, which can be limiting on their development. In such circumstances, their confidence can be quickly shaken, especially when they choose to take risks in their pedagogies that do not align with their mentor teacher's practice (Anderson, 2007; Cattley, 2007). Anna spoke about the apprehension she felt on traditional professional experience placements and the subsequent disconnect that can emerge between theory and practice. For her, being on a traditional placement was invariably

> … so new and so scary at the time. And you've got someone watching you. You don't always remember all those things that you've learnt in Uni. You're sort of just in survival mode trying to just convey this one point of the lesson that you're trying to get across.

PSTs reported that when they were supported collegially within their practice, the realisation that they could operate in an uncertain space and thrive was empowering. One anonymous comment in the online survey seemed to represent all PSTs' experiences of being challenged but also able to learn deeply. He/she appreciated 'being out of my comfort zone and learning more about behind the scenes of being a teacher'. Time and again, participants characterised their time in the RLAD program as quite different to a traditional professional placement. One explanation we researchers proposed for this was the way in which traditional placements expect PSTs to be always in control, and that indeed this is supposed to be a measure of their competence. This is what Sachs describes as the 'managerial' (Sachs, 2001) positioning of PSTs in an outcome-based competency model, where success or failure of PSTs relies so much on the mentor teacher (Anderson, 2007). While it is important to have teachers that are able to manage the complexities of classroom practice, she says, it is also important that they understand that uncertainty is part of learning to teach and a driver for critical reflection. One PST participating in the RLAD program, Megan,

showed this when reflecting on what she was able to do and learn when working out of her comfort: 'It was very difficult to suddenly be working with grade 3's and 4's. I had to really change my style of teaching, adapt, and it's really good to have learned that I can be very flexible in a moment's notice'. On the other hand, one anonymous PST, wrote in the online survey that she found a new affirmation of self in the fact that she could take control without the directive input of a mentor teacher: 'I am also more confident because I took control on Gala Day without a mentor teacher looking over my shoulder, constantly putting in her input'.

Although both lecturers were in always in attendance, and monitoring carefully the work of the PSTs in the RLAD program, the relationship they had established with the PSTs, and the expectations articulated at the start of the program, had already positioned the PSTs as competent. This came through clearly in Jessica's stories about her experience. She never expected that her lecturers, Jane or Kelly, would step in at any moment, given that they had demonstrated faith in her capacity to that point. Jessica explained in an interview how her role in organising aspects of Gala Day at the conclusion of the RLAD program had enabled her to take charge and see herself in a leadership role. Her experience leading the RLAD 'team' in this way helped to move her from feeling like a novice to someone who was able to make decisions and hold people accountable:

> It's a bit daunting having to email your mentors/lecturers and then tell them 'Do this, do that'. I felt a bit funny doing it. I hope I didn't come across the wrong way but, yeah, it made me professional. It was important for me to communicate everything to [C] because she had all the resources and I was always in between telling her things.

The impact of this democratic, collegial approach in developing confidence was a recurrent theme. Emily noted how her lecturers showed confidence in her and her peers:

> We did it all, it wasn't Kelly and Jane, they helped us a lot, they facilitated it and gave us ideas of what to do. But it was a chance for us to do our part, which was a really good experience, really worthwhile.

With the absence of power differentials, the professional conversations were seen as liberating for PSTs as they were invited to critique ideas and resources, and engage in complex design work. Having teacher educators working side by side with PSTs strengthened the connection between theory and practice. Naomi, in her final year of teacher education, reflected on her experience.

> I certainly feel like I am far more confident to go out and be a literacy teacher… I think before that I had some understanding but to put this all in practice was the bit that had previously been missing for me.

The challenge of bridging university-based and classroom-based practice is well-reported (e.g. Darling-Hammond, 2006, 2012; Zeichner, 2010), and the 'culture shock' of beginning teaching is frequently attributed to the associated rhetoric/reality gap (Aubusson & Schuck, 2013, p. 325). It is one of the key factors that has prompted the 'classroom ready' agenda. Working alongside their lecturers, the PSTs were discussing how theoretical frameworks might inform their work. Jessica wanted to know

that she could hold her own position, that she had professional knowledge of value and that she could use it. In her interview, she described her sense of 'empowerment' through 'being able to talk to our lecturers on the same level'. She addressed her follow-up comment directly to her lecturer-interviewer: 'We want to look up to you so when you want to hear what we are saying and give us feedback…it builds our confidence and gives us faith that we know ourselves and we know our stuff'. This comment speaks to the heart of her need to feel as though she held some agency in her decision-making.

Allowing PSTs to experience literacy teaching in contexts outside of the traditional professional practicum opened up a 'safe space' for these pre-service teachers to feel confident to explore alternative pedagogies, ways of teaching and more agentic professional identities.

Stories of Expanded Content Knowledge

The stories that the PSTs shared suggested that they felt the opportunity to engage with industry partners in this project added to their understanding of multi-literate practices across contexts. Shifting literacy practice out of the traditional school classroom and into different settings seemed to be significant in this. As stated above, the RLAD project explicitly focused on positioning PSTs as experts rather than novices, in contrast to the dominant discourses in teacher education that tend to position PSTs as novices and concentrate on their deficits (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008). These views may not draw on the rich wealth of experience, ideas and pedagogies that PSTs bring with them to their teacher education. In an interview with Kelly, Amy was reflecting on a conversation she had with an industry partner. She was genuinely surprised and delighted that she had professional knowledge that could be considered 'expert' within the broader community: 'It made me realise how much I did know. I did not realise that other people [i.e. the industry partner] may not see the depth of literacy'.

In the interviews and online surveys, the PSTs told us that through creating and continually refining authentic literacy resources for the project, they found themselves engaging in a range of professional conversations (like the one Amy was referring to) and starting to self-assess. Sometimes, this brought into question their knowledge base, and in turn provoked other conversations and increased their motivation to continue to develop their own individual literacy content knowledge. The following story related by an anonymous PST in the online survey illustrates the type of thinking of many participants as they deepened their understanding of what knowledge was important about their practice and what literacy teaching knowledge they still needed to acquire:

> I have noticed that I have a lot of learning to do in this area. When listening to my peers in the [professional learning session], I felt as though I was lacking in my understanding or ability to teach writing at such a high level. However, I have implemented many practices covered and have noticed a steady improvement in my confidence when teaching writing, and the level of writing students have been able to produce …

This PST was gauging his/her understanding against that of their colleagues, the self-assessment being all the more powerful as the need for growth was recognised. We often heard stories from the PSTs about what they were now noticing about students' literacy development, and why. This enhanced pedagogical knowledge also appeared to be impacting on their confidence to be a teacher of literacy.

In the excerpt below from an interview, Megan is very articulate in explaining that her content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge were enhanced by participation in the project:

> I feel more confident teaching literacy at a high school level, especially after trying out some techniques on placement. I am not being trained in high school English [but] I feel more confident to incorporate literacy elements into all my classes without feeling that it 'wasn't my place'. All subjects can benefit from literacy input.

In Australia, all teachers are expected to embed the literacy knowledge and skills required for academic success in their different discipline areas (ACARA, 2014). Megan came to feel that her literacy knowledge was limited and she began to extrapolate from the professional learning session as to how she might now build her science literacy knowledge. In particular, her written reflection sheet showed she was keen to explore how she might incorporate her new knowledge of visual literacy. Megan had shifted her identity as a Science teacher and was able to test this new dimension of her identity on her next professional placement in a school.

Megan's story was echoed by Michelle, who came to recognise the increased benefits of using literature across different contexts: '[Participation in the RLAD program] gave me another way of looking at picture story books and bringing them into not just the primary classroom but the secondary classroom, which has inspired me to do that in my secondary pedagogy assignment'.

Through their involvement in the RLAD project, the PSTs appeared to increase their knowledge of, and skill in, teaching multi-literacies and multimodality across contexts. They acknowledged that reflective teachers of literacy need to identify that learning happens across boundaries and not just within the confines of their own classroom. We conclude our discussion of the stories aligned with this theme, by sharing Emily's comment of how she recognised that teaching does not just happen in the classroom and that to develop her literacy teacher identity she needed to take advantage of experiences which existed outside of traditional professional experiences: 'I recognise that I need to think about teaching in a different way, I suppose, I guess than just traditionally in a classroom'.

Stories of Critical Reflection

The most significant policy document driving curriculum and practices in initial teacher education courses in Australia, *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and procedures* (AITSL, 2017), emphasises the importance of preparing graduating teachers to be able to engage in critical reflection.

The RLAD experience saw many PSTs prompted to examine what they knew and put into practice in the teaching of literacy. As a second year PST, Naomi attached great significance to her work on the program, not only as the best teaching she had done but also as an example of how she wanted to develop her pedagogy.

> I am so proud of my work [on this program. The questioning skills [I developed] are useful for my other assignment … I feel more competent after this … as I know what is a good question and what is not. I consciously abandon those nonsense questions… And this way I can make my lesson more engaging.

Naomi's reflection suggests she was moving towards critically interrogating her beliefs and taking a stand on what she had learnt about questioning. She displayed an awareness of her teacher self, and recognised a knowledge base that allows her to critique her own work.

James spoke of his increased appreciation of picture books as suitable texts with older students.

> I would have been less inclined to use picture books because of them being seen as, I guess, children's books, but now I have the confidence to say, 'Well no, it's not just a children's book, … Moving into junior secondary school, the ability to stand up for picture books and say we're not just reading this because we're kids. We're going to read it from an analytical perspective. And I wouldn't have done [it] otherwise, I don't think, without the program.

During the project, James had seen different approaches to those taken in his traditional classroom placements, and this caused him to rethink the decisions he had previously made. He anticipated some resistance to the move, although it is not clear whether that might be from students or colleagues. Nevertheless, he felt confident to make his case for this approach to literacy teaching having seen them used in novel and extending ways such as literature conversations and augmented reading experiences.

The AITSL *Standards and procedures* document also speaks about the need for graduating teachers to be able to engage in collaboration with more experienced colleagues as fundamental to their development. However, traditional professional placement experiences, particularly across the primary years, are usually focused on specific classroom contexts. This can result in limited access to other teachers' practices and insights into team planning. The literacy teaching experiences that the PSTs had in the RLAD project were outside more formal learning settings, such as school classrooms and university workshops, and this appeared to give them new insights into what might be possible when teachers work more collaboratively. Another possibility opened up by the PSTs engaging in collaboration was what we have previously termed 'identity work'. As they worked more closely with teacher educators and peers, they began to re-imagine their identities as teachers of literacy.

In one interview, Jade related a story of working in a collaborative teaching space. In the excerpt from the transcript of that interview below, she contrasts her experience of compulsory group tasks in university coursework units with volunteer work in the RLAD program, and shares how this impacts on her ability to have professional conversations. She prefaced her story with the comment that teamwork was a 'really big' part of her RLAD teaching and learning, and that it had a lot to do with the

voluntary nature of the program. However, while teamwork was often a very positive dimension,

> there were definitely occasions where you felt like someone wasn't contributing, and [you need] that ability to have those polite adult conversations… 'Can you please do this part, so I can then do my part?' That was something I gained. Because at uni with group work, you all have to do it, but group work in the RLAD is voluntary, so those conversations become even more important, I suppose

Jade implies that her identity as a collaborative teacher who is able to manage the tensions of the workplace, had not been addressed in professional placements she had undertaken. In this project, the authenticity of the PST-created resources heightened the need for collaboration amongst PSTs. Jade learned that having those difficult conversations was a skill she needed to work in a team. She went on to explain that she saw this as part of her professional identity as a teacher.

Vu and Dall'Alba (2014) suggest that collaborative reflection between teaching colleagues can improve 'levels of criticality'. This seemed to be borne out in Zoe's and James' reflections. James appreciated that collaboration was crucial for his ideas to be examined and to learn with others: 'It's given me those different perspectives whereas I might have only been into my own way of thinking beforehand so it's been good to get that different perspective'. Zoe highlighted that through her conversations with peers and with Jane and Kelly, her views of literacy and literacy pedagogy shifted: 'It has allowed me to be more objective … [to] move away from the way I was taught and be open to different teaching styles … [to be] more creative and think outside the box'. And finally another PST reflected, in the anonymous survey, on how his/her pedagogy and knowledge of literacy had been challenged by interactions with others, prompting a deeper level of critical reflection on future pedagogic practice: 'This program has allowed me to engage in professional conversations, challenging how I will teach reading, writing and responding to texts in my own classroom'.

Conclusion

The rich and varied stories shared by the PSTs who participated in this study have been presented here under three interconnected themes: stories of increased confidence; stories of expanded content knowledge; and stories of critical reflection. Considered as a whole, the stories suggest that although traditional professional experience placements in school classrooms provide many opportunities for PST learning and skill development, it is valuable if these placements can be complemented with engagement in professional experience beyond school classrooms. This type of complementary professional experience opens up spaces for PSTs to take more risks with their learning, and allows them to be positioned as competent colleagues and experts in their field within the wider community.

Our presentation of PSTs' stories from the RLAD program shows them experiencing high levels of professional freedom, autonomy and agency outside of the

competencies-based standards used to assess teacher 'classroom' readiness in mandated professional experience. The study also shows the powerful impact this freedom has on their professional identity. After participating in the RLAD program, the PSTs often spoke about themselves as knowledgeable and agentic teachers, able to engage in critical, creative and collaborative thinking around literacy in the twenty-first century. When PSTs are directly supported by and with teacher educators in industry placements such as the RLAD program, they are highly likely to experience the powerful nexus between theory and practice, and start to see how theory can drive their future pedagogic practice and their identity development as teachers of literacy.

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Chapter 4
Building Stronger Teacher Education Programmes to Prepare Inclusive Teachers

Sarah Hopkins and Penny Round

Abstract In response to concerns about the capacity of current school-based placements to prepare new teachers for inclusive classrooms, teacher education institutions are developing additional fieldwork programmes. We describe an innovative fieldwork programme that resulted from a partnership between the Faculty of Education at Monash University and Wallara (a disability-service provider), and we present findings from an investigation into the pedagogical decisions pre-service teachers made in this programme when tutoring young adults with intellectual disabilities. The findings suggest that well-structured fieldwork programmes that take place on campus can provide valuable opportunities for preparing new teachers for inclusive classrooms.

Introduction

In Australia, as elsewhere, the last three decades have seen important steps made towards promoting *inclusive education*, where every child is able to learn alongside their peers in mainstream classrooms within their local communities (UNESCO, 2017). These steps have included the passing of key legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth Government, 1992), which prohibits discrimination in education based on disability, and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Disability Standards for Education, 2004), which mandates that education providers make *reasonable adjustments* to be able to treat a person with a disability on the same basis as students without a disability. They also include the development of Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, endorsed in 2011 (AITSL, 2011), which include the requirement that teacher education programmes

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equip all new teachers (not just those studying special education) with knowledge and skills to support the participation and learning of students with disabilities.

On the ground, however, much work is needed before visions of inclusive education can be realised. In the state of Victoria, in Australia, for example, there remains a lack of disability-specific professional learning for school leaders and teachers, and a lack of specialist expertise and support for schools to provide an inclusive environment (Review of the Program for Students with Disabilities, 2016). This is especially evident when it comes to teaching children with intellectual disabilities. Experienced teachers in mainstreams schools report that they do not feel well supported or prepared for teaching children with intellectual disabilities (Forlin, Keen, & Barrett, 2008; Sermier Dessemontet, Morin, & Crocker, 2014).

Professional experiences are key to building strong teacher education programmes that influence the knowledge, skills and dispositions of new teachers in such a way as to positively affect what they do in the classroom. Darling-Hammond (2006) outlined three critical components that characterise strong teacher education programmes: (i) tight coherence and integration between coursework units and the sequencing of professional experiences; (ii) extensive and well-supervised professional experiences that link back to coursework units using pedagogies and assessments to link theory and practice; and (iii) closer relationships with schools that service diverse learners. It is a problem that many initial teacher education programmes are reliant on professional placements in mainstream schools to provide pre-service teachers with practical experiences of working with students with disabilities, at a time when there is limited guidance, support and expertise available to develop a culture of inclusion within these schools.

Instead of relying on schools, teacher education programmes could take the initiative to build partnerships with disability-service providers, enabling pre-service teachers to work directly with their clients. Adults with intellectual disabilities consider poor literacy skills to be one of the barriers they face in achieving greater social inclusion and want more opportunities to learn these foundational skills (Abbott & McConkey, 2006); however, they have few opportunities to learn once they have finished secondary school (Davies & Beamish, 2009). While disability-service providers could play a greater role in developing literacy skills for their clients alongside independent living skills (Moni, Jobling, & Morgan, 2011), workers in these organisations do not generally hold teaching qualifications and may not be equipped to provide the learning opportunities needed.

In 2015, the Faculty of Education (Monash University) established a collaborative partnership with a local disability-service provider called Wallara and launched the 'Keep on Learning' (KoL) Program. In the next section, we present an outline of the KoL Program, and then proceed to present findings from an investigation into how pre-service teachers supported the participation and learning of students from Wallara as part of this programme.

The KoL Program

The KoL Program brings together pre-service teachers enrolled in their first year of an undergraduate degree (henceforth referred to as 'tutors') and young adults with intellectual disabilities (referred to as 'students') to participate in a tutoring programme. Part of this programme focuses on developing literacy. Participating students travel in a group by bus to the university campus to attend a 1-hour tutoring session each week, for 10 weeks. After coming together for morning tea, each student works with the same two tutors in a room that provides privacy and few distractions. The KoL Program encompasses both literacy and numeracy tutoring, but the literacy component is the focus in this chapter.

Participation in KoL is voluntary for both tutors and students. First-year pre-service teachers enrolled in a BEd (Primary and Secondary) in Monash's Faculty of Education are required to engage in 20 h of volunteer work in educational settings outside of mainstream schools. KoL is one of the options available to them. Wallara students self-select programmes they wish to participate in.

The design of the literacy component of the programme was informed by an extensive review of research-based literature outlining best practice for teaching reading to people with intellectual disabilities (e.g. Erickson, Hanser, & Hatch, 2009). Literacy tutorials focused on reading literacy and comprised of three activities, each scheduled to last 15–20 min: a reading fluency task; a phonemic awareness task; and a spelling task. For the first task, students read a book aloud to their KoL tutors, and the tutors offered support using shared or guided reading strategies (where needed). Initially, books from the series written by Paul Jennings about a dragon called Rascal were used. For the second activity, tutors and students selected words from the book, wrote these on a mini whiteboard and explored how sounds worked within these words. Depending on the students' skill level, they might have, for example, sounded out onset and rimes, or sounded out individual phonemes. The third activity made use of a spelling app on an iPad. This app allowed users to enter words, record their own voice speaking the words and then progress through different difficulty levels of recognising letter–sound associations.

To prepare for their work on the KoL Program, tutors attended three 1-hour work-shops. During these workshops, they were taught how children typically develop phonological awareness skills, starting with developing an awareness of words, responding to rhyme and alliteration during wordplay, recognising syllables in words then onsets and rimes, and progressing to more complex skills involving phonemes. They familiarised themselves with the three literacy activities used with the students, and worked in small groups to practise blending, segmenting and manipulating individual phonemes.

In addition to these workshops, and as part of their coursework during the first year of study, tutors were completing the first unit (in a sequence of two units) to prepare them for teaching English and literacy to children in primary schools. In relation to teaching beginning readers in this first unit, pre-service teachers were introduced to theories of how children learn to read, including Luke and Freebody's

'Four roles of a reader' model (in Flint et al., 2017), and they learned how to design a reading programme to address these four roles: code breaker, test user, text participant and text analyst. They were encouraged to teach code-breaking using an *integrated approach*, where children learn to recognise alphabet letters, sounds in words and spelling patterns, as they read authentic texts (i.e. interesting and conceptually rich stories) and experiment with their own writing. The participating pre-service teachers were also shown a range of teaching strategies to help beginning readers to make sense of what they are reading.

Tutors were advised to expect that their students would have considerable differences in literacy skills, and that they would need to work with their Monash partner to adapt the programme according to each student's needs and interests. They were encouraged to make changes where needed, but to keep the same tutorial structure with three activities and the same learning intentions for the three activities. At the end of each tutoring session (after students leave the university), tutors were invited to come together in a group with other tutors and teacher educators. In that group, they discussed how the tutorial session went (including their successes and challenges), they voiced any concerns they had about what they had been doing and they asked questions. Everyone in the group was encouraged to provide feedback and respond to questions from their peers. The purposes of these debriefing meetings were as follows: (i) to support tutors to make good decisions (aligned with what the literature judges to be best practice); (ii) to encourage tutors to reflect on their decisions and evaluate the effectiveness of their practices; and (iii) to share their experiences and appreciate the diversity among people with intellectual disabilities. At the end of 10 weeks, a formal ceremony on campus was organised for the Wallara students, their family members and the Monash tutors. As part of the ceremony, students received certificates of achievement and tutors received certificates of appreciation.

The Study

This study is part of a series of action research projects, which were all aimed at improving the KoL Program in its second year of operation. One particular aim of this study was to develop a better understanding of how tutors were supporting the participation and literacy learning of their students. To help achieve this aim, we audio-recorded the debriefing sessions held at the end of each tutorial, where tutors shared their experiences and responded to each other's questions. (We had approval from the university's ethics committee and written consent from tutors to do this.) These debriefing meetings lasted between 15 and 45 min.

Recordings from each meeting were first transcribed, and comments made by tutor pairs over the 10-week period were put together (in sequence) by the researchers. We then used three questions to highlight parts of the transcript that seemed most pertinent to addressing our research aim:

- What did tutors do to modify the three activities in the KoL Program?
- What did they do to enhance student engagement?
- What factors led to these decisions?

After reading through the highlighted parts of the transcripts several times, we began to write up the tutors' experiences as narrative case studies, where each case represented the trio who worked together (one student and two tutors). We endeavoured to use the same or similar language that tutors used in the debriefing sessions and interspersed our written descriptions with direct quotes from tutors, where it was appropriate to do so. We chose three narrative case studies to be included in this chapter, as each illustrated different aspects of support provided by tutors. All students in these case studies were in their early 20s and had a moderate intellectual disability. Tutors were also in their early 20s. In writing up the case studies, we used pseudonyms for students' names but did not distinguish between tutors in the team (for ease of reading).

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Enabling Learning Through Task Differentiation and Managing Behaviour

Trevor is a vibrant young man who engaged people easily in conversation. He loved to talk with his tutors and liked to direct the literacy sessions according to how he thought they should run. For example, in the first session, the tutors were persuaded to spend the whole time on the fluency activity because he wanted to learn how to read the entire book '*to make his dad proud*'. In the second session, he only wanted to use the iPad because '*he liked using the iPad*'. While the tutors were mindful of building rapport with Trevor, by the end of the second session, they felt that they had relinquished too much control, and the sessions were becoming unproductive. They wanted feedback from us, the teacher educators and researchers, on how they might reinstate more structure in the session and keep Trevor on track.

  In the next session, the tutors outlined to Trevor the sequence of activities planned and used the strategy of 'when and then'—that is, *when* they had finished the first two activities, *then* he could work with the iPad (the third activity). After trying this strategy, the tutors reflected that it had worked to a certain point but Trevor still spent a lot of time off-task chatting with them. Following further feedback, they made the decision to use a timer: they were going to ask him to work for a set time and then allow him a break where he could chat. This seemed to work, as they explained in their debriefing session.

> We've been a lot more strict on him…Today we did lots of five minutes (with the timer) so I said, 'We're going to read for five minutes and then we can talk for five minutes'… And if [Trevor] started going off topic during the five minutes of reading or during five minutes of

what we were supposed to be doing, the actual task, if he started to go off topic during that time we could definitely – we could just say, 'Come on, let's finish this first then you can tell us later'.

The tutors became more confident using this strategy over time and Trevor became more accustomed to their expectations: '*We've done like seven minutes of reading, five minute break…and he knows…he'll try to go off…and I just act on it so quickly. We're like no, no, in our break…he tells us we're mean, and then laughs*'.

As Trevor started to engage more with the literacy activities, his tutors found that he actually had a lot of difficulty reading. They were surprised by this, given his competent oral skills: '*We thought he'd be able to read and you shouldn't assume that*'. After the third session, the tutors decided that reading the Rascal book was too hard: Trevor was taking so long to read each page and did not always understand what was happening in the book. They were also concerned that he was losing confidence in being able to read the entire book. They decided to focus on the alphabet instead, as they noticed he had trouble recognising some letter names and their corresponding sounds.

> [The book was just] too hard. And then it came to last week and we realized that he couldn't really pick up on the letters, so we thought, 'We need to go back to the alphabet…we just need to bring it back to basics'…We bought these new little cards…this cute little alphabet book…which obviously has reading in it.

The tutors focused the fourth session on identifying letter names and sounds, and afterwards reflected, '*It went okay*'. We encouraged them to consider using an easier book rather than changing the activity; in this way, they could simplify the reading task without changing the learning intentions. We showed them an easier book and they agreed to try it.

Once the tutors had honed their strategies for encouraging on-task behaviour and had based the three activities around an easier book, Trevor's confidence in his own ability grew steadily. At the end of the programme, his tutors felt it had been a rewarding experience.

> When we initially started with the little Rascal books…[Trevor] used to get really upset that he wasn't progressing and he wasn't moving past the initial pages. And we said to him, 'It doesn't matter how much you do, it's how much you do and understand it' … So, you know, with the Rascal pages he would maybe only get to page three or four in half an hour, and then we introduced the new book … and he did eight pages in like five minutes, seven minutes. And he was so proud of himself, and we said, 'You know, so you can do it, like you really are…' … So, then now…he's finished this book maybe two or three times now, and he literally said, '*Wait, I'm too smart for you. I'm too smart for you.*' So yeah, that's good.

Case Study 2: Extending Learning Through Task Differentiation and Task Engagement

Lisa is a quiet young woman, who was very excited to be a part of the KoL Program. After the first session, Lisa's tutors were surprised at her reading ability, which

exceeded their expectations. They wanted to ensure that the tasks used in the following week were at a more appropriate level for her.

> So we kind of had to, we kind of spent the rest of the session just feeling out what she didn't know and what she did know, and trying to work out where we can go next week to make it a bit challenging for her…We just took this first lesson trying to find her interests.

The tutors discovered that Lisa was interested in countries and animals, so, over the next few sessions, they modified the programme to meet these interests. First, they adapted the spelling activity by including the names of different countries. They used their laptop to find countries of interest to her and then helped her to break up the name of the country, '*like Madagascar—like you need gas for your car*'. They noticed Lisa became upset when she had difficulty spelling words using the iPad, so they concentrated on writing words instead. As Lisa loved learning the names of countries, her tutors developed a guessing game where they would start writing out the name of a country and Lisa would guess what country they were thinking of.

Lisa's tutors also chose a more advanced book, about giraffes, that they thought would appeal to her interest in animals. The number of words on each page initially overwhelmed Lisa, so they used a blank piece of paper to cover up some of the words and assisted her when she was stuck, by helping her to sound out the word. Any words that Lisa had difficulty with, they would write in a list so she could take it home to practise. They found these sessions were working well and they encouraged Lisa to draw a picture and write a sentence about what she was reading. In doing this, they noticed she sometimes confused upper and lower case letters.

> So we [do] an activity and then we talk about what she's read … – we ask her questions so she can try and think about what she's read and make sure she's understanding it and then she is drawing a picture and writing a sentence about it…She just does one sentence writing and we talk with her about it because she mixes up the capital letters and the lower case letters when she is writing…Today we put a lower case chart letter in front of her and said when she writes it, 'Try and think about writing the lower case letters'. But she still did some upper case letters.

Lisa's tutors tried a number of different strategies to help her with writing. For example, they used a chart and explained when she needed to use capital letters: '*When she wrote the sentence, we went back and looked at it and explained to her [that] the capital letter is the first letter and then all the rest are in lower case*'. They also tried using dotted lines to highlight upper case and lower case letters and focused on the language they were using: '*We tried to use the terms "lower case" and "upper case"…rather than "big" and "small."*'

At the end of this KoL session, the tutors reflected that Lisa was '*so happy and so excited to be learning*' and felt that '*if she had a lot more exposure to reading in her life and literacy I think she will just soak it up*'. At the end of 10 weeks, they recognised the significant progress she had made.

> It's good. … When we first started with [Lisa] and we showed her the chapter book, and she saw all the words on the page, she says, 'Oh, that's so many words.' And now she's just – she doesn't even think about it. She just opens it and just like she's just reading through. And the book that she got for her birthday is a chapter book, as well, and she's reading through

that. And so, I think it's so nice to see how confident she's become with her reading… and I hope that she, you know, when she finishes this, I hope that she'll keep reading.

Case Study 3: Enabling Learning Through Task Differentiation and Scaffolding

Brenda was very keen to show her tutors her writing ability at the start of their first session. She used the mini whiteboard to write her name and then continued to write words but they made little sense. After sometime, her tutors felt they needed to work on the reading task and were uncertain about how to manage the transition; they felt Brenda wanted to impress them and they did not want to upset her. Her tutors found it difficult to discourage Brenda from writing because it was something she loved to do. They had decided to let her continue but asked her to sound out the letters as she was writing them. At the debriefing following this lesson, Brenda's tutors mentioned that they were not planning to bring the whiteboard to the next session. As teacher educators, we suggested that they keep it tucked away (out of sight) until they were ready to use it.

Over the next few sessions, Brenda's low literacy skills became apparent. Brenda's tutors continued asking her to sound out the letters as she was writing them, and they thought this '*kind of worked*'. They felt that allowing her to take as long as she wanted when writing on the whiteboard was more beneficial than reading, which she found very difficult. When she was reading the book, they noticed she was guessing words by looking at the first letter. They wondered how they could get her to focus on sounds in the middle of the word. We reminded them that using the initial letter in a word and then guessing the rest of the word was an appropriate strategy for beginning readers.

Nearly halfway through the KoL Program, the tutors decided to use a simpler book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (by Eric Carle) because it had '*bigger text and words that really did correspond to the pictures*'. Brenda appeared to like the new book, but they were still not sure if she understood what the story was about. They wrote words on a separate card, to help her to recognise where a word started and finished. They also chose to copy the 'exact same pictures' from the book: '*We're trying to get across the whole … like the picture and the text are the same, because we picked pictures from the text to make up cards last week*'.

Brenda's tutors wondered if they should try writing a sentence from the book, laminating it and getting a whiteboard marker so Brenda could write over the top of it. However, they found out in the next session that this did not work well, because she would copy all the 'tails' in the original font and that was confusing her. (For example, she copied the letter 'a' instead of writing '*a*'.) The tutors had been helping Brenda with counting as well, so she could count the number of fruits the caterpillar ate each day in the story, but we encouraged them to focus on reading literacy for the moment.

Over the next few sessions, Brenda's tutors helped her to read and recognise individual letters, and they were very happy with the results: '*We just worked on like a couple of letters, typically ones from her name and we'll show two letters and be like, you know, which one is the b? … and she was doing really well with that today*'. They ended up playing games with the cards they had designed for the story, instead of using the spelling app, which they thought was too challenging.

> We've got cards which are words from the book with pictures from the book and we generally play a couple of games with her, be it, you know, hold it up and she tells us what it is, or a game where we lay them out and she flips one over and tells us what it is. Today, we played one where we laid them out face up, and I'd say, 'Can you point to the cheese?' and she would point to [it].

They noticed that Brenda's reading improved over the next few sessions, and started to wonder if they were now providing too much help.

> [Brenda] waits for us, because she knows that if she doesn't know it, and she doesn't really try, that we're going to give her more and more prompts. And so, she kind of like waits for the prompts until it's easy enough for her… I know that she'd be able to figure it out, but it's like a fine line between like too many prompts that it's too easy for her …or it actually being too hard…give it a go, you know what this is. …I always fall into the trap of giving her the prompt… Next time, I might give her a little bit longer and let her know I'm more serious about it, that she needs to give it a go.

The tutors were very pleased with Brenda's progress by the end of the programme: '*Before this week we opened a book for Brenda…we opened the pages one by one, and this week Brenda did this for us… She feels really proud of herself and has become more confident*'.

Discussion

There is strong convergence in the literature about the value of professional experience linked to coursework components. This linking enables pre-service teachers to connect theory and practice in ways that 'theorize practice and make formal learning practical' (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 5). As we have said earlier in the chapter, it is problematic if teacher education programmes are relying on mainstream schools to provide quality experiences of working with students with intellectual disabilities, because the literature suggests that experienced teachers are calling for more guidance and support in this area themselves. In this chapter, we have described a structured programme designed for young adults with intellectual disabilities to strengthen their foundational skills in reading literacy, and we have presented case studies that investigate some of the ways in which pre-service teachers have adapted the programme to support the learning and engagement of these young adults.

In many instances, pre-service teachers made helpful and insightful decisions to adapt the programme in ways that were responsive to their students' needs. These decisions related to the quality of instruction and the learning experience. For example, Lisa's tutors found out about her interests to engage her in literacy activities,

which included selecting a more appropriate book for her to read based on her interest in animals and spelling the names of countries. Other tutors found different ways to incorporate writing into the programme, to support the reading process. They developed engaging ways to practise skills using card games and guessing games, and employed different strategies for monitoring their students' understanding of what they were reading. These are all practices recognised as being effective for engaging students with learning difficulties and promoting reading literacy (Seo, Brownell, & Bishop, 2008).

Tutors also applied their knowledge of how children develop phonemic awareness to help them focus on an appropriate level for explicit instruction. Brenda's tutors worked at the word level to develop Brenda's awareness of words. Trevor's tutors focused on letter names and corresponding sounds (alphabet level). Lisa's tutors worked on separating words into syllables and guessing words based on initial sounds (onset-rime level). Beginning teachers generally experience difficulty individualising instruction and adjusting a planned lesson when students need additional support (Seo et al., 2008), but this study provided evidence of the pre-service teachers involved in the KoL Program making encouraging attempts to do just that. This included assessing where individuals were at developmentally and building on this base. These pre-service teachers were in only their first year of a 4-year teacher education course.

Pre-service teachers' decisions to enhance learning were also related to managing behaviours and creating a positive learning environment. For example, Trevor's tutors recognised the importance of establishing a structure or routine and successfully used a 'when-then' strategy and timer to increase time on academic learning. Both Trevor's and Brenda's tutors were learning how to redirect behaviours that were not necessarily disruptive or off-task, but were less than beneficial for students' learning. Brenda's tutors were also working on recognising when it was appropriate to remove some of their initial scaffolding and to encourage more student autonomy. Tutors shared experiences that illustrate some of the more nuanced aspects of teachers' work when it comes to building rapport and maintaining the right level of challenge for students.

Darling-Hammond (2006) highlighted how professional experiences need to be extensive, with intensive supervision and well linked with coursework components. The importance of intensive supervision is illustrated in our case studies where we, as teacher educators, intervened to guide and sometimes redirect tutors at specific points in time when we felt they had not made the best decisions. This occurred when they avoided tackling something that they found challenging. Most notably, it occurred when a student found an activity challenging and tutors ended up replacing the activity with another (rather than adapting it) or focused on teaching a subsidiary skill. For example, Brenda's tutors replaced the reading fluency task with an activity designed to teach her the alphabet. Best practice research suggests that children should learn to recognise alphabet letters as they read authentic texts (Erickson et al., 2009; Flint et al., 2017). In our role as teacher educators, we explained to all tutors in the debriefing session, why it is better not to use an alphabet task and drew attention to their coursework material, which encouraged them to use an integrated approach when teaching reading literacy. We also emphasised the importance of keeping teach-

ing focused on an identified set of learning intentions when differentiating a task, and to avoid spending too much time on subsidiary learning (like counting and to some extent writing).

To provide much needed opportunities for young adults with intellectual disabilities to build literacy skills, the KoL Program involved tutoring young adults rather than school-aged children. This had many advantages. In particular, tutorials with the KoL students could take place on campus where teacher educators could provide intensive supervision, and they were able to align the tutors' experience with the coursework components. In addition, debriefing sessions with all pre-service teachers could be easily organised as they were all together on campus. In these sessions, tutors had authentic reasons to collaborate with peers, to reflect on what was working and not working and to learn through trial and error in a well-supported environment. These case studies provide beginning evidence to suggest that collaborative partnerships between education faculties and disability-service providers can provide valuable opportunities for preparing beginning teachers to be effective, inclusive practitioners.

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Chapter 5
Going Remote: Narratives of Learning on an Indigenous Professional Experience Placement

Jennifer Rennie, Cordelia Prowd, Ryan Harrison, Tanya Davies and Teanau Newton

Abstract A lack of specialist knowledge and skills in teachers, as well as high levels of teacher turnover has contributed to the reported poor educational outcomes of Indigenous students in remote communities in Australia. In response to these reports, Australian universities have been required to include curriculum and pedagogical content that addresses two specifically focused Indigenous standards in their initial teacher education provisions. To enrich these standards, universities have offered placement opportunities in Indigenous communities for pre-service teachers. In this chapter, I report on a newly designed remote Indigenous placement through the presenting and analysing reflective narratives written by four pre-service teachers who participated in the placement. Many aspects of the stories are distinctive with respect to the individuals and their experiences, but commonalities emerge in the form of four over-arching strands of story: stories of equity and social justice; stories of building relationships and collaboration; stories of the 'right' pedagogy; and stories of Learning on Country.

> It was a journey of continual learning, from the moment that I arrived, until the moment I got on the plane to leave. I have come away from my placement overwhelmed by the enormous volume of knowledge and a deep feeling of appreciation to the students, community members, teachers and teaching assistants who taught me so much.
>
> (Teanau, Pre-service teacher)

Preamble

A recent education policy document published by the Australian Government argued that all university teaching graduates needed to 'have the knowledge and skills necessary to interact in a culturally competent way with Indigenous communities' (DEEWR, 2011, p. 9). It further argued that universities in Australia should aim to

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produce teaching graduates 'who have a comprehensive understanding of … remote education grounded in practical experience and theoretical knowledge' (DEEWR, 2011, p. 3). In the context of teaching placements and experience, this meant universities should structure their teaching degrees with 'stronger capacity and credibility … especially in terms of preparing teachers for work in rural, regional and remote Australia' (Trinidad et al., 2011, p. 112). It is with this policy context in mind that we set about the task of re-designing and re-implementing a remote Indigenous placement in the Faculty of Education, Monash University. In this chapter, I share four narratives written by pre-service teachers relating to their experience and learning on this newly designed remote Indigenous placement. Using narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2016) and the concept of storylines (Sondergaard, 2002) the narratives are analysed to identify the common stories that cut across the four narratives.

Stories of Support (or Lack of Support) for Remote Education in Australia

Schools in remote and very remote areas of Australia have been described as high needs schools which are presented with a number of challenges (Price, 2016). In these remote locations, students tend to fare worse than their urban peers in standardised tests of literacy and numeracy achievement. It is more difficult to attract and retain teachers in these locations, and those who do elect to teach there are often not adequately prepared to work in these schools. Student attendance is erratic, and they are very isolated places both geographically and culturally with limited access to services (Price, 2016). However, it should be noted that there are some who suggest these negative discourses around Indigenous outcomes that oftentimes originate from the reporting of data from national tests of literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN) are unhelpful as they run counter to criteria that are considered 'good schooling' in these communities (Disbray, 2016).

The high turnover of teachers in remote locations has been reported as a significant factor in the educational outcomes for students in remote schools (Hall, 2013). In an evaluation of Northern Territory teachers that examined issues around teacher quality, experience and expertise there were three main areas highlighted in relation to those students considered 'at risk' in remote communities. These included high teacher turnover, lack of preparedness to teach Indigenous students, and a lack of specialist expertise in areas such as English as a Second Language (ESL) (Abu-Duhou, McKenna, & Howley, 2006).

In the past decade or so a number of initiatives from both education departments and universities have been put in place to try and address the issues with staffing and teacher preparation to work in remote and very remote schools. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership has recognised that quality teaching begins with quality Initial Teacher Education (ITE), and have therefore developed a suite of professional standards that ITE providers must ensure students meet upon

graduating. Two of these are specifically Indigenous focussed: Standard 1.4, 'Strategies for Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students'; and Standard 2.4, 'Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians' (AITSL, 2011). The introduction of these standards has required universities to include curriculum and pedagogical content that addresses these standards in their ITE provisions. Whilst many universities have integrated the standards across their courses, other universities have included dedicated units relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in their courses and specialisations within courses. For example, in 2008 the New South Wales Department of Education and four other universities piloted an enhanced teacher training program (ETTP) delivered to final year primary pre-service teachers, through a suite of dedicated units, that aimed to build pre-their capacity to teach Indigenous students (Labone, Cavanagh, & Long, 2014).

Similarly, education departments have been looking seriously at the area of teacher recruitment in remote and very remote locations. In 2010, the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (DET) launched their 'Quality Remote Teaching Service Program' as a means to recruit teachers for their 82 remote schools. The process which involved a number of stages aimed to assess applicants' suitability for working in these contexts. Assessment was based on research conducted by DET using personality profiling on 90 remote practitioners nominated by principals, to identify the dispositions and characteristics needed for success in remote communities (Brasche & Harrington, 2012).

In addition to the inclusion of curriculum relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education many universities are offering professional experience opportunities in remote schools. This has been an area of expansion with an increasing numbers of studies researching these kinds of professional experience initiatives. Given the issues around attracting and retaining teachers in these communities, programs which give pre-service teachers the opportunities to make informed decisions around working in these places would seem a necessary inclusion in ITE. However, planning for and enacting this work is not without its challenges (Osborne, 2003). In addition to logistical considerations such as placement planning and coordinating, financial expense, geographical isolation and challenges of finding suitable accommodation for pre-service teachers, there are also issues associated with how well prepared pre-service teachers are to teach and live in these places (Auld, Dyer, & Charles, 2016; Sharplin, 2002; Yarrow, Ballantyne, Hansford, Herschell, & Millwater, 1999). Many studies talk about the importance of pre-service teachers being culturally competent, employing culturally relevant pedagogies, and linking new ideas about teaching to what is already known (e.g., Osborne, 2003). Warren and Quine (2013) state that teachers need to be both culturally and pedagogically prepared to 'deal with the multifaceted challenges that exist in remote communities' (p. 13). Sullivan and Johnson (2012) suggest the challenges of appropriate preparation, cultural awareness, and long-held beliefs systematically, 'should improve the quality of education that teachers provide to students in remote schools' (p. 107). Others argue that all of this learning should sit within a rights based framework which advocates for 'education for consciousness raising' (Falcon & Jacob, 2011, p. 26). This in turn

is important for the ongoing reconciliation agenda established some 25 years ago after the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

A report published in 2016 used a five dimensional framework to measure Australia's progress in this area and set out a road map for how we can become a 'reconciled, just and equitable Australia now and twenty-five years into the future'. The five dimensions relate to the development of:

- Positive relationships built on trust and respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians participating equally and equitably in all areas of life;
- All political, business and community institutions actively supporting all dimensions of reconciliation;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights being valued and recognised part of a shared national identity; and
- A widespread acceptance of our nation's history and agreement that the wrongs of the past will never be repeated. (Reconciliation Australia, 2016)

Remote practicums can provide a window into opportunities to teach in remote schools. In recent years, alternative placement opportunities such as International placements have become a popular addition to ITE (Fitzgerald, Parr, & Williams, 2017). These have been shown to have many positive benefits in terms of student learning including the development of intercultural competencies and improved classroom practice (Walters, Garii, & Walters, 2009). However, there has been a paucity of research conducted into the potential benefits of remote placements in Australia for pre-service teachers, with most studies focusing on the logistics and complexities of doing this work (see for example, Auld et al., 2016; Osborne, 2003; Sharplin, 2002; Trinidad, Sharplin, Ledger, & Broadley, 2014; Yarrow et al., 1999).

The Back Story of This Remote Practicum

After securing a grant in 2015 from the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (Federal Government), a team of teacher educators and professional staff in Monash's Faculty of Education began the work of setting up a remote professional experience in consultation with the Northern Territory Department of Education. The team included myself and a colleague who held the role of Director, Indigenous Education and Leadership in the Faculty at the time. Following the departure from the Faculty a previous coordinator some years earlier, we began the job of re-imagining and re-designing a remote Indigenous placement experience. After potential sites had been identified, we liaised with various schools and communities in relation to which schools might be prepared to host a group of up to 12 students. Two communities were identified as potential sites. After logistical issues had been considered in relation to timing and duration of the placement, we began the task of selecting students. Interested third and fourth year Bachelor of Education students, and second year Master of

Teaching students were invited to submit a written application that responded to three questions:

1. How would you benefit from the experience of participating in a remote Indigenous placement?
2. What does it mean to be a 'culturally competent' teacher?
3. What are the issues related to education in remote Indigenous contexts?

The applications were then shortlisted and a smaller group of students were interviewed. The written application, interview, academic results in the education unit EDF2031 'Indigenous perspectives on teaching and learning', and previous professional experience reports were used as a means to select the final group of ten students who embarked on the placement in August, 2016. Our aim was to select students who we felt would be a best fit for the experience. This was important as schools in these communities are difficult places to work and are dealing with their own set of complex issues (Price, 2016). This process was repeated with a second cohort of six students who participated in the placement in August, 2017. An induction program was developed in consultation with the communities and schools that both groups of students needed to complete prior to participating in the placement. During this period, ethics approval was gained to conduct research to understand the various stakeholders' experiences. As part of this research, we interviewed pre-service teachers, school principals, teachers and Indigenous support staff from schools in the remote locations. Pre-service teachers were interviewed both during and after the placement and school personnel after the placement. In 2017, additional ethics clearance was sought to give pre-service students the option of writing a reflective narrative about their learning whilst on the placement. In this chapter, I focus on four reflective narratives written by pre-service teachers who participated in the 2017 placement experience.

About the Storytelling in This Study

As stated earlier, the broader study from which this chapter draws involved interviewing all of the various stakeholders in relation to their experiences in the setting up and implementation of the placement. The data reported on here focuses on the reflective narratives written by four of the pre-service teachers who embarked on the 2017 placement. A small number of questions were provided to help the pre-service teachers think about how they might approach their writing, although they were encouraged to focus on things that were important to them. I wanted it to be their story. The following questions were provided as prompts:

- What were you motivations for undertaking the professional placement?
- How were your expectations met or otherwise?
- Were there some significant events that prompted you to think/reflect and learn?
- What did you learn about working and living in this space, about teaching and learning, and about yourself as a teacher?

Taking a narrative inquiry approach I wanted to gain a real sense of each pre-service teacher's individual lived experience of the remote placement through the written reflections. I wanted to understand what mattered to them. As such, a narrative inquiry approach was applied to the ways in which the reflective narratives were written. Clandinin (2016) describes narrative inquiry as an 'approach to the study of human lives conceived as a way of honouring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding' (p. 17).

Becoming a teacher is not confined to the four walls of the classroom. Teachers' lived experiences are constructed within the broader social, cultural and institutional contexts in which schools and classrooms are situated (Williams, 2015). This is of particular importance for schools in remote locations in Australia where teachers live in relative geographical and cultural isolation. The social, cultural and political issues are complex in these communities, where Indigenous peoples have been subject to decades of colonial practices in an attempt to assimilate them into dominant Australian values (Kerwin & Van Issum, 2013). Consequently, the pre-service teachers' experiences of living and being in these communities and the learning that occurred outside of the classroom were considered equally important.

There were two main stages applied to the data analysis. First, each narrative was read separately, to gain a sense of the individual experience of each of the participants. The second stage involved applying the concept of storylines from feminist poststructuralism (see, for example, Davies, 2000; Sondergaard, 2002) to identify any common storyline/s that cut across the individual narratives. Sondergaard (2002) defines storylines as 'a condensed version of a naturalized and conventional cultural narrative, one that is often used as the explanatory framework of one's own and other's practices and sequences of action' (p. 191).

Relating the Stories

In this section, I retell stories from four of the pre-service teachers—Cordelia, Ryan, Tanya and Teanau—who undertook a placement in the Northern Territory in 2011. As much as possible I have tried to retain the voice of each story-teller and keep their stories 'in tact'. This was especially crucial as I had asked them to write their narratives in a way that was important to them. And yet, I have not shied away from showing my own role in relating and interpreting each pre-service teacher's story. I had been invested in the planning and implementation of this placement for two years. I was confident that it had been a positive learning experience for the students involved, but in my prompts for them I had left it relatively open in terms of what they might write about so there was a level of uncertainty in what I might find. In terms of my interpretive role, I wasn't sitting in front of them asking questions as they composed their narratives, and I did not have the benefit of facial cues or body language to help me interpret their stories. Nevertheless, an aim of narrative inquiry is not necessarily to find one 'truth' or answer to a question or set of questions but to recognise the fact that there are many different stories equally valid that should be told (Hunter, 2010).

Cordelia's Story

The first email with a reflective narrative attached arrived. I opened the document with a sense of both intrigue and trepidation.

Cordelia began her story by quoting her mentor teacher in Maningrida, in the Northern Territory, when she first met her. She had asked if there were any tips her mentor might give.

> *Pause…*. [exhales]… Ahh, gosh… well, I know this sounds cliché, but… I think the best piece of advice I can give you is if you can come up with as few expectations as possible, you're going to fare a lot better. It's those who can adapt to any situation that really get something out of it.

She then proceeded to write about her beliefs around teaching. In particular, she expounded her belief that teaching should be totally focused on student learning, and that 'children possess unique and tremendous skill sets themselves, and as such, have a great deal of lessons to teach *adults*'. She said it was this that contributed to her motivations to undertake this placement. '[I wanted to] take a step back from constantly voicing certainty and authority in educational spaces. Instead, I sought to learn from and listen to other voices so that I could have a deeper understanding of the role of a teacher in community life'. She explained how she heeded her mentor's advice and that she entered the space with a deliberate promise to be 'open-minded', a 'blank slate' and to 'learn as much' as she could.

In the next part of the story Cordelia discussed some of her learning in her Maningrida placement. She talked about how she was amazed at the 'resilience' of the children she had taught, making reference to the many challenges for children including health, poverty, language barriers and educational attainment. There was a sense that she was troubled by all of this as she talked about discussing this with her mentor teacher. Cordelia concluded that 'Indigenous education is fraught with extenuating factors' and that it was important to 'examine the situation through a holistic lens'. Following this, she explained how on her placement she had tried to make sense of the impact of white colonialism on Indigenous education, another aspect of her story that obviously troubled her. She had actively sought out conversations with Indigenous elders and Indigenous assistants. They told her stories about how before white occupation many tribal groups had owned the land and that they have now managed to live in relative harmony through negotiating traditional land laws. Community elders had,

> Worked tirelessly with the local school and police to ensure that their children had access to both worlds. The results of such respectful collaboration had resulted in many positive outcomes, such as a school cultural team who imparted cultural lessons to the children, camping trips on sacred land, Indigenous teaching assistants in classrooms, a local school bus to bring children to school and ongoing, concerted efforts to engage students and families in the school education system.

Cordelia concluded by saying that she felt working collaboratively was the only way forward.

Next, she recounted what she had learned about teaching. 'Teaching Indigenous children', she wrote, 'requires you to pretty much abandon all previously tried-and-tested pedagogical methods and instead rely on the relationship you develop with the individual child for guidance'. I remember reading this powerful statement and feeling, as a teacher educator, challenged by it. She went on to tell the story of a child in her class.

> Whilst the children were evidently excited to have a new person in the classroom, they were equally intent on understanding who exactly I was. Many of the children watched me from a distance and only openly engaged with me after several days. There was only one little girl who appeared to place her trust in me from the start, making her presence known by tapping me on the shoulder and gesticulating that she wanted to create a piece of art together. She proceeded to wordlessly engage me in a series of activities, and often glanced searchingly into my face for my answers and actions. All through the afternoon, her body language and intense gaze gave me an unnerving sense that she was weighing up the potential connection between us. I must have passed the test because from the next morning, she would insist on doing most, if not all, classroom tasks together …. Most importantly, the rapport we developed resulted in her becoming very willing to learn. English was most probably her fourth if not fifth language and so classes were far from easy for her. However, her respect for our relationship meant that if I asked her to complete a task, she was most willing to apply herself to it. This understanding of respect for a respected elder's wishes and expectations was something I had not come across before in a child so young. I found her determination (and reasons for applying herself) both inspiring and humbling.
>
> I knew very little about this student outside of the classroom context. …. And yet, I felt as if I knew her quite well. This was because the relationship was grounded in mutual respect for each other as two people sharing an experience together in the present moment, rather than a detailed understanding of each other's pasts or futures…. Our time spent together enabled her to grow in her understanding of Western educational ideas and concepts, and me in my understanding of teaching and learning. In this way, we shared the educational journey together. …. one day I arrived at school to learn that she had gone back to her Country. I was sorry not to have been able to say goodbye. But in many ways, it ended in the way it started: suddenly, unceremoniously and mysteriously.

Cordelia felt that the type of relationship she developed with this student was very different from the role of teacher-student relationship that is taught at university or state schools. Whilst her previous pre-service experiences had taught her the importance of promoting and supporting positive relationships between teachers and students, relationship building with Indigenous children was more than this. It required a 'mutual understanding and respect; with any ideas of hierarchy and condescension being swiftly replaced with an understanding that both the teacher and the student have knowledge to impart and share with one another'. She said it was 'confronting', 'unnerving', but 'ultimately humbling if you can allow yourself to realise that despite being the teacher, you can learn much from your student yourself'.

Her narrative ended in a similar way it began by her pondering the journey ahead

> As a white pre-service teacher, I feel I am teetering on a professional precipice. As much as I am drawn to working in Indigenous communities, am I just continuing the cycle of white interference in communities that had done very well without us? Or do I plough ahead with new insights and seek to rectify my predecessors' mistakes? I am as yet unsure, but I will continue to hold on to my mentor's advice and keep an open mind to all possibilities.

Ryan's Story

Ryan's story began with the excitement of being selected to embark on what he knew would be a powerful professional learning journey 'liv[ing] and teach[ing] in an Indigenous community'. He saw this as, finally, a chance to have a richer understanding of what he had learned at university. He began his story by recounting his flight with a group other students in a small aircraft looking out of the window and seeing 'coastal islands, turquoise waters and rugged green bushlands all of which were set against a bright red earth'.

He then wrote about how fortunate he was to attend the 'Learning on Country' camp with his mentor and teacher during the first three days of the experience. The Learning on Country camps are an annual event at this school that run over two weeks during August. Members of the Language and Culture team take groups of students in the middle and upper primary, and secondary areas of the school out for two nights to 'Learn on Country', involving a number of cultural and hunting activities.

> I had met my placement grade and mentor for no longer than one hour before we hit the hard-red dirt in two mini buses and two Troop carriers. The Year 4, 5 & 6 students were elated, as this was the first school camp for many and a first time in the back of a luxury 4-wheel drive. My tent mate was an Indigenous man of a similar age to me and he instantly enthralled me with the telling of many of the dreamtime stories. Sitting there and listening to his stories, I could not help but feel humbled and honoured to be camping on Traditional Sacred Land, with rich tapestries of culture, histories and spirits present.

Ryan explained how he learned many things whilst on this camp. In addition to developing relationships with the students he learned about 'bush medicine', 'bush survival' and what he called 'culture'. The camp made him much more at ease due to being able to get to know the students and his mentor teacher in a less formal setting. He was surprised about the level of diversity of students in his class with children coming from five different states in Australia, but also amazed at 'how talented' the student were with some having English as their 'second, third or fourth language'. The students were 'happy to be at school', 'engaged', and they displayed 'great curiosity and interest' in 'the curriculum and the lessons being presented'. The school embraced the 'local Indigenous knowledge and culture' which allowed the children to 'be themselves and feel comfortable' in the school setting. Ryan praised the 'Language and Culture team' at the school for their work in this area. As I read Ryan's reflections, I remember thinking how delightfully refreshing it was to hear stories that countered the negative discourse that so often surrounds these communities and schools.

Ryan ended his story with a summary of what he had learned suggesting that he learned far more than he had expected

> Throughout my three weeks of placement, I learnt far more than I expected, from the unbridled curiosity of Indigenous children, to the day-in day-out life within a remote Indigenous community and of course, to the tastiness of the barramundi we had caught twenty minutes prior and cooked over a small makeshift fire pit. Most importantly in this setting of deep and rich culture, I was made to feel I belonged, changing my path in life for a lifetime. Not only was I was inspired during this time, but I returned refreshed and energised with a strong sense

of purpose to fulfil a career working in Indigenous communities, learning their language, customs, histories and cultures. As of now, I am driven and determined like nothing before.

Ryan's practicum was life changing for him. He was humbled by what he had learned and held a deep level of respect for the community and school.

Tanya's Story

Similar to Ryan, Tanya's story began with a level of excitement about being selected, and about what she would learn 'in a multitude of ways as a teacher'

> I felt that it would provide me with the opportunity to hear first-hand from remote teachers, offering me a unique insight into life and remote indigenous communities……It would afford me the opportunity to work closely with local Indigenous teachers, students and the community, further benefitting my studies and future in teaching, but also my personal growth.

She wrote about how this would help to build her professional skills and knowledge in her current workplace where she was working with Indigenous children. Like Cordelia, Tanya had tried to approach the placement with few expectations. She wanted to go in 'open minded', although she confessed to doing some background work to get a sense of the community she was entering including watching a documentary on television and talking to 'family and friends'.

She had been concerned about what resources might be available to her in the school but was surprised at how well-resourced the school was. In her own words, 'they had a wonderful cultural section, stable internet, and the teachers and teaching assistants were a great source of knowledge'.

Through her reading and research into education in remote communities, Tanya had anticipated that school attendance would be an issue for these communities, and yet she was still surprised at how children came to school at irregular times and often did not return after lunch. Similarly through her reading about these issues, she had expected educational achievement to be low but felt these students were not given due credit for what they were capable of.

> I felt that they were being let down (not in the school, but nationally) as I realized that these students didn't get the recognition they deserve. They may not be ranked the highest on tests like NAPLAN but they knew about four languages plus English…… What they could tell me about their land and culture, how they looked out for each other and aided each other in the classroom, I felt they were cheated and these skills need to be recognised.

She went on to say how she was amazed how the children were content with so little and how they made 'real play' an integral part of their lives.

> I saw play, real play, as children used things within their environment to make into toys. Swords out of dried pandanus leaves, a boat made from cuttle fish speared onto the end of a stick so that it could be pushed through the water, the simple games of flipping over each other, dancing, singing. I heard so much laughter and not once did I hear a child say "I am BORED". I long for that for my students now back home, to enjoy the simple things.

Again as with the previous two stories, I was heartened by the way Tanya perceived and talked about the children and communities in positive ways. Like Ryan, the 'Learning on Country' camp was a highlight for Tanya.

> 'Learning on country' camp was the highlight of my time on placement. I was nervous and a little apprehensive at first only having two days within the school environment beforehand and being the only pre-service teacher going at that time. The experience though was amazing, it allowed me to get to know the students outside of the classroom. This became beneficial later when I was teaching in the classroom …. I think getting to know my students within an environment they were more comfortable in allowed for me to gain a better understanding of them….
>
> Listening to elders share stories of their ancestors in the evening, speaking in language was magical….I experienced and observed how strongly grounded my students were in storytelling. Listening to those stories made me feel at ease in the evenings when everything was dark and those strange noises didn't seem to bother me as much….
>
> Learning how to make spears, weaving, finding 'bush tucker' under the guidance of the elders……The students learnt about sustainability, it was a strong part of their culture. Only take what they need. Such an important lesson…to respect and care for nature and follow in the footsteps of their ancestors.

Tanya recalled the group's daily afternoon walk to the barge landing to capture each sunset. She reflected how each evening, at around this time, the children would play often with no 'adult supervision', which prompted her to reflect on her own childhood and her growing concern for other children who do not spend enough time outdoors playing.

Tanya had plenty to say, also, about life in the classroom. She wrote about how she came to appreciate the importance of making learning relevant to students' lives.

> When my lessons were applicable to their everyday activities I began to observe results improving significantly. I related writing and reading to them through the use of a text 'We're going on a croc hunt'. Having the students act out the story in the classroom and then planning a 'croc hunt' excursion to Barge Landing the students were engaged and keen to write their own version of 'Were going on a croc hunt in Maningrida', using places that were familiar to them. I also tried to use the students' culture of telling stories, something I had observed the elders doing. I tried to incorporate more 'hands on' learning and a greater variety of practical experiences into the lessons.

She wrote about the critical role that the Indigenous teaching assistants played in the classroom due to their deep level of knowledge about the children, language and culture. They were a critical 'link between the white man and Indigenous ways'. And she wrote about her fascination with the 'kinship' system and how this means 'you will always have a family' where you belong. It made her reflect on the proverb that 'it takes a village to raise a child' and how we could all benefit from thinking more about this.

Tanya's story ended with her acknowledgement of how she saw the development of great leaders within the community. She had come away from her placement 'overwhelmed by the enormous volume of knowledge and a deep feeling of appreciation to the students, community members, teachers and teaching assistants who taught me so much and look forward to going back'. Like Ryan's story, there was a deep level of gratitude and respect for what she had experienced during her time in the school and community.

Teanau's Story

The final story I want to share began with Teanau sharing her fear of the unknown.

> The anxieties of travelling with a bunch of strangers to a remote area, working with Indigenous children, families and people of the community was overwhelming. I was afraid that I might say the wrong thing at any time, or not know enough, or be rejected. The build-up was the worst, because I didn't really understand what I had signed up to do and I was terrified of the unknowns and challenges, but I also felt peace that this experience was going to have a major impact on my life, and could very well be the beginning of a passionate lifetime career.

It turned out to be, she wrote, a 'journey of continual learning' from the moment she got on the plane in Melbourne. Whilst she acknowledged having completed her Indigenous studies unit in her course back in Melbourne, as well as participating in the induction program and doing other individual research about the community, all of this preparation could only so much to prepare her for what was to come: 'I don't think there could have been anything that could really help me understand what it was like, apart from experiencing it firsthand'. Reading this in Teanau's story as one of the lecturers who had tried to prepare Teanau and the other students for the placement, I felt an urgent need to ask her to expand on this. I wondered, as I did so often, how we might rethink the ways we prepared our students for this placement.

Much of the remainder of Teanau's narrative was a collection of memorable moments during her experience. She wrote about her desire to attend the local church across the road from the school. To her dismay, there were no services held on her first two weekends but was excited when she found the church open on her final day. She cites this as one of her memorable experiences.

> My friend and I entered and asked if it was okay for us to join, and the gathered few nodded with smiles. There was one lady who worked in the Family room, at the school who led the small church group, with approximately 7 children, and 3 mothers, those being Indigenous families. We sat together in a circle on the floor, and sang a handful of Christian songs, one of them was sung in one of the languages of the community……The joy amongst the group of us was overwhelming, and the children approached me the next day at school, extending to more relationships being built within the school community.

Her gaze returned briefly to the classroom.

> This lesson involved a real practical nature, looking at items that [the students] see every day, and how to cut them in half, and what a half represented. It included, crabs, fidget spinners (one of the students had one in the classroom), a football (was very popular to play at lunch time) and more. We had just finished, and were outside for lunch, and one of the Indigenous students, came up to me, and had broken his cookie in half, and said "look, half". Other students then began splitting whatever food they had in half, and were talking about it and comparing them amongst their friends. This was a major victory to me, and I couldn't wipe the smile off my face. I was mostly happy that my focus on drawing on objects from their environment, throughout the lesson to explain the concept, really solidified their understanding, and this was shown when they followed on the concept with their lunch items.

Next she wrote about her involvement in the student council and how she was lucky to attend meetings held each week. The issues they tackled on this council included

'taking a stronger stance on rubbish in the school community, and finding safe spaces for students to go within the school'. She concluded this memory by saying 'it was great to be a part of a school community body of students, who were driven to seeing positive change, and seeing younger students and older students working together'. And she reflected about how she would like to implement similar ideas when teaching when she completed her course.

Once again, the 'Learning on Country' camp featured as a highlight of her placement:

> This experience was an amazing flip to school, as I was the one soaking up any information they were willing to share. They were in control, and they lead me to learn things about their Country, which I was so grateful and appreciative for.

Teanau's final memorable experience concerned a relationship she developed with one of the children who had experienced some trauma in her life. The child was initially wary, and yet over the three weeks the relationship strengthened. She recalled feeling overwhelmed when the child took a bracelet from her arm and offered it to her on her last day: 'I still haven't taken it off, being three months since I left'.

To end her story Teanau mentioned some of the challenges she had experienced. These included: the use in the classroom of a phonics program called 'Jolly Phonics'(which she believed was culturally and pedagogically inappropriate); the large number of dogs that roamed the community (she felt they were in need of care); and she had felt a little unsafe on the weekends when alcohol was allowed into the community.

She concluded with some advice: 'I feel that to work in a remote Indigenous community, you have to be open, be willing, be driven, be passionate, and really have a desire to understand the culture and their lived experiences. These are the qualities that helped support me to engage wholly in the experience, and I absolutely loved it'.

Analysing the Stories

In my analysis of the stories of Cordelia, Ryan, Tanya and Teanau, I tried to understand the stories in a way that might help me to unpack both the individual and the collective learning experiences of these pre-service teachers. As I read through the stories again and again, it was apparent that there were many unanswered questions for these pre-service teachers. There were instances where they questioned things they experienced both in the school and the community. There were times when they were surprised about what they had learned, and times where they questioned themselves and others. And there were moments of certainty and uncertainty, revelatory moments and moments of discomfort. I have chosen just four storylines that I saw as common to their narratives.

Stories of Equity and Social Justice

All of the students showed that they entered into their remote placement with a desire to experience and/or work in Indigenous contexts. They had all learned about Indigenous perspectives on teaching and learning in their university-based teacher education course, and now they wanted to have a better sense of what that might 'look like' and feel like. Ryan's words could be seen as speaking for all students on this placement: 'I had previously completed a unit on Indigenous studies, and throughout other units at University I have passionately explored the educational rights that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children deserve. This was the small spark for the reason of embarking on this journey'. The choice of the word 'deserve' suggests a belief that this was a 'right' that they (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children) were not currently experiencing. This group of pre-service teachers clearly wanted to commit to this cause.

Throughout the stories, there was a sense that these pre-service teachers held [strong?] views and questioned issues related to equity and social justice in this space. Whilst they knew and expected that educational outcomes for Indigenous children would be lower than non-Indigenous children, they all wrote about the children they worked with in positive ways. This often presented alongside how concerned they were with the disturbing issues of poverty and ill health that affected some children. They described the children's abilities to speak in a number of different languages, their creative endeavours, their story telling techniques, resilience and the fact they were highly motivated children.

The narratives also contained accounts of learning experiences where the pre-service teachers had made a determined effort to connect to the experiences and knowledge of the children and how they witnessed children learning. They felt that the abilities of the children were not adequately represented in reporting on national and literacy tests and the deficit stories told about them in the Australian news media. In contrast, the 'stories' related by these pre-service teacher emphasised the abilities, capabilities and positive qualities of the Indigenous learners they taught and came to know in just 3 weeks.

Stories of Building Relationships and Collaboration

The pre-service teachers variably recounted experiences where they developed meaningful relationships with children, teacher colleagues and others on the community. Cordelia claimed that she developed a very different understanding of the role of the teacher-student relationship from the one she had encountered at university. Teanau recalled the relationship she developed with a student as one of her 'most memorable experiences'. All spoke of these relationships as different from the relationships they had experienced in other educational settings. Herbert (2007) highlights the importance of relationship work in developing partnerships with Indigenous communities.

She says that this work requires honesty, and involves making an unwritten agreement 'to listen', and 'to reflect' on what is said 'within the framework of your own understandings' (p. 47). Developing relationships with the children in this school and others in the community was seen as an important part of working with them. As pre-service teachers talked about their various relationships, there was a sense that they had a deep respect for the children and people they met. There was also the sense as I read through these stories that these pre-service teachers had learned the crucial importance of working collaboratively with both the community and school.

Stories of the 'Right' Pedagogy

There were numerous examples throughout the stories related to classroom pedagogy. Cordelia wrote that she felt she needed to 'abandon all previously tried-and-tested pedagogical methods' and let the relationship you had developed with the individual child guide you. All of the success stories which the pre-service teachers recalled were where they made a determined effort to connect to the lifeworlds and experiences of the students they worked with. They saw the benefit of allowing children to learn through play. There were also examples of the pre-service teachers questioning existing pedagogical practices. Teanau recalled the use of an American based phonics program in her class which she felt was culturally and pedagogically inappropriate.

Stories of Learning on Country

There were numerous references in the stories to learning about culture. In particular, the three pre-service teachers who were afforded the opportunity of attending the Learning on Country camp recalled this as a highlight of their experience. They wrote about learning what foods to eat, listening to dreamtime stories, making spears, weaving and looking after the land. They made the most of opportunities to actively seek information from elders and Indigenous teaching assistants in the school and some wrote about the fact that they had a real desire to keep learning in this space. The pre-service teachers were in awe of the multiple languages that these children knew and some made an effort to learn aspects of language to help them communicate more effectively with the children.

One of the most significant aspects of their references to learning about culture was that it was not limited to simply learning about a body of knowledge that people have about a particular society. Rather, it included a deeper understanding which involves understanding themselves in relation to another culture. It required understanding how their own culture shapes their perceptions of themselves, their world and their relationships with others. There was evidence of the pre-service teachers working through this complex issue as they wrote about their various anxieties, fears and concerns.

Teanau commented, 'I was afraid that I might say the wrong thing at any time, or not know enough, or be rejected'. Cordelia wrote,

> I do not presume to understand the full impact of white colonialism on Indigenous groups in Australia, but I do believe that such experiences of dispossession and abuse could potentially foster an enduring strength of identity in people. So I sought out Indigenous teaching assistants and elders of the community in an attempt to better understand the community's reconciliation with the impact of colonialism".

She then reflected further,

> I find it rather extraordinary that a group of people who lived largely harmoniously until the arrival and subsequent destruction wrought by *ballanders* could be willing to work with the very same people 200 years later to create opportunities for their children that will (in many ways) move them further away from their traditional ways of life. But what else can be done? The influence of colonialism has resulted in an Australian society that values capitalism and social mobility above all else. The community recognise that education is the only viable option to improve their children's futures, and so they have made a decision to commit to the cause. It is far from a relinquishment of their culture or values, but rather a wise solution to a potentially insurmountable problem".

This group of pre-service teachers was clearly in the 'contact zone', a space described by Somerville and Perkins (2003) as a place where different stories or lifeworlds might meet, intersect and negotiate difference. Like Somerville and Perkins, these pre-service students saw this as highly significant for the developing relationship between Indigenous and other marginalised knowledges and Western academic thought. Whilst potentially a 'risky' idea, it does have the potential for opening up 'new possibilities' which are potentially transformative.

Concluding Story

The experience of this remote placement for Cordelia, Ryan, Tanya and Teanau was one of continual learning. Their previous learning about working in the Indigenous space both at university and in the work context had fuelled their desires to learn more. They embarked on the placement with open minds, few expectations, and a desire to learn as much as they could. There was strong evidence throughout the stories that these pre-service teachers were working towards becoming more culturally and pedagogically prepared to work in this space, which has been identified as an important aspect of working in these communities (Falcon & Jacob, 2011; Sullivan and Johnson 2012; Warren & Quine, 2013).

Postscript

The reading of these stories suggest that these pre-service teachers were deeply involved in the important process of reconciliation as part of this placement. They desired to improve the outcomes for these students so Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander children might participate equally in all areas of life. They realised the importance of building positive relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians and of working collaboratively in this space. They were determined to learn about histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. And, while remaining positive in their outlook on working with Indigenous learners, they did not shy away from reflecting on the wrongs of the past (see Reconciliation Australia, 2016).

Not evidenced in the stories I have related above, I have learned through in more recent informal communications that one pre-service teacher is taking up a position in a remote community in 2018, and one is returning to do another remote placement in 2018. And for the other two, the possibilities of exploring future work in these communities are still open.

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Part II
Professional Experience as Relational Work

Chapter 6
Mentoring Practices and Relationships During the EAL Practicum in Australia: Contrasting Narratives

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Abstract While new regimes of accreditation have sought to standardise the length of pre-service teachers' professional experience placements across jurisdictions, the nature and quality of those placements continue to vary greatly from setting to setting. Research into generic mentoring situations has identified mentor–mentee relationships and the quality of feedback provided by school-based mentors as key factors mediating the experiences of pre-service teachers during their practicum. However, research into mentoring in particular disciplines is uneven. This chapter uses narrative-based case studies to investigate contrasting experiences of two secondary pre-service EAL teachers and their mentor teachers during their practicums in Victoria, Australia. The study identifies particular mentoring practices and relational work evident during the pre-service teachers' practicums and shows how these practices contributed to or hindered their professional learning and identity development during that practicum.

> My mentor teacher said, 'You should take risks now because this is the time when you can take risks. You've got someone else in the room [to support you]. (pre-service EAL teacher, Kate)
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> I just had to give up all my sort of ideas and themes that I wanted to do and … adjust to my mentor teacher because I needed a good report…. I had to suck it up…. I had to play [by] the rules. (pre-service EAL teacher, Maria)

Introduction

Concern is frequently expressed about the capacity of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes to adequately prepare the next generation of teachers. In Australia, this concern often focuses on the value of the school-based professional experience and how well it links with university-based programmes (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008;

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Talbot, Denny, & Henderson, 2017). While some recent studies document valuable innovations in professional experience mentoring (e.g. Kriewaldt, Ambrosetti, Rorrison, & Capeness, 2018), a report from the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG, 2014) raises questions about the effectiveness of mentoring for Australian pre-service teachers.

International literature tends to agree that school-based professional experience (most often in the form of a short-term 'practicum') offers practical opportunities for pre-service teachers to socialise into a school community and transition into the teaching profession (Chiang, 2008; Faez & Valeo, 2012; Farrell, 2008; Graves, 2009). While robust debates continue about the value of mentoring in generic professional experiences, research into mentoring in specific disciplines is uneven. In the broader discipline of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (or TESOL) teacher education,[1] the critical role of professional experience is quite well documented, although most published studies are set in Asian contexts. These studies have shown that mentoring interactions between school-based mentors and pre-service teachers *may* exert a powerful positive influence on the pre-service teachers' experience of the practicum, but in some instances, this 'mentoring' can have a distinctly negative influence (Atay, 2007; Brandt, 2006; Farrell, 2008; Gan, 2014; Gao & Benson, 2012; Riesky, 2013; Trent, 2011, 2013; Urzúa & Vásquez, 2008; Yuan & Lee, 2014).

The TEMAG (2014) report in Australia expressed interest in the quality of mentoring for pre-service teachers, but there has been little research before or after the publication of that report into mentoring practices and relationships that consider the influence of discipline, and this includes the teaching of English as an Additional Language (EAL). A decade ago, a federal government inquiry into ITE in Australia (Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training, 2007) recommended extending the time that pre-service teachers spend in school-based practicums, and they called for more research into the particular nature of pre-service teacher practicums. Since then, accreditation bodies have required pre-service teachers to spend longer periods of time in school-based professional experience (AITSL, 2015). However, the *nature* of that professional experience, and the influence of particular disciplinary areas on the experience, remains under-researched. This chapter responds to Standing Committee's call for more research by investigating the mentoring relationships and practices of two pre-service EAL teachers and their mentor teachers in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia. We present contrasting narratives of the two pre-service EAL teachers and their school-based mentors, and examine the influence of various mentoring practices on the pre-service teachers' professional learning and identity development.

The authors of this chapter are English language teacher educators, who teach and research in Monash University's large, multi-campus faculty of education. We bring to this study diverse practical experiences of mentoring and being mentored in

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[1]Across the world, different curriculums in different jurisdictions use different terms to describe particular forms of TESOL. The terms used in this chapter include English as an Additional Language (EAL); English as a Second Language (ESL); and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). EAL is the term used in the Australian Curriculum (also in the UK and Ireland) to refer to the teaching of English to children whose first language is not English.

schools, and of researching pre-service teacher mentoring, in different international contexts. For Minh Hue, this experience has been in Vietnam and Australia; for Graham, it has been in Australia, the US and South Africa. In our roles as university-based teacher educators visiting and researching pre-service teachers on placements, we have witnessed a wide range of mentoring practices in schools. The narratives we present later in this chapter illustrate how some mentoring during school-based practicums is deeply appreciated by pre-service EAL teachers, while other mentoring experiences can be problematic. But before we tell those stories, we clarify our conceptual position with respect to mentoring and professional experience, through a critical review of relevant literature in this field.

Conceptualising Mentoring

The term 'mentoring' has been used in different contexts of teacher education to describe a wide range of professional practices and relationships, although there is some convergence around defining mentoring as the professional and emotional support provided to teachers and pre-service teachers by their peers/colleagues and more capable teachers (Ambler, Harvey, & Cahir, 2016; Nguyen, 2017). In the present study, we focus on a subset of mentoring practices that refer specifically to the support provided by classroom-based teachers to pre-service EAL teachers in Australia during their professional experience practicum. This mentoring is widely regarded as an integral part of professional experience programmes in Australian ITE programmes (Ambrosetti, 2014).

One of the ongoing debates about mentoring of pre-service EAL teachers in Australia considers the notion of 'transfer' approaches to mentoring and contrasts them with 'transformative' approaches. For example, Brandt (2006) advocates moving away from traditional transfer approaches to mentoring pre-service EAL teachers in favour of transformative practices. She argues that the transfer approach, which is 'expert-directed, subordinating, replicating, dependent, and rational' (Brandt, 2006, p. 362), limits opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in meaningful and purposeful teaching practices. In the transformative approach, however, mentoring makes space for valuing and capitalising on pre-service teachers' existing knowledge, experiences and learning styles. It provides opportunities for problem-solving, autonomy and reflective practice, so pre-service teachers 'are guaranteed authentic and developmental practice opportunities' (Brandt, 2006, p. 355).

Some researchers argue that transformative mentoring practices, as Brandt describes them, are most successful when embedded within a model of a professional experience learning community which includes teacher educators/researchers (Le Cornu, 2010, 2015; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008; White, Bloomfield, & Le Cornu, 2010; White & Forgasz, 2016). When pre-service teachers are active members of this kind of learning community, they are more likely to experience reciprocal learning with their peers, with school-based mentors and with university academics (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008). This conceptualisation of professional experience is underpinned by

a social constructivist view of learning which sees learning as socially constructed through participation in social practices and contexts (Johnson, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978). From this perspective, mentoring becomes 'a collegial learning relationship instead of an expert, hierarchical one-way view' (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008, p. 1803). In a transformative mentoring relationship, the learning is co-constructed, and members of the mentoring team learn from each other. Thus, pre-service teachers learn from mentors and teacher educators, teacher educators learn from mentors and pre-service teachers; in turn, the learning of all these people is more likely to draw from, and be shared with, other members of the professional experience community.

The literature about mentoring we have reviewed above refers to generic mentoring structures and practices that apply across multiple curriculum and institutional contexts. We turn now to the literature into mentoring in the subject area of the TESOL practicum, much of which as we have pointed out comes from Asian contexts.

Mentoring in a Discipline-Specific Practicum (TESOL/EFL)

Several studies have identified mentoring as a positive influence on pre-service teachers during their TESOL practicum, *if* the pre-service teacher is receptive to it. For example, Atay (2007) studied the relationship between pre-service teacher efficacy and their practicum experience in Turkey, and found that pre-service teachers with a high level of efficacy learned much from the mentor teachers' teaching practices and from feedback on their own teaching. This kind of research appears to place more responsibility for the success of a practicum on the pre-service teachers themselves, focusing on the attributes and attitudes they bring to the practicum. Other research homes in on co-constructed practices, involving mentor and mentee together. For example, in the US, Urzúa and Vásquez (2008) reported how pre- and post-observation meetings between pre-service ESL teachers and their mentors created discursive spaces for the pre-service teachers to verbalise their plans, anticipate outcomes and possibilities, and reflect on their practice. Here, too, the effectiveness of the planning and predicting, especially in the pre-observation conversations, is linked to the capabilities of the pre-service teachers—in this case, their self-presentation strategies and their abilities to see situations from different perspectives. Urzúa and Vásquez also suggested that reflecting on a previous lesson and making predictions about the likely outcomes of future lessons enabled the pre-service teachers to evaluate their decisions, to consider whether they need to alter their action plans, to develop their self-awareness and self-control, and to engage in self-evaluation.

Feedback provided by the mentor is often cited by pre-service teachers as crucial to their learning from their practicum. For example, Nguyen (2010) found that about half of the Vietnamese pre-service EFL teachers in her study said their school mentors' feedback made a positive contribution to their professional development during the practicum. The mentors' personable qualities were also crucial in this, with many pre-service teachers noting that their mentors' pleasant personalities contributed to

a supportive professional learning environment in which they could develop their teaching knowledge and skills.

Other research into mentoring experiences seeks to identify effective strategies enacted by mentors. For instance, in exploring pre-service ESL teachers' experience with 'unruly pupils' in Hong Kong schools, Gao and Benson (2012) found that school-based mentors were regarded by the pre-service teachers as very helpful in managing 'unruly pupils'. Particular strategies they identified included mentors meeting regularly with their mentees; mentors sharing their own classroom management experiences; high involvement by mentors in the pre-service teachers' teaching, including collaborating in lesson planning; and mentors' visible 'presence' in the classroom to support the pre-service teachers. In a study in a Hong Kong ESL practicum context, Gan (2014) showed that a mixture of observing their mentors teaching and being observed by mentor teachers helped pre-service teachers develop a better understanding of the role of an ESL teacher in the classroom. Even when the quality of the mentor's classroom teaching was questionable, the pre-service teachers reported that they were able to build their knowledge base for teaching, sometimes clarifying in their judgements what they should avoid in their own teaching after having observed a mentor teacher's lesson that was not, in their judgement, impressive. The combination of observing and being observed, in association with ongoing dialogic contact between mentor and mentee, helped the pre-service teachers to identify and solve teaching problems they encountered in their practicum classrooms (Gan, 2014).

However, not all mentoring strategies are enacted in the classroom or staffroom. Examining an EFL practicum in China, Yuan and Lee (2014) showed that through ongoing dialogue with their mentors beyond the classroom, in a more informal book club, pre-service teachers developed a new understanding of corrective feedback as a means to foster autonomy and critical thinking among students. Other studies extended beyond a concern with classroom practices and explored the influence of mentoring on pre-service teachers' *professional identity*. For example, Trent (2011) constructed a trajectory of pre-service TESOL teachers' identity formation through observations of their practice in Hong Kong schools. He identified pre-service teachers' observation of, and reflection upon, professional teachers as an important influence on their identity formation. The pre-service teachers were sometimes very critical of the teachers they observed, and sought to assert their professional identity in contradistinction to what they saw as the teachers' 'unreasonable' and 'unfair' treatment of students (Trent, 2011, p. 537) or 'boring' and 'outdated' teaching approaches that made students bored and disengaged (p. 539). The pre-service teachers' evaluations of the professional teachers' practices, although negative, sometimes motivated them to become what they described as 'modern' and 'inspiring' ESL teachers as opposed to the teaching approaches they observed in the schools. Similarly, Riesky (2013) interviewed 14 pre-service EFL teachers in Indonesia and found that some of them experienced difficulties with their mentor teachers at practicum schools. These difficulties included lack of guidance from their mentors; unreasonable teaching loads during their practicum; and being restricted by their mentor to teach in particular ways or with particular materials. While the difficulties invariably contributed

to an uneasy mentor–mentee relationship on the practicum, the overall experiences sometimes motivated the pre-service teachers to seek advice from other teachers in the school community. This helped in their journey to become more independent in making pedagogical decisions such as designing teaching materials.

On the other hand, some studies provide disturbing evidence that mentor teachers can negatively influence pre-service teachers' learning experience during a TESOL practicum. Atay (2007) found that pre-service teachers with low efficacy scores in Turkey indicated a high level of disappointment with their mentor teachers' teaching practices such as using very traditional written exams, using traditional grammar translation teaching methods, demanding complete control in classrooms and lacking competence to deal with classroom management issues. Other studies suggest that disappointment with mentors' teaching practices can also have a detrimental impact on pre-service teachers who were initially more confident and competent. Drawing on data from a multinational survey, Brandt (2006) reported that pre-service teachers found it difficult to conform to their mentors' expectations when they were in tension with ideas they had developed in university-based teaching studies, and this led to significant difficulties in their relationship with their mentor.

Where mentors do not, or are not able to, make themselves available to meet with mentees, this is frequently cited as a cause of dissatisfaction by pre-service teachers. In Atay's (2007) study, the pre-service teachers categorised as having low efficacy believed that a lack of interaction with their mentor teachers resulted in limited ability to improve their teaching practices. Nguyen (2010) also reported a number of negative findings regarding pre-service teachers' interaction with mentor teachers during their EFL practicum in Vietnam. For example, pre-service teachers complained that their mentors only rarely observed their lessons, and when any feedback was provided, it was of poor quality. Some reported mentors being unfriendly, unkind, impolite or too easy going. A number of the pre-service teachers claimed they were exploited by their mentors, who required them to mark the mentors' papers for their private classes or to undertake work not related to their practicum. One of the most prominent issues found by Nguyen was the relational conflict between pre-service teachers and their mentors in terms of teaching methods and a lack of freedom for the pre-service teachers to experiment with new teaching approaches (see also Farrell, 2008; Trent, 2013).

In a study conducted in Singapore, Farrell (2008) found that only 10 out of 55 pre-service TESOL teachers rated their mentors as helpful. This perceived lack of support, together with the intimidating pressure from mentors, led most pre-service teachers to feel uncomfortable and sometimes abandoned on their practicum. This prompted many to conform to their mentor teachers' way of teaching so that they could satisfy the mentors' assessment requirements, even though they thought this would not improve their teaching. Methods for assessing the pre-service teachers' performance on the practicum were also found to negatively influence pre-service teachers. For example, Le (2014) reported in a Vietnamese study that the criteria for evaluating pre-service teachers on their practicum were concerned more with the mechanics of teaching than with the appropriation of pedagogical knowledge and the building of subtler relational skills through teaching. Similar findings were revealed by Trent

(2013), where Hong Kong pre-service ESL teachers found themselves having to teach in ways inconsistent with their beliefs for fear that their mentor teachers would not approve of what they were doing in their assessments of the pre-service teachers. The pre-service teachers ended up teaching in traditional ways which they described as resulting in poor student engagement, rote learning, exam-driven teaching and spoon-feeding.

Research Objectives and Significance

The conceptual and empirical literature we have reviewed above demonstrates that mentoring on a school-based practicum can significantly shape the practicum experiences of pre-service ESL/EFL/EAL teachers. It suggests that carefully designed and professionally enacted mentoring has the *potential* to foster productive professional learning in pre-service teachers. But poor quality mentoring can also detrimentally affect pre-service teachers' practicum experience. The literature offers important insights that can be used to inform English language teacher education and mentoring practices in particular. However, as mentioned above, most of the existing research is based in Asia. In Australia, mentoring is recognised as an important element of professional experiences in pre-service teacher education, but recent critiques suggest '[t]he role of mentoring teachers is largely an unrecognised and untrained one, with little support provided for developing the requisite mentoring skills' (TEMAG, 2014, p. 35).

Our study seeks to contribute to the development of mentoring skills and practices in Australian schools (and the conceptual literature underpinning them), by investigating the practicum experiences of two pre-service teachers who were preparing to become teachers of EAL in different Australian schools. In particular, we ask:

1. How do pre-service EAL teachers and their mentors experience a school-based practicum in Victorian secondary schools?
2. What mentoring practices and relationships can be identified in these EAL practicums?
3. How do the identified mentoring practices and relationships facilitate and/or hinder pre-service teachers' professional learning?

Methodology

This study uses narrative-based research approaches (Parr, Doecke, & Bulfin, 2015; Richardson, 2000) to present contrasting stories and experiences of mentoring in pre-service EAL teachers' professional practicums in two different school settings in Victoria, Australia. The traditions of narrative in education research that we are drawing on here understand that any representation of experience demands carefully contextu-

alised descriptions and a degree of reflexivity on the part of the researchers telling the stories (Etherington, 2004; Parr et al., 2015). These descriptions are explicitly aware of the voices of the participants in the storytelling (including the mentors, mentees and the researchers), of time (or movements forward or backward in time) and of perspective (allowing different sometimes contradictory insights into the story).

The contrasting narratives which follow present multiple perspectives on the mentoring experiences of two pre-service EAL teachers and their mentors on a 3-week school-based practicum. They draw on data generated from fieldwork undertaken in a government secondary school (Greenfern Secondary College[2]) and an independent secondary school (Bluerock Grammar School) in Victoria, Australia (see Table 6.1). The original data were primarily in the form of transcripts of stories told by two pre-service teachers (Kate and Maria) during one-to-one interviews conducted by one of the researcher-authors (Minh Hue), as well as transcriptions of audio digital reflections, which the pre-service students self-recorded on digital devices. The mentors' perspectives were drawn from transcripts of one-to-one semi-structured interviews conducted with Kate's mentor (Ms. Weston) and Maria's mentor (Ms. Davies) at the completion of the practicum placements.

After presenting Kate's narrative and then Maria's, we discuss the practices and relationships evident in these cases. In the final section, we present our conclusions and recommendations for mentoring in EAL practicums emerging from this study.

Contrasting Mentoring Experiences

Narrative 1: Kate and Ms. Weston

Kate was undertaking her second major practicum placement in an independent school in the Southern Metropolitan suburbs of Melbourne, a school with a high level of cultural diversity in the student population. Kate's mentor, Ms. Weston, an experienced EAL teacher and mentor, had organised for Kate to teach two Year 9 EAL classes who were quite different in character and ability, as she stated in an interview with Minh Hue:

> I thought I'd give [Kate] the opposite ends of the spectrum [….]. I thought it'd be better for her to have same age groups … who are going to the same place next year. They're all going to Year 10 or [Year 11]…. I asked her to do pretty much the same materials. Well, she chose what she wants – to teach the writing skills – and so I wanted her to do that with both classes so that she would have to learn how to adapt.

In the interview, Ms. Weston proceeded to expand on her rationale for a pre-service teacher to be teaching two classes with similar subject material, and in the process spoke about her conception of the mentoring role as 'moderating' and working collaboratively with the pre-service teacher:

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[2]All names of schools, pre-service teachers and mentor teachers are pseudonyms.

Table 6.1 Participants and data sources in this study

Participants and settings	Pre-service teacher	Practicum school	Gender/age	Specialisms	Background	Mentors
	Kate	Greenfern Secondary College	Female/Late 20s	EAL/LOTE[a]	An English native speaker from outside Australia, a Bachelor degree in an Asian language, lived in Australia for 3 years. Enrolled in a 2-year Master of Teaching graduate degree, which involves 4 × 3-week practicums	Ms. Weston
	Maria	Bluerock Grammar School	Female/late 20s	EAL/SOSE[b]	EFL background, about 20 years of English language learning, a Bachelor degree in Chinese study lived in Australia for 3 years, first time in an English-speaking country. Enrolled in a 2-year Master of Teaching graduate degree, which involves 4 × 3-week practicums	Ms. Davies
Data sources	Three semi-structured individual interviews One stimulated recall interview Four audio-recordings of spoken self-reflections					One semi-structured individual interview

[a] LOTE: Language Other than English
[b] SOSE: Studies of Society and Environment

I think it's kind of fun … because you know it's more, 'OK, you design it, and I'll mentor it and moderate it and help you. We'll talk about it. But what do you want to do? What's going to improve your teaching and what have you done at other places? If you've already done it, don't do it. Do something else. Yep, and then challenge yourself.' You know, and then I can [provide guidance in the form of], 'Do that' or 'Don't do that,' and then modify, depending on how the class responds as well.

Kate was fully supportive of her mentor's decision to give her the two classes at the same level:

I thought it was really good actually [….]. I think it's good having two different classes because it stops you making assumptions about what the students can and can't do. You sort of may be a bit more open-minded because their ability is so varied.

From early in the practicum, Kate appeared keenly aware of the range of abilities and backgrounds in the classes she would be teaching. Rather than feeling confronted by this diversity, a phenomenon widely observed in Australian pre-service teachers (Mayer et al., 2013), she appeared excited at the possibilities, especially because she appreciated that her mentor was encouraging her to take risks. 'My mentor said […], you know, "You should take risks now because this is the time when you can take risks; you've got someone else [your mentor] in the room."'

Kate described the extent of the differences between one class that was 'quite advanced' and the other group that were 'really sort of beginners'. With the full encouragement and support of her mentor, Kate explored what she called 'scaffolding' strategies for different topics and different student groups. For example, for the 'beginning students' she set 'matching exercises and gap-fill exercises and pre-listening activities and lots more visuals … to try and get them to connect with the materials more'. It was telling to hear her speak in interviews about her teaching, and how often she constructed a sense of herself as an agentic teacher—with a plethora of 'I' statements of how she was consciously making specific pedagogical decisions in response to particular needs and requirements of the students she was teaching:

The previous lesson [the students] had chosen their topic. So the next day I said, 'Right, I want you to go online and research ten facts that you will use to write about your topic.'…. I wanted them to get an idea of what you do in a paragraph is that you group similar facts together to help them a bit with the structure of their information report. And so, I showed them this picture, which was from that book which we used for our ESL course [at university]. …. And I said, 'We're going to be talking about China. What sort of facts would we have?' (I picked China because most of the students were Chinese. I thought that would be something that they could relate to and understand and have knowledge about) And then they went ahead and brainstormed some of their facts ….

Similar agentic language is evident in the ways Kate describes her approaches to teaching the same or similar topics with more advanced and more culturally diverse students. This was especially evident in her audio-recorded self-reflections. For instance, in one of these reflections, she spoke about being aware of sustaining longer pedagogical discussions about genre, which morphed into brainstorming of vocabulary stimulated by images/pictures she had specially selected in consultation with her mentor:

> With that unit, we started by talking about different kinds of stories, and I showed them, we went over different genres of stories, say science fiction, horror, the kinds of words you might find in them, the kind of characters you might find in them. We talked a lot about that. Then […] I gave them pictures, and I had four different pictures that were sort of interesting, and they had to get into groups of two or three and they had to write down as many words on a big piece of paper as they could that they associated with that picture, what the picture made them think of. They had to use nouns, verbs, and adjectives and any phrases as well that they wanted to use. And then after they brainstormed all of those, they sort of showed each other and looked at the different words that people had come up with, the different phrases. And then they had time in their groups. They had to use those words to create an introduction to a story. … I gave them three genres: adventure, horror and sci-fi. They had to pick a genre and they had to write the introduction to the story in that genre. And generally, with the high-level class, […] there were more criteria that they had to fulfil like, you know, 'you have to use an adverb', 'you have to use an adjective' and that kind of thing.

Not only was Kate being supported to make proactive decisions about the mediating tools and artefacts she was using with a particular group of students, she was also differentiating activities such that the more advanced group were being given more latitude to engage in inquiry-based research activities in preparation for a piece of writing. Kate's mentor, Ms. Weston, was entrusting Kate with responsibility of assessing the students' work, as evident in Kate's reference to particulars of the criteria her students would need to fulfil in completing the task.

Narrative 2: Maria and Ms. Davies

Like Kate, Maria was a pre-service teacher at the same university, undertaking her second full teaching placement in an independent school in the Southern Metropolitan suburbs of Melbourne. Unlike Kate, who had plenty of notice about her upcoming EAL practicum, Maria was only informed about her EAL placement one day before it began. Maria's mentor was Ms. Davies, a mid-career EAL teacher. Ms. Davies assumed that pre-service teachers on their second teaching practicum would have acquired all of the knowledge necessary to construct and resource detailed lesson plans and would already be confident in taking full control of a class. Thus, she gave Maria the significant challenge of teaching three mixed ability EAL classes in three different year levels (Years 8, 9 and 10) for the 2-week placement.

Maria was pleased with the prospect of teaching some of the same students in her EAL classes whom she had taught in the previous SOSE placement, as she believed she had begun to form helpful relationships with some of them. This was particularly important for her plans to implement what she described as her 'ideal … communicative classroom', with 'a combination of different activities like student-oriented… or teacher and students working together' and more teacher-centred ones. Her faith in the notion of an 'ideal classroom' was mediated by her willingness to use 'different methods':

> [G]roup work […] is great in terms of language practice, sharing your ideas or like in the area that you can't really do at home, for example. But you still need to focus on different

aspects as well. It just really depends on the level of the students and for what […] purpose you're teaching and what criteria or what the requirements are. I guess balance of everything.

So it would seem that Maria entered into the practicum with an awareness of what she would prefer to be doing with her students, while being mindful that she may need to modify her plans depending on the ability of the students in her class, the particular 'purposes' she was teaching for and other factors. Usually, a pre-service teacher is able to develop a sense of these requirements in a preliminary meeting with a mentor in the days before the start of her placement. However, there had been no time for Maria to meet with her mentor because of the very late notice she received of where her EAL placement would be. This meant Maria had little time to read the novel she would be teaching her Year 10s, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, and she was not able to write any lesson plans in preparation for her placement. The result of all this was that Maria was feeling underprepared entering into this placement.

Maria's feelings of anxiety increased when she asked Ms. Davies if she could see curriculum documents relating to the teaching of *Jane Eyre* or the other classes, but none was forthcoming. Maria explained that:

I lacked the content knowledge, […] and I didn't have time to read the whole *Jane Eyre* thing, […] if my mentor could let me just, say, focus on something or just clarify some content knowledge, [but] she mentioned to me that it is my second placement so I should know all these things.

Indeed, in a separate interview with Minh Hue, Ms. Davies explained her expectations of a pre-service teacher embarking upon her second EAL practicum in a Master's teaching degree:

I expect that they would […], you know, have all of the academic thinking side of it and all the lesson plans. I expect that they'd already ha[ve] that and that at this stage they would've been able to go up in front of the class and actually teach and say, 'OK, this is the things that I wanted them to do'.

In the early days of the placement, when Maria observed Ms. Davies' teaching, further tensions became apparent. In Maria's view, her mentor's pedagogy was decidedly 'teacher centred', and she appeared to be 'fairly strict with students'. Maria went on to explain: 'She can joke around a little bit, but …sometimes I felt that she's a bit overly strict'. In time, it emerged that there were substantive differences in the ways Maria and her mentor conceived of teaching and learning. Whereas earlier, Maria was somewhat uncomfortable with these differences—'I could feel conflicts inside me because it would not be the way I would be teaching'—she eventually came to the view that she and her mentor were 'talking in different languages'. Whereas Maria would 'like students to do a bit of guessing and independent thinking', she observed that her mentor would 'just tell the answer, wouldn't make students think. So, she said, like, "Oh, we don't have the time. Just tell them the answer"'.

Eventually, Maria saw no other option than to 'adjust to what my mentor wanted from me, so like, it's just the way I ha[ve] to do it… I ha[ve] to suck it up [laughing]…. I have to play [by] the rules'. Significantly, Maria was largely driven by her concern about the consequences for the formal assessment of her EAL placement by her

mentor: 'I just had to give up all my sort of ideas and themes that I wanted to do and … adjust to my mentor teacher because I needed to get a good report'.

As the placement unfolded, the differences in the way Maria and her mentor understood pedagogy began to influence their professional relationship. Ms. Davies was insistent that Maria, as a pre-service teacher, should be prepared for all eventualities. She was particularly critical of one lesson when Maria introduced an activity that was new to her students. The lesson did not proceed well according to both pre-service teacher and mentor, and Ms. Davies reflected on the lesson in an interview with Minh Hue:

> You [i.e. as a pre-service teacher] need to be prepared for eventualities like that. If you're going to give kids an activity, you need to be two steps in front of them. You can't actually say, 'I don't know what it is' or 'I'll get back to you' because you lose face in front of them, [….] or [you] won't give them an activity that [you haven't] really checked every single aspect of it before.

For her part, Maria began to feel she was continually under surveillance by her mentor—'a sort of constant observation'—in a way that focused more on correcting her mistakes than helping to build her confidence. This was in distinct contrast to her previous experience with mentor teachers:

> In other situations, I would get that supportive feeling and my mentor sort of tells me that, you know, it's OK to make mistakes, and they wouldn't actually tell me that I made all the mistakes, so that was good for [my] confidence.

When Maria did begin to adjust her teaching approach to align more closely with her mentor's practices, she noticed that the feedback she received was no longer critical. In fact, there was little feedback at all: 'When I was starting to do what she wanted me to do, she was like…, she didn't give me any feedback except that everything was good, yeah, because I was doing what she wanted me to'. The lasting impressions that Maria had of her mentor, as reported to Minh Hue in a post-placement interview, were that (i) Ms. Davies gave little or no curriculum guidance or assessment direction prior to her teaching; (ii) most of the feedbacks that Ms. Davies did give were focused on correcting Maria's mistakes and ensuring that Maria taught as she (Ms. Davies) taught; and (iii) Maria felt constantly 'restricted' by her mentor and 'didn't get that supportive feeling from [her]'.

Discussion

These narratives of EAL practicums present contrasting practices of mentoring on the parts of Ms. Weston and Ms. Davies; and Kate's and Maria's responses to those mentoring practices present as a study in contrasts. And yet, with all of their contrasts, the narratives align with many of the stories of mentoring that have been widely reported in the Asian-based studies of TESOL professional experience mentoring that we reviewed earlier in this chapter. Mentors and mentoring practices had a powerful

shaping influence on the experience of the practicum for the pre-service EAL teachers in this study, and on their professional learning and identity development.

The exploratory space which Kate's mentor, Ms. Weston, created for Kate's placement, allowed her to experiment, explore and reflect in meaningful ways on her teaching practices. This was a placement where both mentor and mentee made a priority of meeting and discussing expectations as well as particular plans for the practicum that was to begin in a few days. As a consequence, the mentor–mentee relationship began in a very positive way. Kate was allowed to make some curriculum decisions before starting her placement—she wanted to 'teach writing skills'—and this encouraged her to assume responsibility and work with some independence on her teaching and learning in the weeks that followed. Throughout the placement, Kate's mentor provided the kinds of support—both practical and affective—that enabled Kate to develop her practices and transform her understandings of those practices and the larger educational enterprise. As a result, Kate experienced more meaningful learning during the professional experience and her sense of herself as an autonomous professional significantly increased. Kate's use of a variety of EAL teaching activities was supported by Ms. Weston's encouragement for risk-taking in making decisions regarding EAL teaching and for experimenting with new teaching ideas. Ms. Weston's selection of contrasting classes with respect to their language proficiency created the opportunity for Kate to apply her knowledge and skills in differentiating her lessons to suit different language proficiency levels. The positive influences of mentor teachers found in this study confirm the findings of a number of past studies (Le Cornu, 2010; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008).

Maria's reflections at the start of her placement suggested she had conceptualised her EAL teaching in ways that could create opportunities for communicative language teaching and learning, and she was mindful of the need to adjust her teaching to meet the needs of her students. And yet, for reasons beyond her control, Maria began her placement feeling underprepared in a number of ways. She felt she had little or no knowledge of how to approach the teaching of a literary text like *Jane Eyre*. Because she had no opportunity before placement to meet her mentor and discuss expectations, and not even time to read the novel she would be teaching to her Year 10 class, Maria was looking for direction and support (both practical and affective) from her mentor. However, Ms. Davies' expectations were that she should not need to be giving this kind of assistance. In her mind, a pre-service teacher on her second round of practicum should be beyond needing that kind of support. The anxiety that Maria experienced over the course of her placement appears to have been acutely influenced by her mentor's unwillingness to allow space for Maria to experiment with or explore existing theoretical knowledge and skills, and her expectation that Maria teach the way that she modelled in the classes she observed. Maria experienced a range of challenges during the practicum as a result of differences of expectation in terms of the nature and levels of support provided by her mentor, differences in conception of teaching and learning, and relational difficulties with her mentor.

First, Maria's expectations of support and guidance from her mentor were mostly not met, making it challenging for her to navigate the professional socialisation process independently. To her credit, Maria did attempt to seek out support from

her peers and from other teachers at her school, when she was not receiving the support she hoped for from her mentor. Ultimately, though, this lack of support or curriculum direction from her mentor had a negative and debilitating influence on Maria's professional learning over the course of her placement. Second, it was evident that Maria and her mentor held acutely conflicting perceptions and practices with regard to EAL teaching, which de Courcy (2011) refers to as 'a disjuncture between [the pre-service teacher's] preferred teaching style and that of their mentor teacher' (p. 29). Consistent with findings by Gan (2013), Maria felt discouraged, and consequently, she abandoned her efforts to implement her promising theoretical knowledge, and to introduce innovative teaching ideas that she brought with her into the placement, in order to adapt to Ms. Davies' so-called traditional teaching approach in hopes of 'getting by' (Bloomfield, 2010, p. 232). Third, Ms. Davies appears to have made assumptions about the knowledge and skill levels of all pre-service teachers, which for a variety of reasons (some perhaps not in Maria's control) Maria did not show. Rather than responding positively to potential, which was apparent in Maria's thoughtful reflections about her teaching in the interviews with Minh Hue, Ms. Davies, consistent with 'transfer' approaches to mentoring, focused on the negatives in feedback she gave. She made it clear that she required Maria to accept her role as subordinate, and to replicate her (Ms. Davies) style of teaching. Also consistent with the transfer paradigm of mentoring that Brandt (2006) was so critical of, Ms. Davies gave Maria the impression that she was being constantly observed when not performing according to her mentor's script, and yet when Maria was finally compliant, the level of feedback from and engagement with her mentor became minimal and cursory. In line with past research, conflicting conceptions of teaching and learning EAL in the practicum (Dang, 2013) and the mentor's constant surveillance (Sinner, 2012) had the power to modify Maria's teaching to fit in with the particular practicum activity system where she was positioned as the subject needing above else to be compliant. Eventually, the conflict in the relationship prompted Maria to change her teaching activities to satisfy the professional experience requirements. Consequently, she did not achieve her aim of applying the knowledge, skills and theory she had learned at university and elsewhere in her teaching practice.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There are many reasons why Kate and Maria had such different experiences on their practicum placement. In this final section of our chapter, we highlight those reasons and offer recommendations that might help other EAL pre-service teachers and their mentors avoid such problematic experiences in the future. But it is worth paying attention, also, to some important positive elements in the above narratives of Kate's and Maria's professional experience. We will begin with the positives and then proceed to tease out the problematic issues.

Both Kate and Maria were aware that they drew on a multitude of resources and learning experiences in their practicums. This included knowledge they had

acquired in their own schooling and employment experiences, in interactions with their teacher education peers, and through researching their practices on placements (see Pridham, Deed, & Cox, 2013). Despite the questions routinely raised about the quality of campus-based components of university teacher education courses in Australia, both Kate and Maria appear to have brought a good knowledge of pedagogy and educational theory into their practicums, which enabled them to articulate and reflect upon their experiences with some clarity and insight.

One area where their knowledge may not have been so strong was the teaching of literature, which Maria implies has not been part of her pre-service course at university. (Given the paucity of studies of EAL pre-service teachers' knowledge of literature teaching, this may be an area that deserves focused research in the future.) That aside, it is clear that Kate and Maria drew productively on the knowledge they *had* acquired in their teacher education degrees and from other sources. It is just as clear that Kate's knowledge was more valued by her mentor than was the case with Maria's mentor, and this may have negatively affected Maria's confidence and sense of her professional identity. In this and other respects, the study makes a strong case for mentor teachers to adopt 'transformative' rather than transfer approaches to their mentoring (Brandt, 2006).

Kate's narrative, especially, shows the value of building a relationship and enacting practices that encourage pre-service teachers to take risks, to utilise their existing knowledge and experiences, and to draw on their emerging preferences in terms of teaching practices. It also shows the value of school-based mentors providing scaffolded opportunities for pre-service EAL teachers to problem-solve and engage in dialogic reflective practice with their school-based mentors (Tusting & Barton, 2003, in Brandt, 2006; Doecke & Kostogriz, 2005). This approach is more likely to create a greater depth of learning for both the pre-service teachers and the mentor teachers, and it is supported as much by the case of Kate as by past research (Hudson, 2013b; Pridham et al., 2013). Kate's and Maria's experiences testify to the importance of mentors and mentees making a priority of scheduling conversations in the days leading up to a practicum and especially in the early days of that practicum. This would help to build shared understandings of the EAL programme at the school, expectations vis-à-vis mentor and mentee, and their different roles and responsibilities. Important in these conversations is agreement on expectations of practices for pre-service students at their level of experience and proficiency, and the ways feedback will be given by the mentor (Engin, 2014).

Finally, priority should be given to developing and sustaining successful mentoring relationships in an EAL practicum. As Kate's experiences show, mentoring relationships can play a critical positive role in pre-service teachers' professional learning. In contrast, the lack of mutual affective and intellectual bonds, exacerbated by underdeveloped communication practices on the part of both mentor and mentee, was a major cause of Maria's less productive professional experience. According to Hudson (2013a), building successful mentoring relationships requires effort from both mentors and pre-service teachers; however, the mentor teacher as the person holding 'the balance of power in the relationship' (p. 1) plays a critical role in this process. Our study supports Hudson's observation, that building and sustaining such

relationships requires 'support in providing …. access to resources, two-way dialoguing with feedback and reflections, and establishing safe, risk-taking environments to trial and evaluate newly learnt teaching practices' (p. 1).

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Chapter 7
Generations of Learning: A Professional Learning Experience

John Pardy and Kristin Reimer

Abstract *Generations of learning*, as a research project, sought to extend the professional experience learning of pre-service teachers by pairing them with retired teachers. This was pursued with the express purpose of extending student experiences in their initial teacher education course and as an additional strategy to further support pre-service teachers in the quest of becoming a teaching professional. This chapter reports on the intergenerational learning that characterised the learning that occurred between pre-service teachers and the retired teachers in the research. In the intergenerational spaces of this research project, conversations between the paired retirees and the pre-service teachers moved fluidly between the theoretical and the practical, using the stories of the retiree and the wonderings of the pre-service teacher as the guide. This chapter focuses on the experience of one pair of participants to reveal how the learning that occurred between the pre-service teachers and the retired teachers was generative and reciprocal. The generative nature of the exchanges that occurred between the retired teachers and the pre-service teachers centred on a shared respect for and responsibility towards the teaching profession, where developing relationships was recognised as a key element of the professional experience of being a teaching professional.

Prologue

"I run a project," my (Kristin's) next-door neighbour, a pharmacist, continued, "where medical students meet with elderly doctors in nursing homes." We were talking across the fence, learning about one another's work in short snippets, whenever our schedules aligned for a few moments. "They have these fascinating conversations. The young learn from the old; the old learn from the young."

It seemed like such an elegant idea: pair someone at the beginning of their profession with someone whose professional life was complete, and provide them with space to learn from one another. As a teacher educator, I was intrigued. Teaching has always been

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about intergenerational learning, about one generation teaching the next, and yet, we have rarely thought this through with any conscious intention in teacher education. How might the concept of intergenerational learning extend pre-service teacher education beyond the classroom? If the medical profession has found a way to encourage intergenerational relationships, why not the teaching profession? There would be value it seemed, for the pre-service teachers, the retired teachers, and the profession itself.

I mentioned the idea one afternoon, as a footnote to another conversation, to my colleague, John. He immediately grasped a facet of such a project that had escaped me – how such intergenerational conversations could highlight the historical dimension of the teaching profession and its work, and the continuity and change that define teachers' work and schools. Such conversations, John thought, would provide a way for pre-service teachers to explore the profession of teaching by considering how it has been, how it is, and how it could be. We called the project: 'generations of learning'.

Introduction

Becoming a teacher involves the formation of a professional identity. The profession itself has changed and continues to change through time, so that what constitutes a teaching professional is always at once contested and understood differently in particular cultural spaces and in specific historical times. Robson (2006) explains that rather than a description of an actual occupation the idea of a profession provides 'a way of thinking about occupations' (p. 10). Thus, being inducted into the profession of teaching requires an induction into ways of knowing, thinking about and being a teacher. Teachers, both pre-service and qualified, take time to craft pedagogical practices, developing content and relational capabilities, and understanding what it means to be a teacher. *Generations of learning* provides a way for pre-service teacher education students to partake in this activity with teachers who have come before them. We (Kristin and John) implemented *generations of learning* in 2017, as a pilot project that we anticipate expanding over the next few years. Our aim is to enrich the professional learning experiences of pre-service teachers by complementing the traditional practicum that takes place in schools.

The participants in *generations of learning* in 2017 included seven final year pre-service teachers in Monash University's Faculty of Education paired with eight retired schoolteachers from across Melbourne (one pre-service teacher was paired with two retired teachers who are married). The *generations of learning* project was a voluntary undertaking for all involved. It was presented to pre-service teachers as an opportunity to engage in a unique professional learning experience aimed at deepening their understandings of the teaching profession. Retired teachers were recruited from our own professional and personal networks and the project was presented to the retirees as a way to share their stories and wisdom. The project took place before and during the pre-service teachers' final professional experience placement of their teacher education degree and involved three whole-group meetings, facilitated by us. Partners then connected with one another in their own time, via phone, email or in person. Some of the retirees also visited and observed their pre-service teacher partner

during their teaching placement. Participants were involved in the project from July to October 2017. *Generations of learning* involved a re-imagining of professional experience where the profession is explored and encountered through intergenerational relationships. Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015) identify that teacher education programmes should create spaces for 'robust professional discourse about teaching and the wider purposes of education' (p. 638). G*enerations of learning* is research that deliberately provides an exploratory space connecting pre-service teachers with retired teachers to engage in a series of interactions to develop an appreciation of what it means to be and to become a teaching professional.

Intergenerational Professional Learning

Sachs (2003), in writing about teaching as a profession, states 'It is paramount that whatever meaning of professionalism is circulating, its meaning is generated and owned by teachers themselves in order that it should have currency among teachers' (p. 17). Connecting pre-service teachers with retired teachers provided a way for those entering the profession to understand and appreciate what it means to be a teaching professional in a different way from what they might encounter in lectures and tutorials, or in their professional experience placements in schools. Teachers entering the profession, as a new generation of teachers, do not break from the past but are connected to past generations of teachers and teaching whilst at the same time possessing an orientation to the future. Teachers who have since retired from the profession are a relatively untapped and underutilised resource for preparing future teachers. Retired teachers in the context of *generations of learning* demonstrated that they do not 'just shuffle off and disappear' (p. 149), in the words of Boyer, Maney, Kamler and Comber (2004) but retain and, if opportunities present, contribute to an understanding of the profession that shaped their work lives.

Teaching work is by its nature intergenerational, where one generation teaches another, so this project built upon well-established cultural patterns in education where mentoring and the transfer of knowledge and wisdom occurs from one generation to the next. Generations represent a particular kind of identity of location, with different age groups embedded in different socio-historical processes (Mannheim, 1952). By connecting future teachers with retired teachers, the research in the *generations of learning* project was informed by the depth of intergenerational learning and the enduring historical and future-oriented character of the profession. In meeting one another, the narratives of those who have spent their professional lives as teachers and the narratives of those anticipating a work life in teaching highlighted the continuities, changes and meaning of being a teacher.

Teaching is public, social and ethical in its professional conduct. Biesta et al. (2015) name the difficulty for teachers in understanding what ethically informed practice can look like, given the 'confused mishmash of competing and vague ideas' (p. 636) that constitute discourses of modern schooling. They argue that 'in the absence of opportunities for systematic sense-making in schools, teachers

are regularly left confused about their role' (p. 636). In concert with Biesta et al. (2015), opportunities for sense-making can begin to happen—in perhaps surprising ways—before teachers are even in schools, through intergenerational experiences. The intergenerational encounters between retired teachers and future teachers in *generations of learning* revealed that sense-making about teaching and being a teaching professional can constructively and generatively occur outside professional experience school placements and the lecture halls and tutorials of their teacher education course.

According to Mannheim (1952), the phenomenon of generations is one of the basic factors contributing to historical development. The profession of teaching has changed through time and these changes have been mediated by social and cultural transformations. These differing social and cultural changes become solidified, as the prevailing *Zeitgeist*, a fictive imaging of the times in which one generation lives with other generations, and are made up of perceived differences within and between generations. Pre-service teachers inhabit a time of professional education at universities, in contrast to the retirees in this project who undertook 'teacher training' at Teachers' Colleges. The relationships established between the retired teachers and pre-service teachers provided a basis for historically conscious encounters, not so much for decoding the respective *Zeitgeist* of their different generations but rather as a collaborative exploration of the cultural heritages of being a teaching professional, publically, socially and ethically.

The *generations of learning* project is further conceptualised through frames of generativity (Erikson, 1950; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; de St. Aubin, McAdams, & Kim, 2004). Erikson (1950), in writing about stages of human development, suggested that midlife and beyond was a stage of generativity—creating and caring for the next generation so as to ensure a positive future for the world. McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) saw this commitment to future generations expressed through such activities as parenting, teaching, mentoring and leadership. Adults, write de St. Aubin et al. (2004), 'express generativity in social contexts and through social institutions' (p. 5) and seek to pass on the most valued traditions of culture, skills and approaches. *Generations of learning* was conceptualised as a generative project in that one generation of teachers expressed commitment to the next generation of teachers, as well as to the next generation of students and the profession of teaching. McAdams and Logan (2004) highlight that generativity is not just about replication of norms, traditions and practices, but also of movements and rhythms to different and or refigured social arrangements. Generativity can be expressed both in the 'conservation and nurturance of that which people deem to be good in life and in the transformation of that which people believe to be in need of improvement' (McAdams & Logan, 2004, p. 16). Conversations between pre-service and retired teachers in *generations of learning* focused on narratives of the ethically 'good' in the past and present, allowing the participants to name what has in their view improved, what has been lost and what needs to change within the profession.

Generations of learning, as a project, provided an intergenerational space in which to engage in another sort of learning and the very nature of these intergenerational interactions were reciprocal. This reciprocity was a finding of similar

intergenerational research between teachers (Boyer et al., 2004). *Generations of learning* provided a different learning space to that usually encountered by pre-service teachers; it was a learning space free from assessments and measurements. The relationships formed in this space were more concerned with Erikson's ideas of generativity, establishing and guiding the next generation (de St. Aubin et al., 2004). Hence, within this intergenerational space, the learning is generative—in that it is reciprocal in its historically conscious explorations of what it means to be a teaching professional yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Researching Intergenerational Relationships

The initial phase of the project involved all 17 participants being interviewed individually by either John or Kristin. The interviews with the retired teachers focused on narratives of their teaching careers and their reflections upon the profession. The interviews with the pre-service teachers focused on their professional aspirations and their insights into what is involved in being a professional teacher.

The pairing of the student with the retiree was based on perceived shared personal characteristics and shared occupation areas of the teaching profession (see Table 7.1). The initial meeting of all the participants in their pairs involved them spending an hour in conversation with each other. This was a mid-morning event organised and lead by John and Kristin, involving coffee and a light lunch. During this hour, retired teachers talked with the pre-service teachers about their work lives as teachers and their reflections of the profession. Directly following these conversations, a focus group of all the pre-service teachers was carried out to collect data about the insights they developed about changes within the teaching profession.

A second meeting was convened two weeks later, by John and Kristin, where all the pairs spent an hour in conversation. This time the retired teachers were asked to focus their discussion with the pre-service teachers about the beginning teachers' aspirations and initial experiences of the teaching profession. Directly afterwards, we conducted a focus group with the retired teachers about how schools and teacher work has changed based on their conversations with their pre-service teacher. These focus group sessions were recorded and transcribed. As researchers with an interest in student experiences in teacher education courses, these meetings provided a way to foster structured conversations about teaching and being and becoming a teacher. As a consequence, these conversations became intergenerational exchanges and, for Kristin and John, provided a way to understand how the intergenerational connections enriched the learning of students and of those who have retired from the profession.

The other stages in the project involved some of the retired teachers attending their partner's placement school to observe the pre-service teacher teaching, as well as non-facilitated conversations held between the partners in their own time. Data was collected from the first three interviews and from a final phase in the research, which involved John and Kristin interviewing the pairs together about what they

Table 7.1 The participants

Teachers (retired)	Details	Teaching experience	Teachers (pre-service)	Course	Basis of pairing
Len	Susan and Len are married. Both are in their 80s and began teaching in the 1950s	Primary Teacher, Primary School Principal	Yvette	Bachelor of Early Years and Primary Education	Allie's aspiration to be a primary school teacher
Susan		Primary Teacher, Primary School Principal			
Paula	Paula was schooled in far East Gippsland and did a 3-year Trained Infant Teachers Certificate	Trained Infant Mistress, Director of Middle School, Director of Learning, Education Consultant	Tara	Bachelor of Primary and Secondary Education	The two shared similar schooling history as both were schooled in same region in rural Victoria
Lee	Lee received her science degree and then was employed at a country technical school	Secondary Science Teacher, Technical Schools	Binh	Bachelor of Secondary Education and Science	Science teacher paired with aspiring science teacher
May	May completed her 3-year Trained Infant Teachers Certificate and then moved into special education	Trained Infant Teacher, Primary School Teacher, Remedial Teacher at a Speech Clinic, Curriculum Manager for Victorian TAFEs	Mick	Bachelor of Secondary Education	Shared interest in disengaged students and students who experience learning challenges
Joanne	Joanne started her degree in primary but quickly decided secondary school was for her. She was a secondary science teacher	Secondary School Teacher, Teacher at the Correspondence School in Victoria	Peter	Bachelor of Secondary Education and Science	Both shared the identity of secondary mathematics and science teachers
Kath	Kath obtained her primary teaching course and first taught in a two-teacher country school	Primary Teacher, Primary School Principal, Education Historian	Nina	Bachelor of Early Years and Primary Education	Aspiration on Nicole's part to become a primary school teacher
Fran	Fran first taught while still in high school, then completed her Trained Infant Teaching Course and worked in Victorian schools over four decades	Primary Teacher, Current Volunteer in Primary Schools	Aisha	Bachelor of Primary and Secondary Education	Anh had an interest in the history of schooling and aspired to be either a primary or secondary teacher

learned from participating in the project. This final interview highlighted the shared experiences and mutual understandings the participants generated about the past, present and future of the teaching profession.

Participants in the Project

Pre-service Teachers

The seven pre-service teachers engaged in the *generations of learning* project were all enthusiastic about becoming teaching professionals. Some were focused on primary teaching and others on secondary with a range of specialist subjects. All of them, when asked about their decision to become teachers, mentioned the influence of past teachers. For most of the pre-service teachers, the influence was a positive one: they had been inspired to become teachers by their former teachers and were now seeking to *be* the teachers that lived in their memories.

Four years into their degrees, feet planted firmly on the pathway to their career of choice, and the pre-service teachers were now considering the realities of becoming a teacher. Although having participated in school their whole lives and now near the completion of their formal teacher preparation, the pre-service teachers had decidedly partial understandings of what it means to actually be a teacher. When asked this very question, pre-service teachers responded with either ideal notions, 'To educate, to influence, inspire, to shape the next generation to be in accordance with society's values and to shape children for what we want them to be for the future' (Nina); or with a sense of teaching as what you do to/with students as an individual teacher within classroom walls, 'To know everything about content, and how to explain content in an engaging way' (Peter). Pre-service teachers did not convey a sense of joining a profession nor did they discuss the multiple social contexts within which teaching occurs. To be a teacher was seen to be an individual endeavour—whether in inspiring the next generation or in the context of their personal classroom.

Retired Teachers

The eight retired teachers, in their 70s and early 80s, met with and formed relationships with the seven beginning teachers who were in their 20s. The retirees had all been retired for over a decade. Their continuing relationship to teaching and education involved volunteer tutoring and continuing personal relationships established as professionals; one remained an active participant in the field through her committee work at a local vocational college. All of the retirees completed their teacher training at Teachers' Colleges except one who did her teacher education at a university. The retirees undertook their teacher education in the 1950s and 1960s, and they had little

experience or understanding of contemporary university teacher education and its conditions.

Each generation lives through and transforms the society and world that defines them as a distinct generation. The teaching profession itself has been redefined through the ages and, with each age, how the profession is valued also changes. The retirees were interested in working with beginning teachers because of their commitment to the profession, still seeing themselves as teachers teaching or having something to offer the pre-service teachers. Details of the retirees and their respective pairs are in the following table.

Introducing Paula and Tara

In this section, we focus in on the narratives of two people who were paired together, Paula and Tara. John introduces and narrates Paula's story, while Kristin narrates Tara's story. As a pair, Paula (retired teacher) and Tara (Final year student in a Bachelor of primary and secondary education) provide an example of the generativity of generational learning. The exchanges between all the pairs allowed retired teachers and beginning teachers to consider afresh the importance of teaching as a profession. In looking at one pair, Tara and Paula, we see what it means to be and become a teacher through the relationship they developed in *generations of learning*.

Paula's Story

All I (John) really knew of Paula was that she was a retired teacher. As a member of a Technical and Further Education, Higher Education Committee I had worked alongside Paula for the previous few years but was largely unaware of her professional history and her experiences in the profession. When Kristin talked about doing an intergenerational project, I immediately thought of all of the retired teachers I knew and how in turn they would know of other retired teachers who may want to be involved in the project. Paula agreed to participate in the project without hesitation. It was the initial interview with Paula that was a revelation. As fellow committee members, we had a very cursory knowledge about each other. What I subsequently learned was that Paula had not only worked as a teacher, initially completing her Trained Infant Teacher Certificate, but had an extensive career in government and non-government schools as a Director of Curriculum, Director of a Middle school, along with high level and strategic leadership roles in education administration. Yet, it was her story of getting into teaching and the value of teaching as a profession that was a revelation.

Paula did not really know what she wanted to do when she was at school in remote country Victoria. Through Vocational Guidance, Paula was informed that her options were either a 'herd tester' or a 'teacher'. Paula thought,

> Well, I come from high plains cattle country; I don't want to be slopping around South Gippsland in gumboots, with dairy herds, so I ruled out being a herd tester, which only left teaching. So, I went to teachers' college - not because I was inspired to go to teachers' college - because I'd actually had a pretty awful education myself. I had eight teachers in two years. Not many people wanted to go to Swifts Creek High, or Elementary 1460. I didn't have a great education. I did not read until I was in grade three. Lots of teachers.

Paula's first 'posting' upon her graduation was in country Victoria, because she wanted to go back to the country to 'provide what I thought I hadn't really had'.

After a stint in the country, Paula taught in several Melbourne primary schools. One school in which Paula taught early on had a high proportion of newly arrived Southern European migrants, who spoke little or no English. Paula talked about the educational importance and value of using a multisensory approach to language learning with the newly arrived children. Paula's work as a teacher moved from country schools to city schools and then into professional roles as a Director of Studies at a prestigious private school. Paula ended up assuming leadership, policy and curriculum roles in schools and for the Victorian Education Department. Paula's career as a teacher was varied, characterised by ongoing learning. Paula expressed that as a teacher she was always driven by finding out what students know. From there, Paula would work with students to challenge and extend their learning. For Paula,

> teachers are incredibly important, ….yet teachers who think that what they experienced in school is what they are going to give the next generation is not always relevant.

In becoming what can be described as a leading professional, Paula believes leadership and administrative roles in schools involve developing a culture of ongoing learning and a culture of giving. Entering the teaching profession for Paula was all about having a go and growing:

> When you're in there learning and growing, you're taking- you're giving, but you're taking a lot in those early years. And when you move to knowing what you know, and what you don't know, then it's time to start giving. And I can't always see a lot of educators giving back. I think there should be more of it…

Tara's Story

As a pre-service teacher, Tara was excited about graduating and becoming a teacher. Tara is a self-described 'country kid', who grew up knowing that teaching was always an option; not necessarily the first choice, but a constant 'fall-back'. In response to the question all kids get about what they want to be when they grow up, Tara would respond 'Oh, a park ranger or a teacher. Or a firefighter or a teacher. Or a *this* or a teacher'. Once the time came to choose, she decided to settle for teaching, a career choice that seemed achievable, if ordinary. Tara enrolled in the Primary and Secondary Education specialisation, which would qualify her to teach students aged 5–18 years old.

At the time of the *generations of learning* project, Tara was in the last semester of her 4-year degree and teaching was no longer her fall-back: it was now her passion. I (Kristin) did not conduct the initial interview with Tara, but in reading the transcripts of her interview and later meeting her in person, Tara's enthusiasm for teaching and for students was palpable. Her new-found love and passion for teaching had emerged during her experiences in her teaching placements where 'you learn how to deal with difficult kids, difficult teachers; all of the things that actually occur in a school'. She found that teaching was, somewhat paradoxically, about learning and it was her love of learning that she had tapped into. Tara was constantly learning in her teaching placements, particularly her placement in a school with a high number of refugee students and her international professional experience placement in a school in India: 'I've learned a lot about respecting people and valuing others' opinions through teaching'.

While she named teachers on placements as influencing who she was becoming as a teacher, Tara returned to a Year 12 teacher who was the most influential in the formation of her own professional identity. This particular teacher, she said, did not impose his opinions on the class but 'let us form our own judgement, which I think is a huge thing for students to be able to do'. Tara's identification of this particular teacher and this particular quality echoed in her definition of teaching: 'What is teaching? Building a relationship, imparting knowledge, learning from the students'. This definition speaks to a nuanced understanding of teaching as about far more than content provision; Tara spoke of teaching as a reciprocal activity. She later expanded on her definition:

> Students have as much to teach teachers, as teachers have to teach students, if not even more, because everyone has a different story, everyone has a different background, different life experiences and you can learn a lot about the world by learning about different people's experience.

As Tara spoke of her experience in the teacher education programme and her growing understanding of what being a teacher means, she continually circled back to the idea of relationships. When speaking of the type of teacher she wants to be, Tara declared,

> I want to be a teacher that respects my students, builds relationships with each and every one of them. I want to be a teacher that knows my content as well, even though I honestly now, after four years of my teaching degree, I think that's a secondary thing to relationships - I think that is more important than the content knowledge, to be honest. But I just want to be a teacher that kids can look back on in 20 years' time and go 'she made a difference'. I don't want fame or fortune or any of that stuff - but I'd like to know that I made a difference to at least one of my students' lives.

During an international professional experience placement that Tara undertook in India, it caused her a lot of pain when, since the classes were so big in the school she was placed in, she found she could not form relationships with her students. As Tara said:

> I just tried to learn some names, but as well with the different phonic structure, I just found it so hard to pronounce a lot of their names; so I would go 'yes'. But across all of my classes, we had 430 students; so it was very much just 'yes', like 'yes', which killed me a little bit.

Tara's focus on relationships extended beyond those formed with students to other teachers and the families of students, as well. She recognised that not all families would have had positive experiences at school and suggested that again the answer lay in 'building a relationship, so they don't see you as just another teacher, or whatever, because of their past'. It was also the possibility of further relationship that drew Tara to *generations of learning*. In her expression of interest for the project, Tara wrote that she was attracted by 'the concept of a unique mentoring opportunity, as I feel I have been lucky enough to have some of these already!'

The Learning of Paula and Tara

Pairing Paula with Tara was automatic; both having been schooled in country Victoria, it seemed from the interviews that they shared a similar inclination towards teaching as a profession. It is the commitment to a culture of giving and ongoing learning that drew Paula to the *generations of learning* project. Paula thinks that 'What's really important, when you enter a profession is being supported by amazing people and then also taking on the role of supporting other people'. Teaching and entering the teaching profession are about being a classroom teacher but, as Paula explained in her interview, in the focus groups and through her conversations with Tara, as a teacher you impact on 30 students, but as an administrator and leader you can impact on 350 students in a school. Paula really expanded Tara's appreciation of the opportunities afforded in the profession of teaching and through being a teacher. Tara learned that it is about:

> …professionalism. It's not just about being a teacher and standing up in the classroom. It's about having all that extra professional knowledge. So going out and joining the union, joining this, joining that, being part of everything. You're not just a teacher for the students in front of you, but you're a teacher for your colleagues, you're a teacher for the school, the wider community.

For Paula and Tara, there was little doubt that participation in this project was time well spent. Tara expressed it to Paula this way: 'I think every pre-service teacher should have this opportunity… the amount that I've taken on board, that I've learned, that I feel like I've grown, just from having you there, is just huge'. That phrase—*just from having you there*—is key: two professionals engaged in conversation about what it means to be a teacher with no agenda and no outwardly obvious external gain. Tara had learnt so much from Paula, especially when Paula came to watch her teach. Not only had Tara sent her lesson plans to Paula but they discussed how the lesson might go. Tara felt that being paired with Paula caused her to think about her techniques, and it was in the area of questioning that Tara really developed. Tara referred to a coffee session after Paula saw her teach, when Paula encouraged her to think about

> my questioning. That questioning can lead to differentiation. So, it can be questioning to extend gifted students or it can be questioning to allow all students to participate in the task. … Questioning that provides for a breadth of teaching and learning.

Paula felt that what she got out of participating in *generations of learning* was a pivotal relationship that contributes to the profession. Paula's participation was motivated by her belief that you are always learning, and meeting Tara was no exception. Paula described Tara as a 'gutsy broad', and felt that a 'gutsiness', a confident robustness, is what makes a good learner and forms the basis of a teacher who can do great work. Paula expressed that she wished she would have known what Tara has learnt and knows when she began teaching. For Paula, being confident makes a 'good teacher' because confident teachers are not self-centred and are secure enough to give and to be willing to learn.

Paula explained what good teachers do: they look to the students they are working with and see what they know and what they need and they work to challenge and extend those students. In Paula's own experience of schooling, she felt her own personal learning was not a priority, as a result of attending a country school where teachers changed every year or so. She relayed her first teaching experience, at a primary school with a diverse student body, as a way of revealing her own teaching philosophy:

> We had 700 kids on a tiny plot of land. Every time a boat came into the wharves, off would come all of these wonderful Greek families that had come to give their children an education. And we'd look out the door, and hear all these kids who couldn't speak English. Anyway, as a trained infant teacher, I'm in the preps, and then I became coordinator of the prep classes. In 1971, I had 44 preps; eight spoke English. Because of my background of not being catered for, I was always determined; you've got to look after the individual, even when you've got 44. Also, I came from a family where my mother was so organised that I'm actually quite organised. So, I had individual reading programs for every child, and I had three groups for maths. At the start of the year, the kids couldn't speak English, and they couldn't read and write; by the end of the year, they could.

The whole idea of the "good teacher" being organised and responsive to student needs was the basis of many of the interactions between Tara and Paula, where they both recognised the importance of being prepared and knowledgeable. Yet, they also both arrived at an appreciation that student grades are not the sole indicator of good teachers; rather, they saw the measure of a great teacher as the ability to change, to adapt to changes in students and situations. Being ready to change meant for Paula not being blinkered, bringing experiences to the classroom that challenge students to grow and learn. Paula emphasised the need to not just teach the curriculum but teach *the students* the curriculum, which involves knowing them well. For Tara, this was pivotal as she realised she was overly focused on being 'classroom ready', intent on grasping the content and getting through that content. She recognised through her interactions with Paula the significant importance of working with and learning about and from students. Tara identified a 'massive' lesson she took from Paula: 'if there's something that students aren't understanding, in the middle of your lesson, you can't just go on to the next thing. You've got to make sure that that's understood. You can't just keep the ball rolling'.

The relationship that developed between Tara and Paula was generative in that both Tara and Paula felt they had learnt by participating in the project. Paula said Tara was like her daughter because she challenged her and expressed disagreements.

Tara and Paula as a pair, like the other pairs in this project, felt they had grown from meeting and working with each other, for both of them had gained from listening to each other, something they both agree is essential to becoming and being a good teacher: questioning and then listening. Paula loved what she experienced with Tara because, in her words, 'you see someone learning'.

Together Across Generations

In the intergenerational space of *generations of learning*, conversations between the paired retirees and the pre-service teachers moved fluidly between the theoretical and the practical, using the stories of the retiree and the wonderings of the pre-service teacher as the guide. The conversations were not limited by external mandates or institutional constraints; they were, as pre-service teacher Binh expressed, about 'everything else that there is, so dealing with the big goals and the big practical things'. Binh continued, 'I think university has been all about the theory. My mentor teacher in the school is all about the practical'. She felt that the *generations of learning* project spoke to a different space—a space that encompassed both the theoretical and the practical, about both the being and the doing. Pre-service teachers felt they were drawing on the retirees' 'wealth of information' (Nina) to learn practical strategies such as time and behaviour management, as well as to hear stories of experiences, challenges and enjoyment. Pre-service teacher Yvette found that questions could be asked, such as 'What really can I expect when I go out into the teaching profession?' The conversations between the intergenerational partners were generative of professional identity, both explicitly and tacitly. Explicitly, the pairs engaged in conversations about what it means to be a teacher. Through her conversations with Paula, Tara's view of being a teacher expanded from having a job as a classroom teacher to being a member of a community of professionals. A phrase from Paula resonated with Tara: 'If you're not born a teacher, you can be trained to become one. But you die one'. The sense that the pre-service teachers were embarking on a life-long journey as part of a collective, as part of a community of professional teachers, was made explicit to the pre-service teachers through stories shared and words expressed by the retired teachers. Retiree Fran told her partner, Aisha, 'I absolutely miss being a teacher every day now that I am retired'. These conversations were explicitly generative of the pre-service teachers' professional identity and the sense that teaching is a life-long commitment.

Professional identity, however, was also generated through tacit means. The relationships formed in the *generations of learning* project, between retirees and pre-service teachers, stood in stark contrast to the relationships formed in other components of the pre-service teachers' university programme. As pre-service teacher Peter noted, between university lecturers and mentor teachers, there were few professional relationships in the university programme with any longevity. Although he has appreciated his mentor teachers, 'after placement is done, it's like, okay, bye bye'. The relationships formed in *generations of learning* have the

potential to be long-term and were not obscured by the need for the pre-service teacher to perform to a certain standard; they were not altered by a mandate that the retirees gather sufficient evidence through which to judge the worth of the pre-service teacher. In many ways, it was the first time for the pre-service teachers to be in a relationship throughout their pre-service education in which they were not considered a student. Pre-service teacher Mick described that what he was taking away from the experience was a different type of learning that included,

> Just learning about pedagogy and stuff, and how to teach. It's all well and good at University to have your theory subjects, but you learn more from talking to people, and also doing. That's what I found. It's great to have Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, but to learn from somebody's who's actually been there and talk about aspects of your pedagogy that you want advice on, and learn.

Generations of learning was simply about two teachers meeting—from opposite ends of the professional experience continuum—to discuss shared passions. The retirees valued highly the beginning teachers' keenness, realism, assuredness, enthusiasm and commitment, believing that from meeting the beginning teachers that 'education is in very, very safe hands' (Lee). Some retirees, however, expressed protective concern with what was in store for these beginning teachers in the schools and communities they were about to enter. As Fran commented,

> I guess everyone has now expressed how impressed they are with the enthusiasm and all that, but I do worry. Well, they are going into an environment where they're not valued for those things, both by parents and by kids. And there are huge pressures on them to sort of meet the reporting and all those sorts of requirements that it can sort of be overwhelming and demoralising for them. So, you've got these enthusiastic kids going into an environment that could easily knock that out of them.

Relational theory reminds us that 'meeting and learning are inseparable' (Bingham and Sidorkin, 2004, p. 5) and that relationships are formative to who we are and what we can become (Llewellyn, 2011). As relationships were formed between the retirees and the pre-service teachers, a sense of care, from one teacher to the next, was expressed. These were relationships of generativity, of one generation helping to form the next generation of teachers. An understanding of professional identity was generative through the retiree/pre-service teacher relationship. The mere presence of the retirees—there on a voluntary basis and for no obvious personal gain—expanded a sense of what it means to be a teacher for the pre-service teachers. Tara identified this lesson from seeing Paula's engagement in this project and other endeavours: 'There is no end goal to being a teacher. You don't just be a teacher and then that's it. You're always trying to improve, you're always trying to learn'. Importantly, it was also the quality of the presence of the retirees that spoke to the pre-service teachers. Mick noticed that his retired partner, May, was 'very willing to engage and talk, and you could tell that she wanted to be here'. Peter remarked about his partner, Joanne, and the other retired teachers that 'the fun thing is that they are as curious as we are'. Pre-service teachers began to see their retired partners not only as retirees but as teachers engaged in a life-long practice of learning and educating. Professional identity expanded beyond the individual, beyond the here and now, to a shared identity shaped through continuities and changes.

Conclusion

Although conversations in the *generations of learning* project centred upon the profession of the past, and the present, they usually ended up by discussing the profession of the future. As McAdams and Logan (2004) point out, generativity is a complex process of seeking to preserve what is good from the past in order to benefit the future. Peter, in reflecting on his time with Joanne, remarked that discussions of change in the profession had taught him that education is in a constant state of change and progress. Mick and his partner, May, engaged in a reflective process at the end of their final conversation, asking questions related to the future of the profession: How can we increase job security, stop teacher burnout, improve public perception of teaching and promote good teachers without removing them from the classroom? Binh and her partner, Lee, discussed the changing nature of support for teachers by other professionals, government policies, teaching unions and colleagues. They also identified areas that they were pleased had not changed, such as a focus on 'making pathways for all students to succeed' (Binh). The pre-service and retired teachers were engaged in the activity of collective generation of what being a teaching professional means—in the past, present and future. Such a generation means that pre-service teachers are more likely to understand, own and relate to notions of professionalism (Sachs, 2003).

Biesta et al. (2015) have critiqued teacher education for becoming too instrumentalist, where it has become focused on 'getting the job done—and has been steered away from a more intellectual engagement with teaching, school and society' (p. 638). Part of this instrumentalism involves teacher education courses becoming increasingly reshaped and organised in response to compliance with government policy professional standards, to produce 'classroom-ready' teachers. The Teacher Educational Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG), involving the Australian Federal Minister of Education with all the State and Territory ministers, has now set in place more rigid quality assurance, and regulatory requirements to lift the quality of teacher graduates. In several ways, these well-meaning 'reforms' overemphasise measurement of prospective teachers' literacy, numeracy and personal qualities. This emphasise on measurement risks undercutting the interpersonal relationship building skills and the dispositions required by teachers to build rapport and know and understand students to address their increasingly different learning needs. To ensure compliance to these sorts of requirements, pre-service teachers are measured in classes by lecturers, assessed during teaching placements by mentor teachers and, in Australia, judged as sufficiently literate and numerate to be teachers by the Australian Council for Educational Research. In this age of measurement and compliance, generative spaces for conversations that are about meaning-making and relationship building are squeezed out by the focus upon credential-making.

For the participants in *generations of learning,* the generativity of teachers and of the teaching profession was explored. They engaged in what Biesta et al. (2015) would name *robust professional discourse about teaching and education*. For example, together, Paula and Tara explored 'classroom readiness' as being connected to

being 'up for the challenge'. This was not a focus on 'tips and tricks' of being a teacher but rather an ethical disposition of being gutsy enough to be willing to learn. According to Paula and Tara, it is this willingness that shapes teachers' identity. Through *generations of learning*, Tara, as a pre-service teacher education student, was challenged by Paula to really think about all that is involved in teaching students, not just the curriculum. The generative nature of the exchanges that occurred between all the retired teachers and the pre-service teachers centred on a shared respect for and responsibility towards the teaching profession. The intergenerational learning was a reciprocal concern for the teaching profession and a responsibility to further its ongoing respect. The participants learned and landed upon the idea that bringing students along with you as a teacher is central to your identity as a teacher who makes a difference. It was the ability to foster generative relations with students that allowed them to see themselves as teachers. This ability was second nature to all the retirees who participated in *generations of learning*, a part of their identity as teachers and an invaluable source of learning for the pre-service teachers.

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Chapter 8
'What Is Finger Knitting?' Chinese Pre-service Teachers' Initial Professional Experience in Australian Early Childhood Education

Haoran Zheng, Anne Keary and Julie Faulkner

Abstract Professional experience in teacher education programmes is being reframed due to the growing intake of international students over the last decade. Early Childhood Education (ECE), as one of the favoured options of many international students, witnesses increasing enrolment from international students, especially those from China. However, due to the philosophical and pedagogical differences between Early Childhood Education in Australia and China, Chinese pre-service teachers can encounter multiple and complex challenges during their professional experiences in the Australian ECE context. This chapter presents the initial professional experience of one first-year undergraduate Chinese student studying in ECE, through a narrative lens. Bourdieu's *field*, *habitus* and *capital* are employed to understand how pre-service teachers' perceptions towards the field and different cultural and linguistic capitals that they possess, can inform international pre-service teachers' success and self-confidence during their professional experiences.

Introduction

In Australia, over the last decade, the population of higher education is diversifying with the intake of international students. According to the Department of Education (2017), compared to the previous year, in July 2017, there was a 17% increase in the number of international students in higher education in Australia. The majority of international students are from the 'big five' Asian countries (China, India, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Vietnam) with Chinese students forming the largest cohort (36.8%) across a number of degrees and disciplines (Department of Education and Training 2016). Since 2012, China has become the largest source country of international students studying Australia with 28% of the total international student cohort being Chinese Nationals (Department of Education and Training 2017). To be more specific, in 2017, there are 150,393 Chinese international students studying

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in Australia and 108,620 members of this student cohort are enrolled in Australian universities (Department of Education and Training 2017).

Similarly, the higher education area of teacher education is also witnessing this trend as Australia has proactively attracted a large number of international students. This is even more particularly the case for Early Childhood Education (ECE), which has both coursework and mandatory professional experience components, aiming to prepare pre-service teachers adequately for their future profession. For example, in the authors' institution, Monash University, Chinese international students account for 52.2% of the total student number in undergraduate ECE (Monash University 2017). Moreover, due to the immigration policies, ECE is also a qualifying degree for Permanent Residency in Australia. According to DET (2014), 24,936 permanent independent migrant visas from international Early Childhood (EC) pre-service or graduate teachers were granted in 2013–2014.

This chapter argues, along with Arkoudis et al. (2013), that the intake of international students can enhance both domestic and international students' cultural awareness and intercultural engagement. Given this growing phenomenon and its implications for those involved, this chapter will discuss Chinese international pre-service teachers' initial experiences and perspectives on ECE in an Australian context. The title of this chapter ('What is finger knitting?' Chinese pre-service teachers' initial professional experience in Australian Early Childhood Education) refers to finger-knitting, an Australian handicraft, which is a process of looping and weaving with the yarn and used as an activity in some childhood centres. Here, we use 'finger-knitting' not just because it is an activity experienced by our pre-service teachers, but also how it acts as a metaphor for the ways Chinese pre-service teachers construct themselves and are constructed by competing discourses and resources. These include course work and professional experience expectations, professional standards for graduate teachers and ways that they draw on Bourdieusian concepts such as cultural capital.

We frame our exploration with Bourdieu's concepts: *field, habitus and capital*. Due to the pedagogical, philosophical and sociocultural differences between ECE in China and Australia, we found that participants experienced significant challenges in adjusting to an Australia ECE culture during their initial professional experience. Although research has been conducted in the exploration of international and Chinese students' academic experiences in Australia, the field of international students' professional experience is under-researched, especially in Early Childhood Education. Further, it is timely to re-imagine professional experience from pre-service teachers' perspectives, especially from the growing number of Chinese pre-service teachers' perspectives, so that relational dimensions can be better understood.

Contextual Dimensions: ECE in Australia

The Australian ECE curriculum framework, *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)* for Australia is the first national framework developed from knowledge and practices about children's learning and development

(DEEWR, 2009). In this framework, play-based learning is a major focus and significant pedagogy, as it is seen to generate a number of benefits such as cognitive development, language and literacy learning, emotional development and relationship with others, fostering creativity and divergent thinking (Barblett, 2010; Fleer & Samuelsson, 2008). Therefore, it is strongly emphasised and employed in Australia ECE professional experience. In contrast, in China, it is challenging to implement a play-based learning approach due to the deep-rooted cultural beliefs about formal learning instruction and lack of play-based experience of teachers (Rao & Li, 2008). Parents also reinforce a preference towards formal teaching and learning over play in the Chinese context (Hu, Zhou, & Li, 2017).

In Early Childhood (EC) teacher education, the combination of theoretical and practical learning experiences is believed to support the consolidation of knowledge and practices in real learning contexts (Starkey & Rawlins, 2011). There are many advantages of integrating professional experience into teacher education, such as improving academic and professional knowledge and applying pedagogical strategies within the future professional context (Allen & Peach, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2006). The rationale for this integration can be traced back to John Dewey over a century ago, who initiated the idea of consolidating learning (Dewey, 1904).

Professional experience usually commences at the beginning of pre-service teachers' degrees. The early inclusion of professional placement aims to reconstruct understanding of the young learners and the teaching community as well as to enable beginning pre-service teachers to develop understanding of the demands of the profession. To illustrate, the number of ECE professional placement days ranges from 60 to 80 days: 60 days for a postgraduate teaching qualification and 80 days for undergraduate degrees (ACECQA, 2016). In Victoria, since 30 September 2015, all Early Childhood teachers need to be registered with Victorian Institute of Teaching which echoes the quality enhancement needs in ECE (Fenech, Sumsion, & Shepherd, 2010).

Early Childhood Education in China

In total, there are 223,683 early childhood services in China, which positions the nation as having the largest ECE system in the world (Feng, 2017). The recognition of the importance of ECE has risen in China in recent years, especially after the development of a detailed *Framework for 3–6-Year-Old Children's Development Criteria*, which responds to the National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development for 2010–2020 (Ministry of Education of China, 2012). The development of these policy documents means that ECE is marked as one of the education development priorities for the first time in China (Feng, 2017).

Influenced by the culturally rooted philosophies towards ECE, kindergartens in China provide services that are designed to fulfil two purposes: child care and educational preparation (Liu et al., 2012). The Chinese education system is influenced

by the Confucian culture and academic achievement in the forms of examinations, which can be regarded as a means to upward social mobility (Ho & Hao, 2014; Sun & Rao, 2017).

Notably, in many cities in China, there are entrance examinations for primary schools, especially in higher quality primary schools, with the subjects in the entrance examinations being more diverse and questions more difficult than those from other schools. Hu and Li (2012) found that Chinese parents with higher educational levels prefer to send their children to centres where children can engage in formal learning which prepares them for school study and pressure from schools and society. For example, Li and Liu (2016) point out that some kindergartens require children to be able to use multiplication tables fluently, solve addition and subtraction problems under 100, and recognise one thousand characters.

In China, there are more than two million EC professionals working in the field. However, EC professionals' positioning in the society is less advantaged compared to their peers in other education sectors. One reason for this may be the shortage of university-qualified professionals in the field and that the majority of the teachers graduate from normal schools and normal colleges (Zhu & Han, 2006). Normal schools enrol students from lower secondary schools and after three years of study graduates can be qualified EC teachers while similarly normal colleges offer 3-year courses to upper secondary students. Currently, there are in total 252,113 full-time EC teachers working in China with approximately 18% having an undergraduate and postgraduate degrees (376,025 undergraduate degrees and 3278 with masters' degrees) (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2015).

International Pre-service Teachers in Australia

International pre-service teachers studying primary and secondary education in the Australian context can encounter a number of challenges and constraints in these settings, according to research (Ashman, Short, Muir, Jales, & Myhill, 2013; Barton, Hartwig, & Cain, 2015; Nallaya, 2016). For instance, research shows that Asian international pre-service teachers often lack the English proficiency to support the satisfactory completion of their professional placement and university study and that their unfamiliarity with Australian culture can cause difficulties in the placement (Spooner-Lane, Tangen, & Campbell, 2009). Similarly, Allen and Peach (2007) point out that overseas-born pre-service teachers might experience cultural issues such as unfamiliarity with Australian school cultures, different pedagogies and teaching beliefs, as well as classroom management skills. This in turn can affect international pre-service teachers' wellbeing, leading to negative emotions such as frustration and anxiety (Nguyen, 2014). The intercultural differences can sometimes reflect different educational philosophies, perspectives and practices between international pre-service teachers' home countries and Australia (Ashman et al., 2013). Hadley, De Goia, and Highfield (2011) found that international pre-service teachers were surprised to discover that children's voices were valued and heard during the

professional placement, which contradicted their own primary school learning experiences where children sat in rows while listening to the teacher.

To further explore the ideas from existing research, we interviewed a number of Chinese international ECE pre-service teachers. We wanted to capture their responses early in their experience of their degree, when the cultural dissonance was arguably at its most pronounced. In this study particularly, culturally influenced perceptions and practices towards children and ECE teaching and learning can contribute to the understanding of Chinese pre-service teachers' initial interactions with the Australian ECE context.

We draw on Bourdieu's field, habitus and capital, to understand some of the complexities of individual pre-service teachers' transitions to different cultural and learning settings such as China to Australia and university coursework study to professional experience sites (Blackmore, Gribble, & Rahimi, 2015; Clark, Zukas, & Lent, 2011; Marginson, 2008). Briefly, Bourdieu believes that the interaction between field, habitus and cultural capital generates action and logic of practice (Bourdieu, 1990b). 'Field' refers to the relational social space where there are complex positioning, struggles and power relations (Harker, Mahar, & Wilkes, 1990). It can be seen as a field of force and a field of struggle and every field shares its own laws or 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990a, 1993a). The particularity of a field can produce 'habitus', which denotes transferable dispositions that are shaped by previous experiences and structuring constantly, which can generate different practices (Bourdieu, 1977a, b). Reay (2004) conveys the complexity of habitus by explaining that habitus is embodied and it can encompass speaking, feeling and thinking, which can be the 'products of opportunities and constraints' (p. 433). The third thinking tool, capital, is 'accumulated labour' and there are basically three forms of capital: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). In this chapter, we focus on cultural capital in the form of linguistic capital. Cultural capital can be acquired but it cannot be acquired instantly nor through other people without any personal effort (Bourdieu, 1979). Bourdieu's concepts offer capacity to understand how Chinese pre-service teachers' transferrable dispositions and capital are shaped and informed in the professional experience field in ECE.

Narrative-Based Case Studies

Incorporating narrative interpretations of the participants' stories, or cases in this study, provides us with powerful insights to understand participants' aptitudes and experiences in a particular historical context. According to Yin (2014) a case study is 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (p. 18). In other words, case studies are employed to generate in-depth understandings towards a phenomenon in a contextualised situation. Although single case and multiple case designs share similar methodological frameworks and little difference, we believe using a multiple case design can create a more compelling

and robust data collection and analysis phase which, in turn, contributes to more powerful interpretation (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

We employed a multiple case study design to explore the experiences and responses of a cohort of first-year Chinese international pre-service teachers undertaking a Bachelor of Education (Honours) degree in Early Childhood Education at a university in Victoria, Australia. Data consisted of one focus group interview and two in-depth individual interviews, in addition to document analysis of EC policies in both countries and reflective professional experience journal entries. Eleven first-year undergraduate Chinese ECE pre-service teachers participated in this study and every one of them is a single case. With ethics approval, participants were invited to participate in one focus group conducted at the beginning of their first semester and they were then individually interviewed prior to and after their first ten days of professional placement experience in different urban EC centres. Access to their professional experience journals was requested and granted. During the focus group and individual interviews, discussion focused on previous study experience, study motivation, practicum expectation and outcome, as well as participants' overall perspectives of ECE in Australia. The intent was to explore the changes in Chinese pre-service teachers' perspectives towards ECE in their first year of study and how these changes impacted on their experience of and adjustment to Australian ECE expectations. This reflection on their experiences 'interweaves between different layers of personal, interpersonal, and institutional demands that lend to both present and future implications of pre-service teachers' identity as EC professionals' (Monk & Phillipson, 2016).

In this chapter, we present findings from one particular case: Sue's story, which offers a glimpse of the cultural and linguistic challenges that one Chinese pre-service teacher encountered in their first professional experience as well as the capital and contribution that she brings to the Australian ECE field. We believe that positioning and repositioning the ways that this participant speaks of her professional experience provides useful understanding for teacher educators into broader intercultural encounters with an Australian ECE context.

Sue's Story

Sue is 18 years old and a first-year student studying Early Childhood Education in an Australian university located in Melbourne, a large culturally diverse city in Victoria. Originally from Shanghai, China, Sue previously studied at an international school in China. In this non-traditional Chinese school, Sue studied all subjects in English and was taught by non-Chinese teachers. In comparison to her friends who studied at public schools in China, Sue's English, especially her spoken English, is proficient as she was required to complete her academic study in English. Sue's family planned to send her to England to undertake tertiary education. However, they then realised this would mean Sue would be required to sit university entrance exams. Sue's family explored other options and found that Sue could take multiple tests and

formative assessments throughout the foundation programmes to meet the university requirements if she moved to the State of Victoria in Australia. Therefore, Sue's family chose Melbourne for Sue's higher education study and Sue did not complete her secondary school study in China. Instead, Sue transitioned to one foundation course programme in Melbourne and studied two years in the programme prior to university.

There were varying motivation factors for Sue's enrolment in an ECE degree. Sue took a test in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and achieved 6.5 in total with 7 in speaking and listening. Her IELTS score met university requirements and therefore, she was not required to undertake further English language studies. Sue remarked that she loves children and her grandmother used to work in ECE in China. Being able to migrate to Australia further influenced Sue's decision.

The following section presents Sue's perspectives on and experiences of ECE. The transcript excerpts are from the focus group discussion and her individual interview.

English Language Confidence Before and After Professional Experience

When asked whether she encountered English language challenges at the beginning of the semester, Sue commented that she was fairly confident with her English language proficiency:

> For daily English, maybe because I have been here for a while, I don't have many English language issues during daily conversations with others. In class, however, I feel that I lack academic vocabulary. When I write an essay, I always need to use the dictionaries. And before I started my study in Australia, I was very confident about my English level and I achieved satisfactory academic IELTS score (with 7 in reading and speaking; 6 in writing and speaking).

Attending an international school and studying in Australia for more than two years contributed to Sue's self-confidence with conversational English. According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital accumulation depends on length of time, social class and society, with the amount of one's cultural capital being marked by their previous circumstances and condition. From a middle-class background, Sue was able attend a private school in China and spent more than 10 years learning English in both China and Australia. These earlier conditions and experiences helped Sue to acquire linguistic capital in the context. As can be seen from the above quote, Sue's ability to converse freely demonstrates her self-assuredness with the everyday communicative aspects of English (Yang, 2001). Sue outlined her struggles with academic writing and provided the example of using dictionaries to support her essay writing. Sue referred to her satisfactory IELTS scores as testimony to her sound expressive and receptive English language abilities. Due to the immigration laws and English language requirement for university entrance in Australia, IELTS

as one of the most employed English tests is a signifier of linguistic evidence of one's English competence (Blackmore et al., 2015).

Sue's perception and language confidence can be discussed in terms of the findings from a number of studies conducted on how international students communicate and study in English in Australia (Arkoudis & Doughney, 2016; Borland & Pearce, 2002) and studies regarding English language challenges of Chinese international students' studying overseas (Zhu, 2016). These studies argue that international students experience difficulties and challenges with academic and daily language usage and this reflects their previous language learning experiences which tend to be grammar-focused rather than taught through a communicative teaching approach. The research suggests such difficulties adds stress to their English language practice (Sawir, 2005). In Sue's case, her previous language learning experience boosted her confidence to maintain conversations in English. However, she required assistance from dictionaries for her academic essay writing. It appeared that her satisfactory IELTS scores gave her almost a sense of competence with her English language ability in an academic context.

One week before Sue started her first practicum, she was interviewed and asked about her English ability again. Sue's response was now quite different to her previous reaction:

> Sometimes when I read, I understand every individual word. However, when they are in a sentence, I don't understand the meanings of the sentence. For the weekly readings, I told my friends that if the readings were in Chinese, I would definitely be able to finish all readings before my classes. As the readings were in English, I felt less motivated.

Sue's confidence towards her academic English appeared to have diminished. She reported her poor reading comprehension even though she was able to understand the meanings of each word. Sue's confusion about understanding the vocabulary but not comprehending the meaning echoes the current trends in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) that linguistic knowledge such as decoding and vocabulary size plays a minor role in second language reading (Cobb & Horst, 2001).

Moreover, Sue inferred that she might well experience difficulties with the English levels required of a practicum experience, acknowledging 'After all, I'm not an English native speaker and it will be challenging during my practicum'. Sue's concern about her English in professional experience not only reflects the lingua franca role of English but also discloses her unfamiliarity with EC field-specific expressions and words involved, such as the names of activities in the centre and children's songs. Bourdieu (1992) asserts that the linguistic habitus and dispositions of a field implies linguistic capacity to produce grammatically correct discourse and the use of these discourses in specific field. In other words, social conditions play an important role in determining the legitimacy of linguistic capacity. Even before the first professional experience, Sue's unfamiliarity with the Australian context due to her different socio-cultural background is influencing her perceptions towards her linguistic capacity in professional experience.

On completion of her first professional experience, Sue was invited to participate in another interview to reflect on her first professional experience. She was very

excited to share her thoughts on the challenges she had experienced and the new ECE knowledge she had acquired. Sue identified 'English difficulty' as an area of concern whilst on placement:

> [My] English was not enough for the practicum, especially I lacked the basic daily vocabulary. Many times in this practicum, I couldn't understand much when the children talked to me. I didn't know what they wanted and I didn't know the names of the toys. One day, a girl told me that she wanted to do finger-knitting. At the beginning, I didn't understand the word 'finger-knitting'. Then she taught me about finger-knitting.

Sue elaborated: 'Sometimes, I feel quite upset and frustrated as my English is worse than a three-year-old's English.' Even though Sue has been learning English for a number of years and she was relatively confident about her English, she had difficulties communicating with the young children during her placement. She implied she lacked the linguistic as well as cultural knowledge (or capital) required for placement experience in an Australian ECE context. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), the role of language is not simply as an instrument of communication, and one's linguistic capital is closely related to the their given social background and previous academic experience. According to Bourdieu (1992), linguistic capital is defined as the capacity to produce expressions for a specific context. For example, accent, vocabulary and grammar can be elements of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1992). Growing up in China and learning English in an international educational setting and studying in Australia for more than 2 years did not provide adequate linguistic and cultural preparation for Sue to manage her coursework and professional placement without a struggle. Sue explained how she lacked the EC vocabulary associated with names of toys. This impacted on her language and communicative capacity to interact with the young children in her care whilst on placement. In turn this affected her self-confidence regarding professional communication in English in an Australian EC context.

Bourdieu (1992) asserts that the more linguistic capital that one has, the more likely that he or she can maintain a profit of distinction which is related to power. Linguistic capital in a Bourdieusian sense is not about the question of meaning; instead it is the question of value and power (Grenfell, 1998). In a group, the ones who possess the competence have more power (Bourdieu, 1977b). Even though there was nobody commenting on Sue's language competency during her professional experience, her confidence fell as she could not access the same linguistic value and power as her Australian peers or the children in the centre.

Furthermore, finger-knitting as one of Australian early childhood centre activities can be perceived as a cultural practice echoing the habitus of the EC field. In order to understand the field, one might need to develop the realisation of the schemes of perception and appreciation of the habitus and also, proactively accumulate the required capitals (Bourdieu, 1990a, b). Habitus, a product of history, acts as the principles generating and organising practices which can be those 'reasonable' or 'common sense' behaviours (Bourdieu, 1990a, b). As the recognition process and accumulation of the required cultural capital takes time, in this respect, Sue's learning finger-knitting experience can also be understood as an opportunity and a strategy

regarding learning how to negotiate unfamiliarity to help her with accumulating cultural capital in the Australian ECE context.

Tensions in ECE Professional Experience

After her professional experience we questioned Sue over whether additional support needed to be provided to her as this was her initial contact with the Australian EC settings. Sue replied

> Not much. When I participated in the meeting with my mentor and my university officer, I told them that I was from China and English was not my first language. Also, I said that I might experience difficulties. But they both said "No no, this is not your excuse." They argued that my experience should be the same with Australian students. However, the Australian students grew up here and they could understand the children's English way more easily than me.

Sue engaged in this meeting with University professional staff because on the first day of her practicum, she focused on observing children in their play. However, her mentor assumed Sue demonstrated a lack of interest and motivation and that was the reason why Sue was invited to participate in this meeting. To our understanding, Sue struggled to understand how she should engage in the professional experience context as she was reluctant to talk to children and help her mentor. According to Bourdieu (1992), misrecognition is generated from one's previous experiences and their current situation in the field. As a new entrant in the ECE field, Sue had limited knowledge about the functioning of the centre as well as the partnership with her mentor. In Sue's previous experience which was mostly structured in China, Sue's practice (by observing solely) did not meet her mentor's expectations. Both of their expectations and practices were framed from their previous experiences as parts of their own habitus and the habitus differences became visible during the first interaction between Sue and her mentor.

Examining the learning characteristics of Chinese students, Li (2010) points out that Chinese students take time in imitating actions in a new learning field until one thoroughly understands or masters the field. Learning under the Confucian influence is not just constrained to learning the knowledge or theories per se; instead, it is a self-perfecting process. This process can be understood as a capital accumulation experience under Bourdieu's theory.

Similar findings also appear in the study conducted by Hadley et al. (2011) that, as a form of respect, international pre-service teachers did not wish to ask mentors questions, while mentor teachers, on the other hand, thought pre-service teachers were less engaged. Sue's narrative suggests there was also a misunderstanding and miscommunication between her mentor and herself about the purpose of the placement and the expectations of pre-service teachers. According to the university handbook, for the first professional placement, pre-service teachers are supposed to observe and document the EC teacher's planning and teachings, observe and document children's learning as well as support their mentor teachers. Therefore, upon arrival, Sue

assumed that observation and documentation were the priorities of her professional placement while her mentor teacher might be looking for engagement in activities to demonstrate Sue's motivation and interest. Tensions between Sue and her mentor arose through misinterpretation of Sue's role in the professional placement.

There is a university assumption that international pre-service (Chinese, in this case) teachers and domestic Australian pre-service teachers are able to adapt to the professional placement activities in a similar way. Sue's additional challenges and needs as an international pre-service teacher to some extent were insufficiently addressed during her first encounter of the professional experience. Her mentor's comments about comparing Sue with an Australian student reflected doxa or 'natural attitude'. Doxa is related to power and the dominant agents assess the value and characteristics through the application of their own schemes of perception and agents tend to disagree with differences (Bourdieu, 1984). In the case of Sue, her lack of cultural capital as a first-year international student is not recognised by her mentor, as her mentor commented Sue encounters the same types of challenges experienced by her Australian domestic peers and being a first-year international pre-service teacher should not be Sue's excuse. Sayer (2005) argues that one's previous dispositions as a part of their habitus can help them cope more effectively in a familiar context and this also strengthens their 'feel for the game' (p. 25). In contrast, entering the Australian EC centre for the first time does not give Sue the 'feel for the game', especially when her mentor expected her to achieve the same professional experience outcomes as her Australian peers. Sue's mentor may not have previously experienced working with international pre-service teachers and when Sue argued that she experienced challenges, her mentor assessed the reasons as not valid. Without the field-appropriate cultural and linguistic capital to succeed when her performance was evaluated on the first day of her professional experience, Sue felt that she should be responsible for her own lack of competence. As a result, Sue felt frustrated and worried. Individual students or pre-service teachers can have very different social trajectories and mentor teachers play critical roles in recognising their additional needs and providing support to them through the professional experiences.

Sue's Constructive Participation in the Context

When we asked Sue if there was any aspect of her practicum that she was proud of, she responded

> There was a Chinese boy in my class and I noticed that he was quite different from Australian kids. He couldn't speak English well and at home, he only speaks Chinese. He couldn't talk to other children and the teachers/staff cannot understand him either. He cried every day and he didn't listen to teachers. So the teachers and staff always came to me to comfort him and talk to him.

Sue believed her role as a Chinese pre-service teacher is not always 'deficit' but rather allowed her to connect with a lonely, also marginalised child. Literature in

the field indicates that in studies of international pre-service teachers' professional experiences (Spooner-Lane, Tangen, & Campbell 2009), there is often a focus on their lack of English competence, or lack of linguistic capital, which is also evident through responses in this study.

However, Sue's interview transcripts reflect that the issues and challenges for international students studying in Australia are more complex. Difficulties with initial professional placement were a consequence of insufficient preparation in terms of specialised EC as well as professional language requirements, in addition to cultural understandings that would have better supported the pre-service teachers' placement. Lack of vocabulary understanding in higher education or school contexts can affect international pre-service teachers' teaching experiences as well as their confidence to teach a cohort in the future (Hadley et al., 2011).

Yet, Sue brought her own linguistic and cultural capital to the EC field in her story about comforting the crying boy. Her Chinese cultural and linguistic capital provided her with the means to establish meaningful communication. Moreover, since the child's English language competence was relatively low compared to his Australian peers, Sue's linguistic capacity acted as a bridge to lessen the communication gap. This experience helped Sue with her own confidence construction in the professional experience and it also earned her mentor teacher's appreciation.

Sue's Developing Perspectives on Early Childhood Education

After her coursework and professional placement, Sue developed new perspectives towards the field and more specifically to the ECE context in Australia. Prior to undertaking professional placement, Sue's perspectives on ECE were framed in relation to the theoretical knowledge and her experiences of ECE in China. The Australian ECE context was a new field for Sue and it was structured with its own attributes (Bourdieu, 1993b). For example, as previously mentioned, Australian ECE field is structured by policies and frameworks, such as the national ECE curriculum framework, Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and, National Quality Standard (NQS) in the National Quality Framework. In this field, play-based learning as a pedagogy is significantly encouraged. In relation to cross-cultural perspectives in ECE, Sue reflected

> I did lots of activities with children …. read stories for children and played with children. I think there is more freedom for children in the Australian ECE. In China, I have a five-year-old cousin who is going to primary school this year. Every family member is worried nowadays and she needs to go to different extra-curriculum classes every day. I think this goes too far and [is] too strict for children. Children couldn't enjoy their childhood. In comparison, I think children in Australia are too relaxed and they should engage in some formal learning. They shouldn't play all the time. I know my thoughts and ideas are still influenced by the Chinese context.

In her new field of study—ECE—in Australia, Sue began to realise the importance of play-based learning. She played with the children and participated in their

finger-knitting activity. In other words, the field of Australian ECE together with the knowledge, conditions and experiences, were shaping Sue's habitus and structuring her perceptions and action. When habitus is conditioned in an unfamiliar field, the differences or disjuncture can initiate change and transformation (Reay 2004). As a result, the transformation of Sue's habitus occurred along with her attitude and action change. Meanwhile, her habitus also predisposes her to adjusting to the Australian ECE context while she retains some of her earlier enculturation.

It can be seen that Sue's thoughts and practice towards ECE still reflect her earlier life experiences. Habitus is linked to an individual's history where there is particular socialisation with one's families (Reay 2004). In the practicum, Sue believed that children should be engaged in more formal learning and that may also be why she stressed that she read stories for children. Her cousin's learning experience in China to some extent could be an extreme example but Sue believed that learning curriculum knowledge is important for children when they attend EC centres. In China, one role of ECE is to prepare children for primary school learning and the trend of ECE curriculum assimilation into primary school learning is prevalent in China. For example, Cheng (2014) writes that in a number of EC centres in China, in order to improve the teaching and learning quality, there are a variety of activities and classes everyday such as English, computer science, primary school mathematics and children are also given a great of homework. Sue's habitus in this respect is partially responsible for her thoughts and relates to ECE in general and her previous experiences, whilst her recent encounters with her cousin's experience are internalised, adding another layer to her habitus.

Concluding Thoughts

Given the burgeoning numbers of Chinese international students in ECE degrees and the value of this growth area to Australian universities, we felt it vital to investigate the academic and professional experience needs of this cohort. Moreover, interviews conducted with these students over the period of one semester offer an evolving lens through which to examine initial tensions they experience regarding Early Childhood Education The preliminary findings from one Chinese international pre-service teacher's academic and professional experiences are very limited but highlight a number of issues from the literature. Since one purpose of professional placement is to support pre-service teachers' consolidation of knowledge and practices, supplementary support is needed for international pre-service teachers to transition smoothly to professional placement (Fan & Le, 2009). In Sue's case, although Sue officially passed her professional experience, this professional placement was a frustrating and de-motivating experience and served to disempower and disenfranchise her as a first-year pre-service teacher. One conclusion is that additional support is needed to prepare international pre-service teachers prior and during their initial professional placement. This echoes one of the themes of this book that, to us, professional experience is more than just a short-term practicum which can

capture rapidly increasing diversity and complexity in the teacher education field. More education for Australian mentor teachers on first-year international students' needs is required as this can help them to provide support to pre-service teachers to construct their professional understandings and move ahead to experience success in ECE settings. Meanwhile, international pre-service teachers should also proactively accumulate their understanding and skills during their professional experience. In the unfamiliar EC centre setting, international pre-service teachers can lack a 'feel for the game' and they can encounter additional challenges and difficulties due to the differences between their habitus and the field habitus. In this case, conscious planning and being proactive can enhance the confidence of international pre-service teachers.

In our study, the tensions underpinning ECE in Australia and China clearly influenced Sue's overall perspectives on ECE. Additional support provided to this cohort can help them with transitions and benefit their initial professional experiences. For instance, prior to professional placement, facilitating communication between universities and EC centres, including clear guidelines in advance, would enable mentors teachers to help international student cohorts who may need additional support. Confident, well-prepared pre-service teachers could then enjoy an optimal learning environment once out in the field.

Previous studies demonstrate that there is a strong link between international students' cultural and linguistic capital and their academic or even employment outcomes (Arkoudis et al., 2009; Arkoudis et al., 2013; Blackmore et al., 2017). Pre-service teachers are encouraged to explore roles through different boundaries and their habitus can be continually structured and restructured. As a result, the same pre-service teachers can become confident educators who are able to work with different mentors and different school contexts.

EC centres and universities as social fields are encouraged to recognise the contributions and cultural capital that these international pre-service teachers can bring to the ECE context, especially in relation to professional experience. To reiterate, research in exploring international pre-service teachers' experiences usually focuses on a deficit perspective, or on the difficulties that they encounter. As Sue's case reflects, there are indeed challenges associated with Chinese international students' professional experience in western Early Childhood degrees due to different cultural standpoints. However, a deeper analysis suggests that more strategic mobilisation of capital from Chinese pre-service teachers brings valuable and diverse resources to the Australian ECE context, and can considerably benefit intercultural understandings in a globalised environment.

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Part III
Professional Experience as Identity Work

Chapter 9
Bringing the Profession into University Classrooms: Narratives of Learning from Co-teaching Primary Mathematics

Sharyn Livy Livy, Johnson Alagappan, Tracey Muir and Ann Downton

Abstract While some teacher educators work alongside teachers with their pre-service teachers in school settings, it is less common for teachers to work alongside teacher educators in university settings. The following chapter provides insights on how a mathematics lecturer and a Year 1 teacher taught primary pre-service teachers in a university classroom. Narratives from the co-teachers and two colleagues who observed lessons and interviewed the pre-service teachers tell the story of a co-teaching experience which developed relationships, a sense of community, and diverse skills and expertise of the co-teachers, along with the impact that the experience had on the participants.

Introduction

> I have enjoyed this subject the most so far, this semester. I am loving learning about mathematics… I'm enjoying the team teaching – gaining a different perspective from both of you. (Tom – pre-service teacher)

The challenge of improving the quality of schooling outcomes and the closely linked quality of teaching is an ongoing issue in Australia, and continues to be a focus of recent research (Anthony, Cooke, & Muir, 2016). As teacher educators, we are tasked with preparing our pre-service teachers (PSTs) for entry into the profession and how well we do this is influenced by a number of factors, including course design and delivery. Within Australia there is concern related to the preparation of primary mathematics PSTs. A recent review of literature within Australia has identified a need for

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further research, collaboration and sharing of practice with other educational communities, if we are to improve teacher educators' practice (Anthony et al., 2016). Currently there is an imperative in Australia to improve the quality of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), including the knowledge for teaching mathematics (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group [TEMAG], 2015). In particular, the Advisory Group recommended that all teacher education should be integrated with practice in schools and that theory and practice in ITE must be inseparable and mutually reinforced. According to TEMAG, while professional experience placements can and should provide real opportunities for PSTs to integrate theory and practice, the reality is that the quality of professional experience is limited. There is a lack of integration of theory and practice, and a lack of integration of the work of providers (universities) and schools. The report also raised concerns that not all ITE programs are equipping graduates with the content knowledge, and evidence-based teaching strategies and skills required once graduated. It argued that providers, school systems and schools were not effectively working together in the development of graduate teachers (TEMAG, 2015).

While some teacher educators work alongside teachers with their PSTs in school settings (e.g. McDonald et al., 2014), it is less common for teachers to work alongside teacher educators in university settings. Some universities have recognised the importance of capitalising on practising teachers' expertise through casual employment of practising teachers and through secondments (e.g. Maher, 2011), but opportunities for weekly co-teaching of classes are less common. This is unfortunate, as bringing practising teachers into university classrooms may well assist with bridging the gap between the profession, theory and practice. Some universities, including Monash University, have recognised the benefits of co-teaching, and have established partnerships with schools that extend and/or complement professional experience placements. The Faculty of Education at Monash University provided funding incentives to encourage co-teaching situations, whereby practising teachers were invited to participate in teaching courses at both undergraduate honours level and Masters level. The purpose of this initiative was to assist with building relationships between universities and schools, ensuring graduating teachers are 'classroom ready' (TEMAG, 2015) and equipped with a diverse range of skills. For most PSTs, collaboration with practising teachers only occurs through their professional placement experiences, and there are no guarantees that these experiences provide PSTs with examples of 'best practice', current research, or in our case, exposure to quality mathematics teaching. An additional challenge for teacher educators is to provide PSTs with connections between the 'theory' and practice of classroom teaching, which research has shown can be achieved through university experiences that have classroom relevance (e.g. Beswick & Muir, 2013). Attempts to bridge this gap in the past have included engaging PSTs in critical viewing of video footage of mathematics teaching (e.g. Beswick & Muir, 2013), implementing lessons or co-teaching in classrooms (e.g. Anthony et al., 2015; Cavanagh & Garvey, 2012; Perkins, 2015), role-playing and rehearsal (e.g. Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Muir, Allen, Rayner, & Cleland, 2013) and the use of representations of practice, such as children's work samples (Grossman et al., 2009). The first author of this chapter, Sharyn, had implemented

some of these practices in the past (e.g. see Livy & Downton, 2018), but was keen to immerse her PSTs in a semester-long experience where they could interact weekly with a practising primary school teacher, in a university setting. While we acknowledge the importance of professional experience placements in exposing PSTs to the work of 'real' teachers, and the value placed on these experiences by the PSTs themselves (e.g. Mayer et al., 2014), we were concerned about the variability experienced by PSTs while on placement. PSTs' limited opportunities to participate in a community of practice, where they could reflect upon and discuss their experiences collectively (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2011) were also a concern.

There is growing evidence within the literature that PSTs' university classes can be dominated by a 'knowledgeable other'. Enfeld and Stasz (2011) wondered how a hierarchical relationship between single knowledgeable others (that is, teacher educators) and less knowledgeable learners affected participation in a community of practice. Studies have recognised that the teacher educator is in a 'privileged position' (Anakin & Linsell, 2014) to nurture the teaching and learning of mathematics. Klein (2012) argued that if the teacher educator is positioned as the 'one who knows' (p. 29) then there is less chance of change being enacted in teaching practices. Chick used a *demigod* metaphor to illustrate the idea that there is knowledge possessed by an expert to be imparted, with students being potential recipients of what we as teacher educators offer. Sharyn, in her role as teacher educator, was used to playing the role of the demigod, but would this shift when she became a co-teacher in her university environment? How would she respond to the potential situation of no longer being the sole authority in the classroom, with her students not tabula rasa on which the teacher must write the truth (Anderson & Speck, 1998)? Also, how might the PSTs respond?

Co-teaching

While there are disparate views and definitions of co-teaching, our situation most closely resembles the definition offered by Lock et al. (2016) as 'two instructors who team teach by providing simultaneous instruction to a…group of students in a course over a period of time' (p. 24). They maintain that co-teaching is about developing a relationship in which two instructors react and respond to each other and to the class, while Anderson and Speck (1998) point out that the success of the enterprise is influenced by the co-teachers' compatibility, expertise, gender, and classroom environment. In their documentation of a co-teaching situation undertaken with a graduate class by two instructors, Anderson and Speck found that as a team, they were compatible and complemented each other, despite having different teaching styles. Their students benefited from their teaching approach through gaining multiple perspectives on issues and they found the diverse instruction interesting and engaging. In the report of their experiences, Anderson and Speck were surprised that they did not have any negative results in their data and attributed this to the constructivist approach they employed in their teaching, and the mutual respect they showed towards each other

and their learners. Like Sharyn and her co-teacher Johnson, Anderson and Speck were not assigned by others as co-teachers, but rather selected each other, as has been recommended by others in the literature (e.g. Stehlik, 1995). Also in common with our study, two of their colleagues took on roles as participant observers during the classes, and were able to provide an objective data source from 'those who do not have a vested interest in the success of team teaching' (p. 683).

An often-cited benefit of co-teaching is that students gain multiple perspectives because two teachers offer different viewpoints (Anderson & Speck, 1998). Co-teaching also creates opportunities for modelling different approaches to teaching (Harris & Harvey, 2000), which may complement and extend upon the approaches experienced by students in their professional experience placements. There are also benefits for the instructors. Studies (e.g. Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2008; Ferguson & Wilson, 2011; Lock et al., 2016) found that co-teaching experiences enhanced instructor practice, provided enhanced reflection and were a legitimate means of continuing professional development. There is general agreement in the literature that a successful co-teaching partnership is founded on trust, and that participants need to provide one another with honest and critical feedback (e.g. Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Cobb & Sharma, 2015). This necessitates factoring in time whereby the co-teachers can engage in dialogue before and after the lessons, *about* those lessons (Cobb & Sharma, 2015). Within this dialogue, the co-teachers need to provide, receive and act on critical feedback, engage in self-reflection and respond to feedback from their teaching partner (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013).

Research Design

Qualitative narrative inquiry was the methodology adopted for this chapter. Chase (2011) defines narrative inquiry as 'an interest in life experiences as narrated by those who lived them' (p. 421). The lived experiences were those of a Year 1 practising classroom teacher (Johnson), a mathematics teacher educator (Sharyn) and the PSTs (pseudonyms used throughout) they taught each week. The purpose of the co-teaching partnership was to provide PSTs with shared opportunities to extend their theoretical underpinnings with the knowledge required for teaching primary mathematics. Sharyn had been teaching at Monash University for the past 3 years, prior to which she had worked at another university, had been a mathematics consultant for the Mathematical Association of Victoria, mentoring primary teachers for 4 years, as well as having 10 years' experience as a primary teacher in government primary schools. Johnson had more than 20 years teaching experience as a primary school teacher, including 10 years teaching in international schools. He had recently completed a Graduate Diploma in Psychology. During 2017, Johnson was responsible for teaching Year 1 students in an independent Foundation to Year 12 Christian school situated in the Western suburbs of Melbourne. The first opportunity Sharyn chose to work with a co-teacher on a regular basis was during 2017. Prior to that she had invited teachers as guest lecturers to present to the PSTs. In 2016 Johnson

had been invited to attend a tutorial with fourth year PSTs who were preparing their applications for school positions. Following this session, Johnson said he would be interested in doing further university teaching and was invited to participate with Sharyn in the co-teaching program in 2017. Prior to Johnson co-teaching at the university, Sharyn visited his school, taught a model lesson and observed him teaching his Year 1 students. They later shared both of these lessons with the PSTs.

First semester provided an opportunity for Johnson to become familiar with the protocols of teaching in a university setting. After a few weeks of teaching together in semester one, Sharyn and Johnson realised that their co-teaching experience would be a form of professional learning for both. Tracey and Ann, who were colleagues of Sharyn's and also mathematics teacher educators, were invited by Sharyn to independently observe classes and interview participants. Tracey and Ann were keen to be involved as they were also interested in extending their understanding of the co-teaching partnership that Sharyn and Johnson were undertaking. They contributed to the study by collecting field notes taken while observing Sharyn and Johnson co-teaching. Tracey also interviewed Sharyn, Johnson and some of the PSTs, to provide an additional perspective when coding, analysing and reporting the findings. Tracey's interviews were recorded and later transcribed. By second semester Sharyn and Johnson had established routines including a research focus, which was based around exploring their own learning experiences and that of the PSTs. We were particularly interested in reporting the strengths and weaknesses of the co-teaching experience, reflecting on our own teaching and learning as well as how the PSTs responded to tasks we shared on a weekly basis. After a conversation with Tracey and Ann, a plan was developed for collecting data during second semester related to the co-teaching experience for research purposes. We decided to collect data from Sharyn, Johnson and the PSTs. Sharyn and Johnson agreed to keep a weekly diary and also met to discuss their teaching, what worked, what they noticed about the PSTs when they were engaged in the lesson, and any issues or concerns. Finally, they discussed plans for the following week's lesson. The following questions guiding their weekly reflections:

How effective was the lesson?
What would you do differently?
What was a critical incident that stood out for you, for the PSTs?
What did you learn today?

Each week after teaching, Sharyn and Johnson independently recorded their answers to these questions in their diaries. Next, they shared, discussed and compared their diary entries. These conversations were recorded, transcribed and significant reflections were selected for the narrative, reported later. In addition, they designed surveys for the PSTs to complete during weeks 1 and 12 of the semester. The responses to the first survey are not reported in this chapter, but were used to help inform the planning of subsequent lessons by Sharyn and Johnson. The second survey consisted of questions that provided feedback from the PSTs to the teacher educators related to the co-teaching experiences including their reflections on critical instances that assisted them to learn. For example

When thinking about teaching primary mathematics what has helped you the most?
What were some critical incidences that have helped you to learn mathematics?
What have been some incidences that have helped prepare you for teaching mathematics?

Quotes from PSTs' survey responses were used within the following three narratives. The first narrative provides Sharyn's story and situates the study. In the second narrative, Johnson shares his experiences as a co-teacher. Tracey and Ann provide a third, joint narrative and reflections, from their perspective as critical friends and observers in the classroom.

Narrative 1: Sharyn's Experience

After teaching with Johnson for a semester, I was excited to meet our new cohort of PSTs in semester 2. We were teaching a unit, 'Mathematics education in the primary years'. Thinking about the experiences and impact that Johnson had on my teaching in first semester, I felt enthusiastic walking into our first class. Johnson was relaxed and friendly, and we were ready to set the scene. By this time, we had established a routine. Each week after teaching, we independently wrote in our diaries, individually reflecting on the co-teaching experiences, and on our own teaching and learning before we discussed and shared our reflections with each other. For example, we talked about occurrences during the lesson which we thought were important for helping the PSTs to extend their knowledge for teaching. Next, we planned the activities for the following week's tutorial including how each would contribute. Detailed planning provided an opportunity to rehearse parts of the lesson and to clarify with Johnson the theory and underpinning mathematical ideas of the tasks, or why tasks were chosen. For example, tasks may have been chosen because they could be used to model how mathematical materials might be used, provide an opportunity to explore different strategies for solving a problem, or to extend PSTs' mathematical understandings. During planning, Johnson also considered how he could contribute to the class and identified artefacts he might bring along from his own students to share.

Although I enjoyed these rich discussions and opportunities to reflect on my teaching with someone else, our planning and discussions were time consuming. In addition to planning the next tutorial, we also spent time discussing the activities together in order to ensure Johnson was aware of why particular tasks were chosen and the pedagogical approach for teaching each task. Similarly, additional time was spent after the lesson, as we engaged in the debriefing sessions. This resulted in increased workloads for both of us and Johnson also had the responsibility for planning his Year 1 lessons for another teacher to deliver in his absence.

The additional time and effort was worth it when we received positive feedback from the PSTs. It was great, for example, that the PSTs via surveys at the end of the semester endorsed our expertise and partnership.

Fig. 9.1   Sample of photos shared with PSTs of primary mathematics lessons

> Both Sharyn and Johnson obviously communicated well in the lead up to lessons, so they
> were on the same page in their presentations of ideas and approach to content. (Shane)

For our first class in semester 2, we asked the PSTs to brainstorm what they thought an
effective primary mathematics classroom might look like and we shared photographs
as a stimulus (Fig. 9.1).

These photos were taken during recent visits to primary schools. Although I am
no longer a classroom teacher I believe it is important to regularly work with teachers
and their students. This was also one of the reasons I chose to participate in the co-
teaching program. Visiting schools regularly provides real stories to share (Fig. 9.1),
and allows me to continue to make connections with how primary students learn
mathematics.

I was confident that the PSTs valued Johnson's contributions both because of the
way they interacted with him in class and through the comments they made in the
surveys at the end of the semester:

> A strength of the program was having another perspective on maths teaching, Johnson
> brought to the table plenty of additional ideas in regards to maths games, activities and
> learning methods. (Leigh)

I always felt that Johnson was the number one 'primary mathematics teacher' in the
eyes of the PSTs because of his ability to share his current knowledge of teaching. I
also appreciated his input when focusing on 'real' mathematical experiences and how
children learn, or how teachers plan and assess students' mathematical understanding.
I never felt threatened by Johnson's contribution; rather I valued his knowledge for
teaching mathematics, and his ability to validate the tasks and learning experiences we
chose. He also upheld the belief that students in schools should be given a challenge,
and that it was good practice to provide them with hard mathematics. We therefore
agreed that we 'should push' our PSTs as well.

Throughout the co-teaching experience, I felt that my teaching style did not change
but felt that we got through less content than I had covered in the past and probably
because of Johnson's contributions, I taught at a slower pace than usual. Johnson was
quite comfortable in extending the conversations, and obviously enjoyed interacting
with the PST. This meant that I had to be the gate keeper at times, suggesting we
move onto the next task and cutting short potentially valuable discussions in order

to cover required course content. Doing so had the potential to cause discomfort, but our positive co-teaching relationship meant that we worked through this and discussed the importance of keeping on track. We planned together and shared the teaching. We agreed the teaching was about a sixty forty split. Another important success factor of the co-teaching was that we both valued the same philosophy for teaching mathematics and our approaches relied on our personal experiences.

> Because there were two teachers, more assistance could be provided during tasks as there was an extra teacher. Johnson was able to give examples and evidence of strategies used in the classroom. (Emily)
>
> … it appeared that by having the second facilitator, that second perspective was useful [for them] and clarifying [for us] to ensure material was presented as intended. (Shane)
>
> I like having the different points of view, especially as one of them is straight from the classroom. There is also the benefit of having different explanations if one is not clear enough. (Maria)
>
> You get two points of view. You get two examples of experiences and a fresh voice within class. (Timothy)

Johnson was helpful in reiterating or adding to what I would say. While he was talking, it helped me to either think about what I would do next or how I would add to his ideas. To summarise our experiences, I have chosen Sophie's and Sue's reflections recorded at the end of the semester:

> Both Sharyn and Johnson continually bounced ideas off one another which was fantastic. Amongst the two of them, their knowledge was thorough and extensive. Johnson's expertise provided a sense of real-life context through his pictures, examples and student work copies. Sharyn's theoretical knowledge gave me a great overview of many of the practical concepts explored. (Sophie)
>
> The best thing for us has been that we feel right away that we're ready to teach maths, whereas other classes, we just don't feel we're ready." And they said, "It's because of all the activities you've done with us and you allowed us to experience the mathematics. We feel really comfortable. (Sue)

Narrative 2: Johnson's Experience

Thinking back to first semester, teaching at Monash university provided me with an opportunity to brush up on my research knowledge, and to learn about what is being taught to PSTs. I looked at the prescribed text and weekly chapters as preparation for the tutorials and for my own knowledge. I enjoyed sharing my knowledge of how to teach mathematics with the PSTs because I often see them challenged when on placement in the classroom. I often shared my knowledge of challenges that primary students have and their misconceptions, and it was refreshing to share skills in a larger audience of PSTs. It was good making the connections with Sharyn and other lecturers. We shared and learned together, with me being exposed to this whole different world of academia, and the research environment. Meeting people like Ann and Tracey also provided valuable affirmation of the process of co-teaching, and

their reflections on what they noticed as effective teaching after observing Sharyn and myself co-teaching. These included our ability to communicate effectively and efficiently as a team. Ann and Tracey both commented that we complemented each other in the classroom. We carefully kept the PSTs actively listening and when one was talking, the other would be engaging the PSTs, encouraging and supporting them with their responses. Importantly, Tracey and Ann noticed that we had a high level of collaboration. We appeared to be on the same page and this greatly enhanced the PSTs' experience and interest in developing highly effective mathematical teaching strategies.

Thinking back to my first week in the program, I remember that I had lots of questions in my head and I was apprehensive about teaching with Sharyn. I was concerned about the dynamics of how the lessons would play out, even though we planned carefully together beforehand. Many questions came flooding into my mind along with competing thoughts about the lesson sequence: Did we have the right resources? When would I share examples from my classroom and what parts would I be teaching? How might Sharyn and the PSTs respond to the comments I would make? Although I was confident in my knowledge and eagerness to contribute, I was entering a new teaching space where there were many unknowns. How the entire experience would pan out for all of us was the big question. Would I leave with enhanced theoretical knowledge? Would Sharyn appreciate working with a co-teacher? Would the PSTs learn anything new and would their classroom readiness be enhanced during this experience? In order to answer some of these questions we organised a survey for the PSTs to complete and I was relieved to find that the PSTs reported that they were enjoying the co-teaching collaboration. Despite my initial concerns, the following comments from the PSTs affirmed that my contribution to co-teaching was appreciated and helpful:

> It was good to get a different perspective or an 'add on' to something Sharyn had already mentioned. The dynamics of the two teachers was great and each complimented the other. They were both very enthusiastic in their teaching and it bounced off them. (Suzie)

> He explained many of the maths concepts in an easier way and because I'm not the best at maths it was easier to understand his explanation. (Dona)

When the PSTs were learning about how to plan a sequence of activities, I chose to share a lesson from a sequence of lessons on counting, from my Year 1 classroom. Sharyn liked this because the counting activity made links to the mathematics curriculum and beyond, including Indigenous cultures of Australia. Within the lesson plan there was other information that would help the PSTs to develop an understanding of the detail and complexity of planning for the diverse needs of the children. For example, links to tuning in activities, misconceptions, mathematical language, suggestions for catering for various learning needs, everyday context and use of technologies. The PSTs were surprised at the detail and thinking required when planning and realised the importance of collaborating with colleagues in order to deliver highly effective mathematics lessons.

> I felt like it was useful having a co-teacher as he was able to link the theory we were discussing to the real-life primary classroom. I especially found this useful when we covered the topic

of planning. As Johnson made relevant comments about the importance of actually doing this planning and that it would be done with a group of teachers working collaboratively. (Louise)

Giving practical examples to topics discussed and talking about how his lessons went and what he would do differently next time. (Penny)

It was interesting that one of the PSTs, Bill, made a comment related to having a male lecturer. Later Sharyn explained that there were no other male lecturers in mathematics education in the Faculty. Also, when PSTs go on placement in primary schools they would be more likely to have a female mentor teacher, as many primary schools have a low ratio of male teachers.

After Sharyn had given an instruction to the PSTs I found myself sharing about possible student misconceptions. From my classroom teaching experience, it is vital to focus on what students might not understand, using formative assessment during lessons. Hearing about real students in the classroom helped the PSTs to imagine teaching situations.

I liked any reference to the actual students that Johnson teaches. Seeing examples of their work is one of the most valuable resources, as this is the kind of thing that we will come across. Understanding the way they think, misconceptions etc. (Amanda)

Sharyn usually introduced the topics and I would follow up with questions or comments. I felt comfortable with this working relationship and was able to think on my feet regarding how to follow up with a purposeful discussion to help the PSTs with their classroom readiness. I remember talking about the mathematical language the teachers might use and how students can become confused if you get terms mixed up. It is also important that the students hear the correct mathematical vocabulary to help them learn. By directing the PSTs to examine the language that teachers use, and the possible confusions that might occur, the PSTs were able to think like students themselves, seeing how certain concepts might be confusing. Also, a lot of PSTs think that if students are not able to understand a certain concept they assume the mathematics is too complex. They often attempt to simplify the problem rather than using effective language and strategies to scaffold and extend students' learning. The contribution that I was able to make as a co-teacher, complementing Sharyn, was evident in these comments from the PSTs:

I really got a lot out of the unit/lesson planning week and how to sequence lessons … helped me gain understanding in that the language used was easy for my poor mathematical brain to comprehend. (Darcy)

The co-teacher was always challenging my thinking and encouraging me to use better mathematical language. He could relate to classroom aspects today. (Meagan)

Overall Johnson added to our learning and enabled the "educators" to get more one on one time with each of us. (Ryan)

I found Johnson extremely beneficial to my learning and development. It has allowed me to question and prompt him for real life context … Having a current teacher in the classroom has really helped me develop and understand what children understand and how they develop. (Beth)

Finally, Sharyn regarded my presence in the classroom as being equal to that of hers. She did this by regularly soliciting my input and opinions in class and often seemed to defer to my current practising knowledge. Although it would be understandable if the PSTs perceived Sharyn as the higher authority, there was never a moment that I was made to feel that my knowledge or skills were inferior to hers. I did, however, learn many new skills, strategies and activities through the year. For example, I learnt about using enabling and extending prompts, the use of photographs to assist students to notice mathematics within their everyday lives, and some exciting new websites that provided highly engaging activities for students. My pedagogy was challenged and allowed to grow. I acquired new strategies and research interests as a result of my co-teaching experience. For example, learning about enabling and extending prompts provided me with an alternative to using differentiated groups which formed a substantial part of my usual teaching approach.

Narrative 3: Ann and Tracey's Perspectives

As critical friends, we were able to assist with facilitating Sharyn and Johnson's post-lesson reflections.

> … what I liked about the co-teaching was that it gave me thinking time because often when you're teaching by yourself, you've got lots going on in your head and then you'll say something that will help me think about something else. Like another perspective. (Sharyn, post lesson reflection)

While we were not always present when Sharyn and Johnson were reflecting on the day's lesson, they recorded their discussions, and we were able to read the transcripts of their discussions at the end of semester. What particularly stood out for us was the respectful manner in which they provided feedback to each other and commented positively on each other's contributions. Each acknowledged the strengths of the other as evidenced by comments such as, 'You had some really good engaging activities' (Johnson, semester 2, week 4), and 'You helped them—up the front, you stood at the board and you helped them unpack what an effective numeracy teacher might look like by writing things down, and as I was walking around, I was noticing that they were copying down your notes and things' (Sharyn, semester 2, week 1). The camaraderie and rapport that we observed in the classroom were evident when they were discussing the overall impact of their teaching as illustrated by the following transcript excerpt:

> Johnson: I like how you approach the PSTs, I really do. And I'm not just saying that for the sake of saying that – you're not forceful with them, you're not pushy with them – you're guiding them – you're coaching them.
>
> Sharyn: I think you do too.
>
> Johnson: If you get someone who's too forceful or too difficult to work with, that feeds into their negative attitudes about maths and I think just being there was a calming influence.

This mutual respect and validation of each other's roles also played out in the classroom. In a post-lesson interview with Tracey, Johnson said that he felt comfortable and supported to be able to contribute and in his words,

> I felt supported in what I was saying, what I was sharing, and that the students felt that the knowledge that was being presented to them had more impact because it was coming from two different perspectives.

There was a natural interplay between Sharyn and Johnson, both observed in the classroom and evident in the reflection transcripts. Although their approaches were naturally different, they shared common goals and philosophies in terms of their teaching practices. Two PSTs noted that

> They complement each other's teaching styles (Mia); and They're different enough in their teaching that it's good, but they're not too different that it overwhelms. (Jake)

Sharyn and Johnson were also in agreement about the impact that the co-teaching experience had on the PSTs, which was one of the original aims of the project. For example, Johnson stated that

> You have to look at the affective domain as well in terms of their feelings about how well-equipped they feel to be teachers and if the whole idea of this is – how can we improve PSTs readiness, I think we've got a long way to achieving that because without us [Sharyn and Johnson] even asking, the PSTs actually articulated that and said that they felt more prepared to actually teach maths than any other class.

In the post-lesson reflections, Sharyn also frequently mentioned the engagement of the PSTs, often in comparison to other classes she had taught in the past where the engagement was not as evident. This was likely attributable to the manner in which Sharyn and Johnson interacted with each other in class and in their delivery of the lessons. Conversations we had with the PSTs reflected their appreciation of the relevance of Sharyn and Johnson's classroom experiences (in schools and university settings):

> The practical aspect of lessons has been enormously beneficial. The readings were beneficial and then having concepts reinforced and explained by hands on activities has been incredibly useful… I have enjoyed this subject the most so far, this semester. I am loving learning about mathematics… I'm enjoying the team teaching – gaining a different perspective from both of them (Tom)
>
> I love the tutorials! They are fun and engaging. I feel well prepared and excited to teach maths! (Sophie)

Through our classroom observations and conversations with the PSTs, we were struck by the way that Sharyn and Johnson seamlessly interacted and complemented each other in the classroom. In particular, the PSTs often used the phrase 'bounced off each other' to describe their interactions: 'they bounced off each other and kept us engaged … getting a different perspective from each of them'. We were interested in exploring just how much the personalities of Sharyn and Johnson contributed to their ability to 'bounce off each other' and to the overall success of the learning experiences of the PSTs. As a teacher, Johnson is charismatic and passionate about

student learning and this was conveyed to the PSTs through the many stories from his classroom experience and strategies he shared with the PSTs. In addition to 'being very likeable with a gentle personality and he's very friendly' (Kim), he was also described as being 'knowledgeable and helpful' (Shona).

In a conversation with Tracey, one PST, Shona, indicated that Johnson's personality added value to the class. From our observations and conversations with Sharyn, Johnson and the PSTs, we were also struck by the dynamics between them and how the experience may have been different with two other personalities. In week 10 of second semester, Sharyn had a planned absence, and Johnson co-taught the class with another lecturer. On reflection, Johnson indicated that he found he 'did not have a lot to contribute, I have to say' and that his role was more of a helper than a co-contributor. He did not feel that he had as much opportunity to contribute as he did when co-teaching with Sharyn and attributed this mostly to the limited opportunity to co-plan the lesson together:

> You couldn't just walk in and bounce off each other if you hadn't planned together. I had come prepared about saying things to share but the lesson didn't run as planned – there were things I could share and say but I probably did this more in small groups than in the whole class, as I would with Sharyn.

While the co-teaching experience may have begun with Sharyn taking the lead and directing the lessons, by the end of first semester Johnson was taking more of this role. Johnson noticed this himself and even stated, 'I've got my voice a little more this week—I may have been a bit quieter last week'. Early observations showed that Johnson's questioning was of a supportive nature—e.g. Does anyone need clarification? Does everybody understand what they have to do? There was a notable shift in Johnson's questioning of students later in the semester where he consistently probed further to understand PSTs' thinking. When doing this he would use similar techniques to the ones he most likely used in his Year 1 classroom. For example, in one lesson observed by Ann, when he was not satisfied with how the PSTs defined perimeter, he kept asking probing questions until he was satisfied with their answers. He later said, 'So I kept on asking over and over again … and they were trying to get me to explain to them the definition of perimeter I would use with my children.' The use of his probing questions also highlighted student misconceptions—another strategy used with his Year 1 children.

There were a number of occasions when the role of 'expert' seemed to shift from Sharyn to Johnson. In the earlier lessons, for example, it was likely that Sharyn would have probed the PSTs' understanding of perimeter, with Johnson providing a supporting role, whereas in this example, Sharyn reiterated what Johnson said, thereby maintaining her voice, but recognising his expertise. While Sharyn and Johnson shared the responsibility for answering questions posed in the whole class situation, we both noticed that Johnson interacted more than Sharyn with groups of students while they were working. Sharyn tended to monitor and observe students from a distance and allowed Johnson to take the lead in interacting with table groups. At times, however, Sharyn felt the need to intervene in order to maintain the focus on the task at hand or when discussions were occurring about assessment expectations

or requirements. In this respect, the dynamics shifted back to Sharyn having the ultimate responsibility for the PSTs' learning. There were some tensions experienced between Sharyn ensuring that the content was covered and that assessment guidelines were clear (Johnson did not assess the PSTs) and allowing Johnson to engage in discussions with PSTs that were valuable, yet not assessed or part of the required curriculum. From our observations and conversations with all parties, we could see that there was still a perception that Sharyn was the lead or higher authority and Johnson was there to complement her role. Johnson, himself, stated that

> I mean she's the lead teacher, if you wish, in what's happening, the lecturer, the professor, and I'm here to supplement and complement what she's doing and not the other way around. So, I came with an understanding of what my role is and I was looking to what I can contribute.

Discussion

While the narratives of the co-teaching experience provided insights from three different stories there were common threads related to the importance of relationships, a sense of community, diverse skills and expertise of the co-teachers, and the impact of the experience on each of the participants.

Relationships

A contributing factor to the success of the co-teaching experience for all participants was the respectful relationship between Sharyn, Johnson and the PSTs. Chanmugam and Gerlach (2013) found that the trust between co-teachers deepened over the course of the semester. Similarly, the trust between Sharyn and Johnson deepened throughout the year, most likely because of their commitment to helping the PSTs develop their knowledge for teaching primary mathematics. As the semester went on, Johnson continued to grow in confidence and was able to contribute more and more to each weekly tutorial. The narratives provided evidence of a mutual respect for each other and this was clearly identified by the PSTs, Tracey and Ann. Sharyn's initial visit to Johnson's school before commencement of the co-teaching experience was critical in establishing their professional relationship. Observing Johnson in the classroom and working with the children also contributed to the development of mutual respect. Doing so also provided Sharyn with an opportunity to experience his philosophy of how students learn. She realised they had like-minded ideas that could be shared with the PSTs. Having similar philosophies for teaching was a key criterion for Sharyn when selecting her co-teacher. The natural and spontaneous interplay between Sharyn and Johnson in the classroom engaged the PSTs and was evidence of the shared philosophy and strength of the co-teaching relationship. Both provided each other with honest and constructive reflections on how to improve the PSTs' learning experiences, providing joint ownership of the classroom. Furthermore, this

relationship assisted PSTs to have the best opportunities to learn and develop their teacher identity, values, knowledge and skills for primary mathematics teaching. Finally, compatible relationships were critical to the success of the co-teaching situation and of the learning that took place. As Graziano and Navarrete (2012) found, flexibility, openness, trust, and being accountable and respectful of one another, are important characteristics required for co-teaching partnerships.

Sense of Community

Johnson helped shift the dynamics of the classroom from Sharyn the teacher educator positioned as the 'one who knows' to a collaborative classroom—engaging the PSTs in discussion and challenging their thinking. The strengths of this co-teaching situation were to build a community of practice with the PSTs, and to build relationships that enabled everyone to learn from each other by sharing experiences and stories—developing a shared practice (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2011). Sharyn's and Johnson's goal from week one was to create a positive classroom-learning environment where PSTs felt safe as learners. They challenged the PSTs' beliefs about how children learn and about their own experiences of how they were taught mathematics, through emphasising practices in which challenge, persistence and problem-solving were encouraged. Throughout the experience, Johnson modelled the importance of affective learning by encouraging and engaging in one-to-one conversations and interactions with PSTs in the classroom. Both he and Sharyn worked on establishing PSTs' growth mind-sets, helping them to develop a positive disposition towards their learning and teaching of mathematics. Over the weeks a sense of a community of practice evolved where all participants became connected in a journey of learning. The weekly classes helped Johnson to feel a sense of belonging, whilst also creating a trusting relationship for all. Such a relationship between the co-teachers and PSTs allowed for openness and rich learning as the PSTs were able to ask questions freely to either of the co-teachers. This also contributed to building a community of practice in which everyone felt respected and valued.

Diverse Skills and Expertise of the Co-teachers

It was evident within the narratives of the breadth and depth of knowledge for teaching that both Sharyn and Johnson brought to the classroom. Johnson was always willing to assist the PSTs, highlighting his knowledge of primary students' mathematical misconceptions, pedagogical practices and constant links back to his teaching experiences. Sharyn drew on her experiences as a mathematics teacher educator and researcher to extend PSTs' knowledge for teaching so that they may support their students' learning using engaging experiences and making connections to the Australian Curriculum. Sharyn and Johnson used their complementary skills and expertise to

challenge PSTs' beliefs about how students learn mathematics. For example, they immersed PSTs with tasks, resources, artefacts and stories from the classroom to contrast with a more traditional approach and worksheets, which they may have experienced in their own mathematics learning and in their observations when on practicum (e.g. Bjerke, Eriksen, Rodal, Smestad, & Solomon, 2013).

Impact of the Experience on Each of the Participants

Like Anderson and Speck (1998), we found that the co-teaching experiences had a positive learning impact on all participants. Working with a co-teacher shifted the dynamics of the classroom and how the PSTs responded to their learning. Sharyn learnt from Johnson when he shared stories related to his teaching. In addition, Sharyn was given an opportunity to reflect on her own teaching during and after class. She planned the lesson content in greater detail (with Johnson) and was able to bounce off Johnson's ideas, thus enriching the PSTs' experiences. Tracey and Ann would agree there were also more opportunities for teachable moments, when Sharyn and Johnson noticed misconceptions and responded to unexpected questions from the PSTs. The co-teaching experience provided many opportunities for Johnson to build on his knowledge of current teaching approaches for teaching mathematics. He thrived within the academic work space, engaging with staff and PSTs. The gentle mentoring provided by Sharyn enabled Johnson to take on more of the teaching each week which assisted him to build his confidence over the course of the year. Johnson planned diligently, helping Sharyn to consider ideas for the weekly lessons and he also brought artefacts to share with the PSTs including student work samples and photos of the students' learning. Johnson learnt from Sharyn when she was discussing the theory related to the teaching ideas and when reading the chapters in the course text. Since participating in this project, Johnson has become interested in further study, including completing his masters and attending teacher education research conferences.

Compared to other classes, the PSTs noted the co-teaching arrangement assisted them to be 'classroom ready' for teaching primary mathematics. The rich classroom discussion and sharing of resources equipped them with knowledge for teaching, and a repertoire of rich pedagogical practices as beginning teachers. Johnson's contributions from the classroom were recent, first-hand experiences that included artefacts, pedagogical practices and practical implications for PSTs' future classroom practice. These experiences provided the PSTs with a deeper understanding of professional and pedagogical relationships involving learning and teaching of mathematics in the primary classroom. The co-teaching provided a rich experience that PSTs may not have otherwise experienced and 'what it means to *be* a teacher, and not just how to *do* teaching' (Parr, Williams, & Fitzgerald, 2018, p. 8). In summary, it was evident that the co-teaching experience was successful and that Sharyn and Johnson were 'compatible and complemented each other' (Anderson & Speck, 1998). Their PSTs benefitted through gaining multiple perspectives on issues related to how stu-

dents learn compared to their other coursework and practicum experiences. Having two voices within the classroom provided an opportunity to reiterate the important points of the lesson from either co-teacher, and helped the PSTs to gain a deeper understanding of the weekly content.

Challenges

While we are convinced that our co-teaching experience was successful for all participants, there were some challenges. The advanced weekly planning and discussion sessions strengthened the program and were beneficial, but they were demanding and time consuming. The expectation that Johnson had to plan for co-teaching as well as his own classroom lessons, created additional workload. Similarly, much less content was covered because of the relaxed manner in the classroom and time given to additional discussion during class. Hence, Sharyn and Johnson had to think on their feet when considering how to trim the planned content. We acknowledge that this might happen in any classroom but more so during co-teaching. As indicated in the literature (e.g. Ginther, Phillips, & Grineski, 2007) a potential challenge for any co-teaching situation are the difficulties related to a power imbalance between the co-teachers. We acknowledge there was an imbalance because of the hierarchal nature of the policies within the university. Sharyn was responsible and accountable for the course delivery and assessment, while Johnson was a guest within the classroom, and although committed to the program did not have the pressures or responsibilities that Sharyn had as the lecturer. However, possibly due to the short nature of the co-teaching experience and personalities of both, no disharmony occurred between them.

Conclusion

Our narratives of the co-teaching experiences and the feedback from the PSTs, provided insights into how co-teaching can close the gap between theory and practice. Such an experience contributes to the professional learning of the co-teachers as well as the PSTs. This chapter contributes to the notion of 're-imagining professional experience' in initial teacher education by highlighting the benefits of bringing a practising teacher to the university classroom in the role of a co-teacher. Furthermore, our experiences were new to us and as indicated by McDonald et al. (2014), it is less common for practising teachers to work alongside PSTs and teacher educators in a university setting. Not only did co-teachers and PSTs benefit by making connections with current research and practice, but also by being immersed within a community of practice in which they could openly reflect upon and discuss their learning. From their comments, it was obvious that the PSTs valued the contribution of the co-teacher and that co-teaching provided them with different perspectives for

teaching mathematics. They agreed that the range of experiences also prepared them for teaching primary mathematics. Some key reasons for the success of this program were that the co-teachers were able to select each other, had similar teaching philosophies, mutual respect and time to plan, prepare and debrief with each other on a weekly basis. They also were able to establish respect 'as equals' by sharing different skill sets with the PSTs and therefore an ability to establish a rich learning environment where all participants views were valued—an important aspect of their community of practice. In summary, it is hoped that the account of our experiences will encourage other teacher educators to adopt a co-teaching approach as a means of enhancing their PSTs' experiences along with developing their own practice. Co-teaching provides an opportunity to bring classrooms stories into the university as well as additional, purposeful opportunities for all participants to learn together.

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Chapter 10
Co-teaching as Praxis in English Initial Teacher Education

Graham Parr, Fleur Diamond and Scott Bulfin

Abstract Policymakers harbour increasing doubts about the value of university coursework in initial teacher education (ITE), but they affirm the importance of professional experience. In their continuing efforts to improve the quality of ITE, and to justify their existence as government-funded teacher education 'providers', Australian universities are developing a wide range of innovative partnership arrangements with schools. This chapter reports on one such partnership where an experienced teacher of secondary school English (Fleur) was seconded to work one day a week as a co-teacher and co-researcher with a team of English teacher educators (Graham and Scott) in a large faculty of education. Using reflexive autobiographical narratives, and Cavarero's (2000) conception of 'who' and 'what' stories, we investigate the praxis dimensions of the experience largely from Fleur's perspective. We show how co-teaching in ITE can promote alternative understandings of 'professional experience'. It can also provide important spaces for critical inquiry into the meanings of practice in English teacher education and what it means to 'become' an English teacher.

Introduction

Policymakers harbour increasing doubts about the value of university coursework in initial teacher education (ITE), but they continue to affirm the importance of professional experience. In Australia, a government-funded inquiry into ITE found that pre-service teachers consistently rate their school-based professional experience as one of the most important parts of their teacher education courses (TEMAG, 2014). In the same year, an independent longitudinal study of ITE showed that Australian pre-service teachers highly valued their opportunities to teach and learn in schools (Mayer et al., 2014). Responding to such reports, the national regulatory body in Australia required universities to increase the amount of time pre-service teachers

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spend in school-led professional experience (e.g. AITSL, 2015). And in concert with the steady growth, internationally, of teaching certification programs that are wholly or substantially school-led,[1] the Australian Government has invested $AUS77 million in a program for PSTs to do most of their 'teacher training' while 'on the job' in schools (e.g. Teach for Australia, 2017).[2]

Meanwhile, in their continuing efforts to improve the quality of ITE, and aware of the need to justify their existence as government-funded teacher education 'providers', Australian universities have developed their own initiatives by forming a wide range of partnership arrangements with schools. Many of these partnerships have helped build mutual understanding between schools and universities (Allen, Butler-Mader, & Smith, 2010; Allen, Howells, & Radford, 2013; Conroy, Hulme, & Menter, 2013; McLean Davies, Dickson, Dinham, Conroy, & Davis, 2015; Rowley, Weldon, Kleinhenz, & Ingvarson, 2013; Willis, Grimmett, & Heck, 2018). In some circumstances, partnership initiatives have enabled the two sectors to learn from and with each other in what Hopwood, Day, and Edwards (2016) call 'collaborative knowledge work', with pre-service teachers ultimately benefitting in terms of a richer professional experience. The 'Co-teaching English teacher education' project we report on in this chapter is one form of collaborative knowledge work. It involved an experienced secondary English teacher (Fleur) seconded to teach part-time for 2 years with two English teacher educators (Graham and Scott) in Monash's ITE program,[3] with the expectation that all parties to the partnership would learn from and with each other. However, as we explain later, we believe the project is better located within traditions of educational praxis, where there is a more explicit research agenda for the knowledge work to contribute to a better, more ethical world.

Through describing and analysing the co-teaching partnership project, we show how collaborative educational praxis can help build understanding and trust between a school and a university, and those working in each institution. Recent literature suggests that these kinds of projects can, with mutual understanding and trust, support the development of alternative professional experience *structures*—e.g. teacher education programs conducted by university-based academics in schools (Eckersley et al., 2011; McGraw, Dresden, Gilbertson, & Baker, 2017)—and alternative *practices*—e.g. inquiry projects undertaken by PSTs with their school-based mentors (Astall, Fastier, & Fickel, 2015; Flores, Vieira, Silva, & Almeida, 2016).

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[1]We're thinking here of programs such as: 'Teach for America' in the US (Teach for America, 2017); and 'School Direct' (Department for Education, 2017) and 'Now Teach' (Now Teach, 2017) in the UK. For a fuller overview of school-led professional experience programs across the world, see Ellis and Orchard (2014).

[2]We note a steady increase in research that critiques such programs and warns about the implications for the quality of teacher education and the teaching workforce in these countries. See for example, Ellis and Orchard (2014) for an international perspective, Brown et al. (2016) and Pitzer (2014) in the US, Brewer and deMarrais (2015) in the UK, and Cobbold (2017) in Australia.

[3]'Monash University … is a large, multi-campus, research intensive university. Its Faculty of Education teaches over 5000 students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate teaching or education courses. …. While co-teaching at Monash, Fleur continued to teach part-time in her school, a large, independent girls' secondary college in Melbourne, which we will call Urban Girls' College' (Diamond, et al., 2017, p. 272).

Such alternative structures and practices are only possible, it would seem, when partners are willing to productively disturb deeply entrenched assumptions of how professional experience *is* and *should* be arranged.

One of those assumptions is that school-university ITE partnerships invariably consist of a two-way binary: a transfer of practical knowledge from the school to the university and a transfer of disciplinary knowledge from university to school. For example, Cope and Stephen (2001) in Scotland argued that incorporating practising teachers into the higher education contexts could help develop more effective initial teacher education, through collaborations with teacher educators, and through the teachers bringing from schools a range of ideas, resources, experiences and practices to 'pass on' to their academic colleagues (Cope & Stephen, 2001). Later, government sponsored projects in the US, such as 'Preparing tomorrow's teachers for technology', continued to assume that the school teacher was the holder of important practical knowledge, and that this could be unproblematically transferred to PSTs in the teacher education institution for use in any context (see Polly, Mims, Shepherd, & Inan, 2010). In Australia, the generously funded 'Teaching Teachers for the Future' partnerships project, similarly described the role of the school teacher as bringing knowledge and skills from his/her school to 'build[] the … capacity of [the] teacher educators' and the university program they lead (ALTC & ACDE, 2011, p. 4). This is a mirror image of how dominant policy discourse sees the role of universities, which is to 'pass on' disciplinary knowledge that teachers are then expected to take into schools (Parr, Bellis, & Bulfin, 2013).

In more dynamic partnerships, school teachers, teacher educators, and PSTs have had more flexibility to develop different practices, relationships and ways of understanding teacher education (Parr et al., 2013; Diamond, Parr, & Bulfin, 2017). This has promoted a richer, Deweyian conception of professional experience, one which appreciates not just that knowledge is inherently social, and generated in social spaces, but that experience itself is fundamentally social, that it is generated and shared between people, between sites and across time rather than being restricted to a single point in time and space (Dewey, 1938; see also Yandell, 2017). In contrast, policy makers' use of the term 'experience' in ITE typically assumes it is a transparent, self-evident concept that needs no explanation. In the co-teaching project at Monash, the three of us were keen for Fleur's role to be underpinned by a richer, Deweyian conception of experience than other projects that positioned the seconded school teacher as simply a portal that facilitated the transfer of skills from schools to the university.

Elsewhere, we have described how, through an extended process of collaboration with Graham and Scott, Fleur came to be an active participant in interconnected social practices of the English teacher education team based at Monash (Diamond et al., 2017). Her participation included: delivering lectures; co-planning and team teaching with academics in workshops; developing and modifying materials from her teaching in school for use in ITE workshops and in online spaces; visiting schools to observe Monash pre-service teachers on placement; liaising with teacher mentors in these schools; and participating in faculty seminars and research conversations. In her day-to-day interactions with Monash's English teacher education students,

across offline and online spaces, Fleur's presence in the faculty offered an additional and direct way for the students to engage with the teaching profession, thus adding another dimension to the professional experience of students.

In a further disturbance to assumptions of what a school-university professional experience partnership should be, Fleur's role as co-teacher at Monash included taking on the role of co-inquirer/co-researcher in the English education praxis project that Graham and Scott were already leading. Pursuing collaborative research throughout the co-teaching initiative distinguished the project from discourses and arrangements that position practising teachers in narrowly technicist ways. This research was investigating the practices and praxis of a cross-sectoral community of pre-service English teachers, early-career and mid-career English teachers, retired teachers and English teacher educators who learned from and with each other in a number of professional learning contexts. The research texts that we have published in the years since the co-teaching project (see Diamond, forthcoming; Diamond, Parr, & Bulfin, 2017), including this chapter, are important developments in the longer term praxis project that Graham and Scott had been undertaking (see Bulfin & Parr, 2013; Bulfin, Parr, & Bellis, 2016; Parr & Bellis, 2011; Parr, Bellis, & Bulfin, 2013; Parr & Bulfin, 2015; Parr, Bulfin, Harlowe, & Stock, 2014; Parr, Bulfin, Castaldi, Griffiths, & Manuel, 2015).

Methodology

The research that Fleur pursued with Scott and Graham during the co-teaching initiative inquired into the ways in which the work of school teachers and university-based teacher educators was influenced by standards-based education reforms (such as professional teaching standards, professional development charters and mandatory standardised testing) and neoliberal accountability regimes (such as performance standards and accreditation requirements). A particular focus of the inquiry was to investigate how a school-university ITE partnership might ameliorate the more constraining influences of standards-based reforms on English education in both school and university. In discussing how we might undertake this investigation, we found common interest in the long traditions of English education research in Australia that have used narrative to represent and critically investigate professional practice (e.g. Bulfin & Parr, 2013; Doecke, Nixon, & Homer, 2003; Doecke, Parr, & Sawyer, 2011, 2014; Parr & Bulfin, 2015; Parr, Doecke, & Bulfin, 2015; Shann, 2015). Thus, from early in the co-teaching project the narrative writing that Fleur was doing to facilitate her critical reflection on her experiences became a valuable provocation and focus for our praxis conversations and actions as a collaborative team. Fleur's narratives resonated with Graham's and Scott's recollections of when they transitioned from working in schools to working in faculties of education; our stories spoke of both similarity and difference in working across and between school and university sectors. One place where there was powerful common ground between us was in the acute contrasts we saw between the official, generic policy and curriculum 'stories'

of English education as told by government and university, on the one hand, and the deeply situated stories and experiences of English education classrooms that we experienced in our respective workplaces, on the other hand.

We came to associate the official, generic policy stories praising the virtues of standards-based reforms of school education (as seen on the website of the Professional Standards for Teachers in Australia, in curriculum documents for the new Australian Curriculum, and on the website of the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy in Australia—NAPLAN) with what Italian philosopher Cavarero (2000) calls '*what*' narratives. These narratives were presented as archetypal, ahistorical, almost incontestable stories of *what* English teaching or English teacher education is, or *what* policy makers think it should be. In these narratives, there is little or no room for flexible interpretations or variations on the stories. We appreciated every day of our academic and professional lives the ways these 'what' stories, handed down from 'on high', were constraining our practices and our sense of ourselves as educators. On the other hand, our practices and identities were not wholly *determined* by 'what' stories. Indeed, the variously situated and culturally specific stories of English education, which we were *living*, still had substantial components of Cavarero's notion of '*who*' narratives. These were the kinds of narratives that Fleur was writing, too, narratives which took great care to situate events and episodes in time and place, and showed the particularity of individuals' lives, histories and relationships in different educational settings.

In *Relating narratives: Storytelling and selfhood*, Cavarero (2000) argues that the more one's life and work are shaped by *what* stories, the more one's growth and identity are controlled by others and thus diminished. '*Who*' stories, in contrast, can be seen as more agentic, more dialogic, more open to engagement with other stories, and more resilient to potential oppression by authoritarian 'what' narratives. When one's life and work are open and receptive to 'who' stories, this has implications for the stories one might legitimately tell about one's practice and one's identity. As Graham and Scott have explained elsewhere,

> The 'who' of more dialogic, reflexive teacher stories …. is a complex heteroglossic self, woven together from policy discourses, curriculum documents, memory, history, biography, genre…. It involves, on the one hand, a recognition of the individual teacher's membership in particular discourse communities (including those underpinned by standards discourses) and various professional and/or cultural collectives, but also a sense of the individual who is shaped by a complex of personal and professional biographies and histories. (Parr, Bulfin et al., 2015, p. 135)

Inspired by Cavarero's notion of 'who' stories, this chapter is constructed around two reflexive, autobiographical narratives, the origins of which were fragments in Fleur's research journal from 2015, the first year of the co-teaching project. Fleur's narrative writing, which she regularly shared with Graham and Scott, was an important part of the dialogue we three co-authors were having around our weekly teaching and research activities. Fleur's writing and our ongoing and engaged dialogues were both aspects of our ongoing engagement with notions of praxis in teacher education. The knowledge about practice we generated was co-constructed through dialogic inquiry across the boundaries of the two education sites and sectors—the school and

university. The final versions of Fleur's two narratives (as they appear here in this chapter) were shaped, re-shaped and woven into the texture of the chapter in ways that enhanced their dialogic interconnectivity with the arguments in the literature we invoke at various times throughout the chapter. They are not intended to be read as set pieces of 'data', developed in isolation from the writing of the other text in this chapter.

Both narratives relate episodes (one in Fleur's school, 'Urban Girls College', the other at Monash) where Fleur and an interlocutor are discussing notions of 'what you do' as an English educator in university and in schools. In the first, Fleur recounts an unexpected conversation with an English teaching colleague in a staff room at 'Urban Girls' College'. In the second, Fleur takes us inside an English Education workshop at Monash co-taught by herself and Scott. In that workshop, a pre-service student asks Fleur, 'But isn't that your job [as an English teacher]?' prompting a rich dialogue between Fleur and the student, and a similarly rich internal dialogue (Parr, 2010) in Fleur's mind about her 'job' as an English teacher educator. Between and following the two narratives, we tease out and explore the issues Fleur raises. One way we do this is by comparing the quite different ways that some key concepts in ITE school-university partnerships literature are understood. (See Table 10.1 below). In our discussion of the narratives, and in the presentation of this table, we are particularly interested in the implications of our experience of the co-teaching project with respect to current debates in the literature about professional experience, teacher education and educational praxis. First, though, we present Fleur's narrative of her unexpected conversation with a colleague back at her school, Urban Girls' College.

Narrative 1: 'I Would Think There Wouldn't Be that Much to It'

I am in the small staffroom for English and Humanities teachers on the third floor of the senior school building of Urban Girls' College (UGC). The building is a mission brown brick, straight out of the 1970s. UGC is a large, independent girls' school in Melbourne's 'leafy' inner eastern suburbs. The staff in the room are busy but friendly. We are on a morning tea break, having the hurried, occasionally raucous conversations that teachers have during such breaks, in between responding to student queries at the door, and glancing at incoming emails.

A colleague catches my eye: 'So, how's the job at Monash going?'

'Oh, good, good.'

It is deep winter (July), and by this time I have been working as a co-teacher in the English education program in the Faculty of Education at Monash University for some six months. I can't recall exactly what I thought I would be doing as a co-teacher, but in these six months I have been: reading about literacy theory and the work of English teacher researchers; watching Graham and Scott give weekly lectures; giving my own lectures; visiting pre-service teachers on placements in schools across Melbourne, providing feedback and reflecting

Table 10.1 Neoliberal and praxis-based framings of key concepts in ITE school-university partnerships

Concept	Neoliberal framing of this concept	Praxis-based framing of this concept
School teaching knowledge	Required to 'deliver' a curriculum. Teachers 'translate' knowledge created in the academy for school students to acquire and understand	The 'know how' and practices of teachers working in schools, both individual and social, directed at helping to improve educational outcomes for students and helping to create a more just world
Initial teacher education (ITE) knowledge	Knowledge of what teachers in schools know and do, and how teacher educators 'transfer' that knowledge to pre-service teachers (AITSL, 2011). Knowledge can be unproblematically transferred from context to context	Knowing, supporting, teaching about, advocating for, and inquiring into the work and learning of in-service teachers, pre-service teachers and education as a discipline
Practice	Separate and distinct from theory. The *methods* or *techniques* that educators use to teach students; or the actions that educators enact to implement curriculum constructed by others	Theory and practice are not separable, but mutually constituting dimensions of the process of developing as collaborative, pro-active, ethical participants in educational work
Student learning	Student learning involves individual, measurable cognitive and psychological development and achievement	Student learning is the acquisition and development of, not just individual but also social knowledges, practices and skills. Also involves developing capacities, competences, capabilities, relationships and identities
Professional learning	What individual educators need in order to address deficiencies or 'gaps' in their skills or knowledge. Provided by more knowledgeable experts	There is no substantive difference between professional learning and student learning. However, the adult learner is also engaged in ongoing processes of becoming a professional practitioner
Standards	Statements that describe what all educators, regardless of their context, need to 'know and be able to do' in order to maintain their currency of practice and/or registration. Used to assess individual competency	Statements that are carefully interconnected across policy documents to enable ease of evaluation of performance by educators. They have the potential to de-professionalise. They can also promote professional learning when responsive to discipline and context, and aspirational rather than compliance focused
Identity	A combination of the roles that an individual educator fills in an organisation and the psychological traits or values s/he brings to the roles	What distinguishes educators, with respect to the multiple communities they operate in. A dynamic negotiation between an individual's perception, and what others perceive the individual to be

with them on their teaching; planning English Education workshops in team meetings with English teaching colleagues; co-teaching in those workshops; and much more.

The buildings at Monash have a familiar feel about them—they were probably built not long after the building where my colleague and I are chatting. The standards rhetoric and performance metrics that dominate my working life at UGC are well and truly evident at Monash, too, although in a slightly different dialect. Even the Monash staff room has the same problems of scarce tea spoons and lumpy, granulated coffee. And yet, there is so much that is new, or that involves seeing what I have been doing in my teaching at UGC from a whole new angle.

Through the 'joint attention' (Crawford, 2015) of an exploratory, dialogic inquiry, shared with Graham and Scott, the experience of co-teaching at a university has had a profound and important effect on how I conceptualise my practice. In taking my practice into a teacher education setting, I have encountered conditions that demand explicit reflection. In 'teaching about teaching' (Loughran, 2014) to pre-service English teachers, I am prompted to reflect on what I do every day in my own teaching life. On the other hand, as a teacher of senior secondary English in a school setting, there are moments in my day, or later in the evening as I prepare lessons and reflect on the day just concluded, when I find myself taking up a different vantage point in my mind.

The experience of co-teaching, and working across two sectors, is proving to be something of an accelerated program in professional learning for me. And yet, as far as the standards at UGC that prescribe my expected participation in professional development activities are concerned, well, there is no dot point that validates its existence. My colleagues have been supportive of my ventures in co-teaching at Monash, but I have discovered that there is little time or language to discuss what I am up to.

Meanwhile, my colleague's eyes are still on me, waiting for me to elaborate. I find myself fumbling for words to translate the experience, and what it is meaning for me, into the situation my colleague and I share as English teachers at Urban Girls' College.

'Um, well. It's really good to be helping the Monash students become English teachers, and it's great to be thinking about what I am doing here differently, you know? Because what I do here I can use over at Monash, as sort of … examples of what we do to teach the kids. It makes me think about my practice differently. And it's sort of pushing me, it's pushing me to do something better. And that's something I can talk about with the pre-service English teachers. Like, with my Year 8 class, who are lovely, but have short attention spans. And I am thinking about all the other stuff we as teachers in schools have to plan for, like difficult relationships in the class, and how my whole first term has been just getting the Year 8s to work together in a friendly way. And then, as I am doing it, as I am teaching, I am on the lookout for things that happen that I can then use in my work at Monash.'

I have said too much. My colleague looks knowingly at me.

'Yeah. I can see you being interested in that sort of thing, Fleur…. It would be pretty straightforward for you, right? I mean, with all your experience. I would think there wouldn't be that much to it.'

'Oh. Um … There's more to it than you'd think.'

Oh no, Fleur! Really? I sound like I am portraying myself as the possessor of special 'insider' knowledge. I inwardly groan.

The bell draws near. It's time to swallow the last of the morning tea, gather materials for the upcoming lesson and head off to class. My colleague's well-meant comment, probably intended to boost my confidence, has caught me off-guard. Not much to it?!

Productively Disturbing Neoliberal Notions of Professional Experience

In the preceding pages, we have noted the prevailing policy discourses of standards-based reforms in English teacher education, and we have indicated how these discourses tend to position the contribution of practising school teachers to ITE in narrowly technicist ways. We have also introduced the co-teaching initiative in English education at Monash and sketched out ways in which it varied from more constrained understandings of professional learning and practice in ITE. These variations can be explained, in part, by different understandings of key concepts like professional experience, professional learning and practice. In Table 10.1, we presented in broad schematic form, contrasts in the ways policy and research literature have framed key concepts in discussing school-university professional experience partnerships. Linking with our discussion above about the different ways professional experience is conceptualised, our intention was to situate neoliberal framing of each concept *in dialogue with* (rather than in opposition to) a praxis-based framing. Although the physical structure of columns in a table might suggest a binary relationship between the two columns in Table 10.1, we do not intend it to be read this way. Rather, it should suggest that in the everyday-ness of school-university partnerships (or co-teaching arrangements for that matter), co-teachers, teacher educators and pre-service teachers experience these columns as in continuous tension with each other (not as a choice between one or the other).

One of the significant contrasts represented in Table 10.1 is between a neoliberal understanding of practice, as 'separate and distinct from theory' and a praxis-based understanding of theory and practice as fundamentally interconnected. The assumption that practice is separate from theory encourages the view, most frequently seen in educational policy documents, that the best way to enhance school-university partnerships is to focus pre-eminently on practice (rather than theory), and the practical dimensions of professional experience. This viewpoint is behind the production of untheorised lists of 'what works' or 'best practice' in much policy advice about professional experience programs (Delandshere, 2006). In promoting such lists, Government reports like *Action Now* (TEMAG, 2014) assist in the neoliberal ideological work of constructing education professionals as commodities whose value can be easily measured and whose performance can be more efficiently controlled (Ball, 2003; Kostogriz, 2012; see also Lukacs, 1971). The lists, though, take little if any account of dimensions of teaching that cannot be easily measured—such as relationships, creative or collaborative or ethical practices, identity work, etc.—and in so doing they speak about professional experience as merely acquiring a more or less defined set of individual 'practical' or 'technical' skills of teaching. This is an etiolated understanding of practice, where the 'practical' dimensions of teaching are shorn away from larger questions of the aims, purposes and relationships to which teaching might be best directed.

A large body of literature argues that this privileging of the practical undermines the rich potential of the professional experience for pre-service teacher learning and

development (e.g. Ball, 2015; Biesta, 2015; Diamond, Parr, & Bulfin, 2017; Kostogriz & Doecke, 2013; Riley, 2015; Taubman, 2014). Goodson (2003) argues that when practical skills are over-emphasised, the creative, critical and collaborative practices that nourish the development of practical skills are rendered invisible. Smedley (2001) takes this critique further by pointing out that 'worship of the practical' invariably implies a form of teacher action or behaviour that is somehow liberated from the 'burden' of theory, resulting in what he calls 'practice-without-theory' pedagogy (p. 200). This serves to reinforce common sense but flawed assumptions about the separation between theory and practice in teaching knowledge, and it rejects sociocultural framings of teaching and teacher education as relational and 'intellectual work' (Giroux, 1998) or 'identity work' (Bauman, 2004).

A related consequence of privileging the practical in PSTs' professional experience is the way it positions school-based mentors as mere dispensers of practical advice or models of desirable practice. We might conjecture that these are the assumptions made by Fleur's interlocutor at UGC, when she observes: 'It would be pretty straightforward for you, right? I mean, with all your experience. I would think there wouldn't be that much to it'. This colleague clearly respects 'all [the] *experience*' that Fleur is 'taking with her' and transmitting to the pre-service teachers at Monash. And yet at the very moment when Fleur is coming to grips with the complexity of her role and identity as co-teacher in a teacher education community, her colleague's framing of Fleur's role in technicist terms (a common occurrence in neoliberal policy documents) has caught Fleur off guard. When this occurs in the framing of school-university ITE partnerships, the potential contribution of the school teacher tends to be limited to the 'practical' ideas he/she can bring to the program (Parr et al., 2013).

This kind of neoliberal logic often dominates discussions about educational partnerships, sometimes to the extent that the school teacher becomes the 'silent partner' in the arrangement. For instance, Allen et al., (2013) critically review a government supported school-university partnership which involved the secondment of teachers from the school sector into an ITE program. In this report, the teacher educators felt the seconded school teachers lacked sufficient knowledge about or insight into the university-based learning with which their preservice teachers were engaged. The participating school teachers, for their part, felt they had no real voice, nor was there a forum, for them to contribute to the campus-based ITE programs in any substantive way. The authors observe: 'Many [collaborating teachers] believed that the [partnership] program tends to devalue teacher expertise by marginalising it to classroom practice' (Allen et al., 2013, p. 106). It is with an awareness of the importance of giving greater prominence to Fleur's voice and her experiences that we decided to construct this chapter around two extended narratives by Fleur, rather than including separate narratives by all of us—as we have done elsewhere (see Diamond et al., 2017).

We now present a second narrative from Fleur, which speaks to what we believe are limited, and limiting, ideas about the role of practising teachers in ITE as largely dispensing 'practical' tips and strategies. Fleur tells the story of an episode of co-teaching in a workshop with Scott, where she is introducing an approach to teaching students poetry in senior English classrooms which involves preparing students for

the type of essay they will be required to write in the end of year exam for the International Baccalaureate Diploma. She also provokes the Monash PSTs to consider some critical questions about this approach, inviting them to develop a sensitivity to the tensions Fleur, and other English teachers, attempt to balance in their work. Following the narrative, we discuss the issues Fleur's narrative raises.

Narrative 2: 'But Isn't that Your Job?'

It was second semester of 'English in the Secondary Years B' at Monash, and by now the PSTs were used to my being in the workshops with them (as a co-teacher). Scott and I had co-planned a workshop, which we called, 'Poetry analysis in senior school English', and I was presenting a 'worked example' of practice from a Year 12 class I had recently taught at Urban Girls' College. My purpose was twofold: to both enact a poetry analysis activity that I had successfully used in that class, and to offer some honest reflections about the unresolved issues and dilemmas this activity raised for me as an experienced English teacher.

By half-way through the workshop, the session had seemed fairly straightforward. I had been workshopping examples and offering suggestions for pedagogy when teaching the analysis of a particular poem, 'Losing a Language' by W.S. Merwin. It was standard fare for what a practising teacher would be expected to do in an ITE setting; it is certainly the kind of role envisioned by governmental reports and policy pronouncements about what practising teachers should contribute to the professional learning of prospective teachers (AITSL, 2017). Moreover, with the increasing call for ITE to focus on 'what works' (AITSL, 2017; TEMAG, 2014), I was conscious that many of the Monash PSTs in the room would be construing the workshop as largely showing them an approach that they could 'run' in their own senior English classrooms.

Toward the end of this part of the workshop, I handed out to the Monash PSTs the resource I had given to my Year 12 students at UGC to support their writing about Merwin's poem. The resource outlined a suggested focus for the introduction, each body paragraph, and the conclusion. I had written sentence stems and key vocabulary to scaffold students who were lacking confidence in analytical writing (e.g. '*Merwin establishes a … tone in the beginning of the poem by …*', and '*The opening stanza introduces the idea of …*'). I had also attached a list of key phrases and useful verbs that students could use to introduce quotes from the poem, note literary effects, and explain their interpretation in the discourse of literary criticism (e.g. '*The imagery of … in Merwin's poem outlines his concerns with …*', *and* '*A parallel is established between … and …. This suggests …*'). This document was to act as support for the process of writing a particular form of literary commentary essay in the end-of-year exam.

To the Monash PSTs, I was careful to point out that I had written this resource after a class discussion the previous lesson, where the UGC students and I had jointly constructed a reading of Merwin's poem. Despite the 'extreme scaffolding' I had provided, I was keen to maintain an authentic link to the meanings we had generated as an 'interpretive community' (Fish, 1980). What's more, I explained that my Year 12 students were encouraged to use the examples, as they saw fit, but I had cautioned them that they should avoid simply replicating them in faithful mimicry.

My last slide was a shot of the introduction subsequently written by one of the students who had been struggling with this literary commentary task. I gave the Monash PSTs a moment to read her introduction, and they proceeded to tell me they felt it was a success. The student had incorporated some of the suggestions from the handout, and made rhetorical moves that

set up her analysis of Merwin's poem. I agreed with their evaluation. However, I then went on to speak of my misgivings about the 'extreme scaffolding' I had employed. Bearing in mind the individuality of each of my students, their humour, the complexity of the social world they deftly navigated, I felt ambivalent about a practice that risked communicating that how they used language in their worlds outside school was somehow not enough.

To this, one of the pre-service teachers expressed surprise: 'But isn't that your job?' she asked. She gestured to the handout of the scaffold I had provided. 'Isn't that your job? To teach them how to write? In the exam?'

After a moment where Scott and I looked knowingly at each other (raised eyebrows included), her question prompted me to clarify.

'Yes, of course it is, up to a point. That is why I did what I did with my students. And I love the language of literary criticism. I value it. But this student', I indicated the writing on the screen, 'has a lot going on. She comes from a remote area. She is a boarder at UGC, far from home and being asked to use language that is quite removed from the way people talk where she comes from. I am aware that at uni, she wants to study land management and environment, so she can use her education to help the community she comes from. Can you see? I want to help this student succeed, but not at the price of making her feel that her own language is somehow inadequate. This is the delicate balance English teachers must negotiate. And a lot of it is in the relational work, the things as an English teacher you know about your students and the time you spend with them, talking about their writing—and the other stuff.'

I could feel the confusion and disappointment of the Monash PST. And I too felt uncertain. I had hoped to show the complexity of English teaching, the ethical dimension that informs my planning and practice. My aim had been to expose the layers behind a plain statement such as, 'Teachers know their students and how they learn' (AITSL, 2011). But perhaps all I had managed was to show 'what works' and then talk about why it might not work for everyone—or not without trade-offs.

Praxis in English Teacher Education: 'It Is This Kind of Action…'

When Karl Marx wrote, in his 1845 *Theses of Feuerbach*, that 'the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it', he was making a strong argument about the need for praxis to move beyond reflection in order to change the world. This is a position re-stated by iconic educators and philosophers in different national contexts, such as Paulo Freire (1972) who argues that mere cerebral reflection, without action, achieves nothing. Freire's oft-quoted definition of praxis—'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it' (Freire, 1972, p. 99)—should be understood alongside his urging that collaboration and social collectives are crucial for this transformation. Thus, while Freire prioritises practice, this is a long way from the neoliberal framing of individual practice we have presented in Table 10.1.

In *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Freire explains the interaction between reflection and action that is central to his understanding of praxis:

> It is this kind of action—human beings engaged in intervention in the world as transform-
> ers of the world—that results in the development of critical consciousness. This critical

> consciousness, in its turn, leads to further action. In and through such action people cease
> to see their situation as 'a dense, enveloping reality or a tormenting blind valley'. Instead, it
> emerges as 'an historical reality susceptible of transformation'. (Freire, 1972, p. 58)

If we are honest, there were times when our 'intervention in the world' in the form of the English co-teaching praxis project left us feeling that neoliberal standards-based reforms were indeed a 'dense, enveloping reality', dampening and constraining our attempts to achieve even modest change within our small sphere of influence. Ultimately, though, we were encouraged to believe that the world of ITE and English education is 'an historical reality susceptible of transformation' and that our interconnected teaching and research were helping us to reflect on *and* act on this world in ways that could potentially transform it. In our discussion of Fleur's narratives (below), we will point to the kinds of nuanced praxis we believe are needed in Australian ITE currently, where reductive neoliberal framing of education not only dominates policy rhetoric but is sometimes appropriated by our colleagues and even our students. Because of space restrictions, our discussion will focus mainly on Fleur's second narrative.

From the moment when Fleur makes explicit reference to the Monash PSTs becoming 'used to [her] being in the workshops with them', the writing foregrounds the many social dimensions of Fleur's teaching at Monash and in her school. In the space of a few paragraphs we read of: Fleur's joint planning of the ITE poetry workshop with Scott; her interpreting, in the moment, how many PSTs in the workshop might be 'construing' her teaching as telling them 'what works'; her emphasis on the joint construction (with her students) of a 'reading' of a poem in her school classroom; the Vygotskian notion of 'scaffolding' that speaks of responsivity to students' present capability and future potential; the central positioning of Fish's concept of 'interpretive community' in the narrative; Fleur's appreciation of the 'social world[] that her UGC students negotiate'; and, finally, her sensitivity to the 'disappointment and confusion' that one of her Monash PSTs might have been feeling. Fleur's practice is infused with a deep appreciation of the social. In both settings, school and university, she thinks about and acts in ways that appreciate how education and meaning making are a collective, social enterprise. In both settings, she values and fosters collaboration amongst professional colleagues and between students and their teacher/s in order to enhance this meaning making.

One of the most complex dimensions of Fleur's narrative is her depiction of the work of negotiating across different paradigms and spaces of education and teacher education. In presenting, as an experienced English teacher, to the Monash PSTs some approaches and resources she has used in preparing senior English students for an exam, she might seem to be complying with neoliberal policy expectations that she provide examples of 'what works'. Policymakers who propose technicist standards for teacher educators might have been satisfied that these stories of Fleur's 'experience' were what the PSTs needed. Indeed, this narrative could be seen as illustrative of Cavarero's 'what' stories, where wisdom is dispensed, and where there is no cause or opportunity to question that wisdom. But there is, in fact, much more to the example. Fleur's narrative, replete with contextual details—the courses

being taught at UGC and Monash, the text being studied by the UGC students, the variety of students in the Year 12 class, her examples of ('extreme') scaffolding—is highly attentive to the particularity of practices in both settings. As we read, we are repeatedly reminded of the particular nature of this teaching story. Fleur makes clear that she has *begun* by sharing what has 'worked', although she has problematised this concept by explaining the specific context of the student who has written the 'successful' introduction. This is no simplistic 'what works' narrative—neither in terms of the teaching Fleur was doing in her Year 12 Literature class, nor in her story of teaching the PSTs at Monash. In both instances, the story unfolds reflexively in its detail and nuance.

In doing so, Fleur has attempted to help her English education PSTs understand the 'delicate balance teachers must negotiate'. In doing this, she hopes to provide an accessible entry point for the PSTs into a complex debate in English education about the extent to which learning English can be both empowering and disempowering. On the one hand, the teaching of English can be seen as empowering others through language (e.g. Derewianka, 2012), the idea that in learning to use powerful varieties of English one gains more power in social situations. On the other hand, Britton (1970) and others have noted that the teaching of school English can be fundamentally disempowering for some students if it is as Fleur notes 'at the price of making [a student] feel that her own language [and identity] is somehow inadequate'. Fleur has avoided self-congratulatory tales of success in her classroom, by 'exposing the layers' of her thinking about her teaching. She has attempted to move beyond generic, context-free 'what' statements from policy makers that glibly assert teachers must 'know their students and how they learn'. Significantly, and illustrative of Cavarero's 'who' stories, she includes her misgivings about the teaching approach she has taken (both at UGC and at Monash), and she shows how ethical practice that attends to students' needs is often a complex negotiation. In the language of praxis, her contribution to a possible transformation can be seen, at one level, in her provocations for her university students to think critically about their emerging practice. Just as importantly, she has in her words and her actions emphasised the importance of the relational work of a teacher of senior English and an English teacher educator. A further contribution is in her writing and sharing this very narrative, and reflecting on it as part of a team of researchers generating knowledge about co-teaching in an English teacher education program.

Conclusion

In our discussion, we have outlined how current policy directives about initial teacher education often privilege technicist conceptions of professional experience. We have been mindful of recent research showing that pre-service teachers themselves rate their professional placement highly for the learning opportunities it offers for developing their practice. However, narratives about teaching and becoming a teacher often challenge these conceptions of professional practice and what they entail.

Using Cavarero's framing of 'what' and 'who' stories, we have presented Fleur's reflexive narratives about English teaching and teacher education that attend to the particularities of relationships and place, and that disrupt reductive understandings of the 'practical' aspects of English teaching. And yet, as the co-teaching initiative has shown, even the so-called 'practical' dimensions of teaching are subject to competing, and often tacit, theories of what it means to be an English teacher or teacher educator, and what it is that English teachers and teacher educators do. There is no 'practice' innocent of 'theory', whether avowed or implicit. Fleur's interactions with, first, a well-meaning colleague, and then a just-as-well-meaning pre-service teacher, show that there are challenging and disturbing assumptions circulating in schools and universities about what constitutes English teaching knowledge and practice and how best to foster its development with pre-service teachers. These assumptions derive from powerful, but limiting, assumptions about English teacher education. We also show how alternative understandings of professional experience can provide important spaces for critical inquiry into the meanings of practice in English teacher education and what it means to become an English teacher.

The language used in standards-based education reform policy documents, such as 'classroom ready', implies a technicist understanding of what might be construed as the 'practical' dimensions of teaching. In challenging this language, we have argued that a narrow focus on actions and behaviours that are said to transcend the particularities of students, classrooms, schools and communities, obscures the intellectual, ethical and relational work of practice as it is lived. Our account of the co-teaching project suggests there are strategies and practices that can be taught in pre-service teaching spaces, but that such teaching requires guided reflection and critical dialogue, encouraging pre-service teachers to make sense of their teacher education experience by putting it into a wider frame of reference. As Table 10.1 indicates, teaching in schools and universities almost invariably involves dialogue between contrasting perspectives on knowledge, practice, learning, identity and other key concepts. This is the 'disputed territory' that Doecke and McClenaghan (2005) discuss, where 'a practitioner struggles with the demands of policy makers, administrators and mandated practices, and the situatedness of working with particular students in a particular place' (p. 259).

Our experience in the co-teaching project tells us that pre-service teachers often discover this as they work to make sense of their professional placement, as well as other dimensions of their professional experience. When policy discourses frame 'practice' as a transparent and stable category of experience that is essentially the same across all contexts, they elide these complexities. In effect, they are redefining what teaching and teacher education mean within the language of what Ball (2003) calls 'policy technologies'. Such 'technologies' require 'new identities, new forms of interaction and new values' that fundamentally change 'what it means to teach and what it means to be a teacher' (Ball, 2003, pp. 217–218). Praxis initiatives such as the 'Co-teaching in English education' project remind us that we need to continue to develop language, practices, and structured opportunities to reflect on the complexities of learning to teach. The narratives we have presented here, framed by an analysis of the contemporary policy context, indicate how professional experi-

ence can become an occasion for meaningful inquiry, as well as developing what policymakers might call 'practical' competence.

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Chapter 11
Back to the Future: A Journey of Becoming a Professional Practice Consultant

Ondine Jayne Bradbury

Abstract This chapter follows one teacher's journey from pre-service teacher, to primary teacher, through to mentor and Professional Practice Consultant (PPC). The author journeys through an analysis of self, and analysis of her identity as an educator, showing how aspects of each of the roles experienced and explored have contributed to her current identity. Throughout the chapter, poetry is used to provide an insight into the various encounters that occur in the Professional Experience space. The poetry marks significant milestones in the 12-month process of being a PPC and assists to uncover the nuances and tensions associated with being in the PPC role.

Beginnings (January 2017)

Beginning while still ending

A dream revealed and lived

Memories of experiences locked away, drawn upon fondly

Pick your stories and run with them

Turbulent times ever-changing

Taking on the role rolling with the punches,

Becoming …

Introduction

It is more than 10 years ago now, but I still remember my initial teacher education degree (a double degree—Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Arts, Literary Studies) when I was studying to become a generalist primary teacher. I thoroughly enjoyed my university-based coursework, but I came to believe that professional experience, in the form of short practicum placements in schools, was one of the most valuable

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and memorable parts of my teaching degree. It was where what I had been studying at university came to mean so much. This was partly about developing teaching approaches for the classroom. It was also about applying what I was learning at university in regard to education more broadly, and beginning to foster my own teaching identity. On these placements, I was excited to feel myself *becoming a teacher*. And yet I was aware, from talking with other pre-service teachers (PSTs) enrolled in my course, that this was not always the way they experienced their teacher education. I remember a myriad of metaphors circulating amongst PSTs in the weeks leading up to our first professional experience. This placement would be for us: 'a baptism of fire', 'like being thrown in the deep end', 'sink or swim', 'make or break'. Not surprisingly, this kind of talk bred fear and uncertainty among even the most confident of us PSTs.

In January 2017, after 15 years of teaching in a primary school setting I found myself one of a group of 12 teachers with recent classroom experience employed by Monash University's Faculty of Education. We were to be the very first cohort of Monash's 'Professional Practice Consultants' (or PPCs). The role, we were told, had an overall aim of optimising the professional experience program for all stakeholders: PSTs, school-based teacher mentors, school leaders, community-based mentors, and university-based teacher educators. Following extensive surveying of PSTs, school leaders and school-based mentors, Monash had created the role of PPC to improve and diversify the support for its PSTs, and also to better support Monash's partners in its professional experience program. The published job description of the PPC referred explicitly to two complementary dimensions: 'an internal focus on student support and an external focus on partner support.' The internal focus involved 'support[ing] students' progress in professional practice and their professional readiness within teacher education courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels prior to, during and post placement.' The external focus was to 'sustain partnerships with placement partners, which included schools, early years settings and community-based sites.' I interpreted this as capacity building with a dual emphasis: (i) PSTs enrolled in teacher education courses; and (ii) school (or community) leaders and teachers who were deemed to be 'key stakeholders' of professional experience.

One aim in writing this chapter is to deepen my understanding of the work of a Professional Practice Consultant (PPC); another is to explore the changes in my identity since beginning in the role. Yet another aim is to contribute to the research literature about the structures, supports and relationships that underpin professional experience placements. I hope to achieve these aims by presenting autobiographical stories and reflections, sometimes in the form of short poems, about my experience of working as a PPC this past year. The stories, poems and reflections draw links between my time as a pre-service teacher (PST), later experiences as a school-based teacher mentor of PSTs, and more recently, my year as a Professional Practice Consultant (PPC).

The theoretical underpinnings of this chapter draw upon literature relating to identity (Gee, 2000–2001), 'Third Space' (Gutiérrez, 2008; Williams, 2013) and boundary crossing in teacher education (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). I have written the stories, poems and reflections in a way that provides a unique personal perspective

on these notions of identity, space and boundary crossing. The sense of uniqueness is enhanced by ensuring that each story I tell, and each poem I present, is situated within a particular institutional, temporal and sociocultural context. Although I present and reflect upon experiences that are distinctive to my identity and me, and therefore cannot be generalised across all other situations or educational contexts, the situated nature of the stories always provides a context for making sense of them. I hope that elements of my experience may resonate with others and raise implications for the development of such roles in teacher education partnerships and professional experience placements in schools and other settings.

One final point I wish to make at the outset is that the newly coined title of 'Professional Practice Consultant' is, at the time of writing, rarely seen in existing professional experience literature. The literature I have consulted at various times in preparing for and writing this chapter often makes reference to more commonly discussed roles in teacher education partnerships and professional experience, such as: 'teacher educator', 'teacher educator mentor', 'professional consultant' and 'academic supervisor'. I mention these roles because although they share some characteristics or features with the PPC role as I have experienced it, none of them completely aligns with all dimensions of the role of PPC as I have experienced it.

Methodology

In planning this chapter, I decided early on to use a form of narrative inquiry methodology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) to represent and reflect upon the stories of my journey from a PST studying to be a teacher, through to a mentor of PSTs (still working in a school), on to a PPC working in university, schools and sometimes community settings. Narrative inquiry (and forms of scholarly storytelling, including poetry) has enabled me to explore my 'lived experience' of transitioning through these different roles and educational contexts. I was attracted to this form of methodology because of its capacity to highlight how we each have our own stories from which we understand ourselves and our places, 'creating new understandings of 'me' at these times in my life' (Hannigan, 2014, p. 11).

I use a variety of narrative 'methods' to focus and trigger the reflexive storying of my experiences, including reflections through poetry writing. Poetry as a form for scholarly storytelling and reflection was first seen in other narrative-based research methodologies such as autobiography, auto-ethnography and phenomenology. It is now used quite often in many paradigms of education research, to 'say what might not otherwise be said' (Cahnmann, 2003, p. 29; see also Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). On the one hand, poetry can also provide a 'vehicle for social inquiry' (Furman, 2007, p. 1), which is important if the research is to go beyond the mere telling of a personal story and to achieve some degree of scholarly rigour. Also, poems or poetic fragments, situated within a carefully theorised study, can allow a researcher to express an 'emotional 'truth' and elicit empathic reactions from the reader who may see some aspect of themselves and/or their experience in the poetry' (Furman,

2007, p. 1). Additionally, poetry can convey the emotion of an experience by evoking images in the reader's mind that help him/her to navigate the boundary between the 'experience of an emotion and its expression in language' (Furman, 2007, p. 2).

I initially wrote the poetic fragments in this chapter in a professional journal, which I kept during my day-to-day work as a PPC. This journal helped me to make sense of the transition I was experiencing from the identity of a teacher in a school to a PPC working in a faculty of education. The journal was always with me as I visited schools, and talked with pre-service teachers, teacher mentors and sometimes school principals. Sometimes, I was literally writing some lines of poetry while waiting in a school reception area before meeting with a PST or mentor or school leader. The more that I interacted with a wide range of professional experience stakeholders, and then reflected on these interactions in my journal, the better I felt I was understanding the significant transformation I was experiencing in my identity since taking on the role of PPC. Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) refer to practices such as I was using as 'writing as a method of inquiry', whereby the inquirer or researcher develops a richer sense of self through a combination of writing practices and engaging in social action. In my own case, there was a sense in which the poems I was writing not only mirrored my interactions and experiences; the poetry writing began to be a significant factor in building my identity and the social reality of my work as a PPC (Richardson & St Pierre, 2005, p. 961).

In my reflections on the poetic fragments and stories I present below, I have found it helpful to utilise a poststructuralist lens to make sense of the various identities and discourses at play in my interactions with various professional experience stakeholders. There are aspects of poststructuralist theory that emphasise the ways in which identity is situated in time and space, and therefore how identity needs to be understood as dynamic not rigid, and plural not singular (see Gee, 2000–2001). Poststructuralist theory also encourages a researcher to be 'critical of the nature and function of knowledge, power and discourse' (Ma, 2013, p. 447). In my chapter, poststructuralist theory has helped me to show how power, like identity, is deeply mediated by the social structure of the individuals operating in a particular context, and that (again like identity) power is not something that can be possessed by the individual themselves. For this reason, in the sections that follow, I occasionally refer to Foucaultian theory to help me explore the connections between knowledge, power, discourses, and identity in my journey of transformation from teacher in a school to PPC in a team of professional staff in a faculty of education. My exploration is structured around six poems, which I reflect upon and discuss with respect to the concepts of identity, third space and boundary crossing. I have organised these poems in chronological order to support the sense of the narrative journey I have been (and am still) undertaking. I begin by referring back to the first poem, 'Beginnings', from the opening of the chapter.

Who Am I? and What Is a PPC?

I have explained that the PPC role was newly created by Monash University's Faculty of Education in 2017. I am now more keenly aware than I was then that the university and I were both embarking upon a journey into unchartered territory. This was exciting and perhaps held a variety of levels of risk for all of us. In the first poem titled '*Beginnings (January 2017)*', I was trying to capture some of this excitement and risk, and the sense of being in a veritable maelstrom of whirling change, in my mind at least. The opening paradox of 'beginning while still ending' describes the moment of concluding my time as a teacher in schools and beginning in the role of PPC at Monash. I evoke the sense of complexity of this paradox, by suggesting that beginning and ending merged into one experience with my move out of the primary setting and into a tertiary setting. Working in a faculty of education was a dream, but so too was being a teacher in a school when I first graduated. I was aware that in order to deal with the challenges and the unexpected difficulties ('the punches'), I would need to draw upon all of the previous knowledge I had developed as a teacher (some of it 'locked away in my memory'). I would need to select relevant stories and experiences from my days as a PST and teacher and 'run with them'. And I would have to travel *back to the future,* drawing on all of my professional knowledge and experiences from the past for use in the present (Williams, 2013).

Whenever I began to feel that the expectations of the PPC role were becoming clear, something else would change and I would once again appreciate how the role was constantly evolving. I remember one of my PPC colleagues referring to the ways different components of the PPC work moved beneath us like 'shifting sands'. That expression meant a lot to me at the time as it elicited scenes of change and development, freshness and the ability to progress and innovate. Conversely, it meant that uncertainty would arise at times, and that many days would feel like I was stepping into the unknown, crossing a boundary into a new set of expectations. Actually, the PPC role was in a continual process of becoming, just like my identity, and it would continue to morph and change depending on the requirements of the University, the Professional Experience 'Placement Partners', mentors and PSTs. This sense of change and uncertainty was picked up in 'A footprint', which I wrote in March 2017.

A footprint (March 2017)

When the heat is on, I set down a footprint
It lingers when placed on the cool ground
Edges blurred, steam rising
Making its mark, doing the job of a transient being
Slowly it disappears as the air around becomes more attuned to its environment
Only to return when the heat is on again

This poem, like 'Becomings', juxtaposes opposites—this time it is hot and cold. I focus on the way the heat of a footprint can leave a mark on a cool tile in the summer,

and how that footprint can seem to 'slowly disappear[]…/Only to return when the heat is on again.' The metaphor of the footprint came to me one day in March, when I was getting ready for another day in my role as PPC. This was a time when many of the Monash PSTs were on placement. I was constantly on the move, conducting visits to placement settings, conciliating in disputes between mentors and PSTs, nurturing relationships, creating new ones. Soon I would be driving away from the school, leaving the various stakeholders to work on their relationships and deal with the challenges ahead in the space where I had briefly set foot.

The metaphor links to my alternating feelings of making my mark in the role of PPC, but then wondering (as the 'footprint' disappeared) if I really was helping. It also registers my awareness, again, of the PPC role being 'under construction', not fully explained or cemented in its nature. In the poem, this is implied by explaining that even when the mark was visible, its edges were 'blurred'. This metaphor can also be read as representing the development of the PPC role, itself, which came into clear focus and disappeared from time to time, but ultimately revealed itself and its many dimensions. The opening phrase, 'When the heat is on', can be read as referring to moments where I found myself having to 'intervene' in a placement if it appeared a PST was struggling in some way and/or when any of the key stakeholders had expressed concern about the outcome of the placement. The notion of a 'transient being' is intended to show that my movement into and out of these troubled placements was gradual and my intervening was often more in the form of liaising rather than an intrusive intervention.

I have indicated that the PPC role was new and unprecedented at Monash. However, it is interesting to compare the kinds of roles I was playing within my first months as a PPC with literature from almost 30 years ago about 'supervision' in professional placements. In 1989, Marrou highlighted what she felt were the key requirements for a 'university supervisor' of a 'student teacher' on a 'teaching round' at that time. Writing from her context as a US teacher educator, Marrou emphasised that a university supervisor should be supportive of both the student teacher as well as the school-based mentor (or 'cooperating teacher', as she refers to the role). This support might involve interviews or counselling, assistance with resources, or orientation sessions just to name a few. Marrou went on to suggest that the relationship between the cooperating teacher, student teacher and the university supervisor should be informed by up-to-date knowledge about teacher education and that the supervisor should be able to 'articulate the process of becoming a teacher' (Marrou, 1989, p. 18). Additionally, the university supervisor should appreciate that many circumstances requiring intervention can involve substantial investments of 'time, energy and professional expertise' (p. 18).[1] The allusion in the fifth line of 'A footprint' to 'doing the job of a transient being' is meant to communicate my desire to bring my knowledge and expertise to the role, but always with the sense of moving on as 'a transient being'. To put it another way, I was conscious of moving across the

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[1]Interestingly, Marrou was speaking about a university supervisor who was usually a tenured academic, whereas I had been employed as a professional staff member on a three year contract.

boundary that divides and connects universities and schools, and moving on as soon as I felt my presence was no longer required.

There is one other interpretation of the footprint metaphor I want to mention, and this relates to my identity as a primary school teacher, which I felt was fast disappearing in the PPC work. Writing 25 years later than Marrou, Williams (2013) looks at the idea of existing in the 'Third Space' as a 'teacher educator' (p. 119), liaising with stakeholders in professional experience settings. She portrays the work of a teacher educator during professional placements in ways that seem very familiar to me in my PPC role (although I was part of a professional staff team and she was speaking about tenured academics). Williams discusses how during 'field experience' a teacher educator may feel as though she is crossing 'professional and personal boundaries' (p. 121) eliciting dual loyalties—that is, empathising with the positions of both the pre-service teacher and the school-based mentor when conflicts arise. In Williams' experience as a teacher educator, she uses this feeling of dual loyalties to help build trust and mutual respect between PST and mentor. This resonated with my experience as PPC. 'Where the edges blur' can be read as the space where I was crossing boundaries, and also the space where a boundary separated and connected a whole range of situations and people I was encountering: e.g. PSTs and mentors; school education and pre-service education; and school-based identities and university-based identities. Williams (2013) invokes the concept of the 'Third Space' (Gutiérrez, 2008; Martin, Snow, & Torrez, 2011) to explain these kinds of spaces. In the next section, I explore the relevance of this concept to my developing identity in the PPC role.

Shifting Identity and the 'Third Space'

When I first became a member of Monash's team of PPCs, I was conscious that I had taken a position as a university-based 'professional staff member'. It was so exciting and new for someone who had previously been actively building her skill and identity as a school-based professional. In a very real sense, the poetry I was writing in my journal was creating a third space for me to process and make sense of this excitement and newness. As Gutiérrez (2008) suggests, the 'Third Space' can consist of 'formal and informal…official and unofficial spaces…creating the potential for authentic interaction' (p. 152). She also explains how the figurative meaning of functioning within a 'Third Space' can relate to the ways in which you contribute to a situation or context or community. When I looked back over the poems I had written in that 'Third Space', it became clear that they were often relating to identity, and many explored the power negotiation that complicated the relationships between PST, school-based mentor and university-based PPC. I want now to reflect on what I was learning through reflecting upon and analysing the ways in which power and perceptions of knowledge were operating in my experience of relationships between PST, mentor and PPC.

Whilst working as a PPC, I felt as though I was working within a plethora of physical and figurative third spaces. These spaces included reception areas in partner schools, on the road as I travelled between partner schools or community settings, and in professionals' staffrooms, where I would participate in meetings with a variety of stakeholders. I have to admit that when I was a PST on a professional placement in a school 20 years ago, I did not recall seeing a university supervisor throughout all of my placements (and yet I am aware that supervisors from different universities often did visit schools). Again, it is interesting to relate my experience as a PPC in 2017 to Marrou's writing in 1989 about the 'university supervisor' rarely being central to the many discussions surrounding the professional experience context. Marrou argued that the university 'supervisor' can be seen as one of the critical factors in a professional experience placement. I saw my role as a professional practice consultant from a faculty of education as similarly critical.

The next poem, titled 'Identity', was written initially in a reception area of one of the schools I visited last year in my role as PPC. Through writing and reflecting on this poem, I became aware of the ways in which my choice of words was highlighting the fluidity of my emerging identity in the PPC role. I had been, in a sense, settling into and consolidating my identity as 'a teacher in a school' for over a decade, and now suddenly in my new role as a PPC, I found myself constantly on the move. Reflecting in the 'Third Space' of my writing, the analogy of a river, twisting and turning occurred to me. Like a river, strongly flowing, I was invariably carving new paths in the river bed, hitting obstacles and finding ways to move around them. My sense of my identity, like the PPC role I was filling, was dynamic and fluid. Williams (2013) might say I was an 'evolving participant' in this ever evolving sense of my identity, because of the way I was actively exploring the various dimensions that the role promised. And yet it is worth noting that my identity through this time was also being shaped to some extent by the interactions I had with PSTs, teacher mentors and my colleagues in the PPC team. In practice, the PPC role was a hybrid of interactions with many stakeholders. At different times, I might be mentoring, coaching, learning from others (in schools, community settings and in the Faculty of Education), and potentially having an influence on a myriad of professional experience areas.

Identity (June 2017)

Identity changing, ebbing, flowing
A hint of the mentor flavour, then vanilla as an aftertaste.
The knowledge once shared and acquired – becomes shared with another?
A knowing wave goodbye as the door closes
only to open again in a different place

The '*Identity*' poem hones in on the part of the PPC experience that involved interacting with school-based mentors. In the 5 years before I was employed as a PPC, I was fortunate to have opportunities in a school to mentor PSTs from various universities. This allowed me to develop some knowledge about what is involved in the complex and nuanced work of mentoring during a professional experience placement 'from

the inside out', in effect. I found that hosting a PST in my classroom was a valuable experience for myself and for my student learners. It was an opportunity to work with the PSTs' new ideas, fresh energy and excitement in a shared teaching space. The introduction of a new teacher voice in my classroom often involved an injection of innovative knowledge; and it invariably offered an opportunity for me to see the learners in 'my' classroom in a new light. As a school-based teacher, when I was mentoring PSTs, I remember trying to recall the feeling of what it was like to be a PST. I presented my classroom as an open, inclusive space; my approach was, wherever possible, to distribute or share professional responsibility in the classroom. I positioned myself, figuratively, as a professional guide operating collaboratively, alongside the PST.

Nevertheless, during these mentoring experiences, I was always aware that the adolescent learners in my classroom, whom I had grown to know over several months (some of them for longer), were my ultimate responsibility. Yes, I was professional in my mentoring of the visiting PST, but it was my students' learning that was my primary focus. Despite remembering some of my experiences and attitudes as a PST, I found it difficult to really 'tap into' what it was like to be a 'PST' in that moment in time, when I had another PST in my own classroom. Rather than developing an enriched identity that encompassed mentoring a PST and teaching a classroom of children together, I recall myself consciously *switching* between the identities of 'classroom teacher' and 'mentor'.

As a PPC I often visited schools and took on 'a hint of' the mentoring work of PSTs who were experiencing difficulties in their placement, *sharing* my knowledge and then moving on. At first, it rarely crossed my mind that I might again step into the shoes of the PST and consider the ways in which identity could play a part in their success or otherwise. Of course, I understood the nerves, the sense of learning as a continuum, and the fact that a PST in the classroom was often at a fledgling stage in their aspiration to become a teacher. However, the importance of a mentor seeking and understanding the identity of her PST was a blind spot on my trajectory. Soon enough, I came to realise the importance of thinking deeply about the different ways in which identities were operating and evolving in the school-based mentor and PST relationship. I saw many successful professional relationships between PSTs and mentors, which would prompt me to reflect and consider how I had been as a mentor. With every new observation of mentors in action, I appreciated more and more how mentoring was multi-faceted, dynamic and unpredictable work. Quality mentoring was different in different contexts—just as when I was a beginning teacher, I had come to appreciate that the learners in my classrooms were diverse, and each presented their strengths as learners in different ways.

Sometimes in the mentoring work I would do as PPC, I would *share* certain information or knowledge, and sometimes I would discuss my own experiences and beliefs as a teacher, and link this to the teaching and learning I had just observed. Often, I was a 'set of ears', listening to the dreams and aspirations of PSTs about to launch into a career in teaching. I began to appreciate, in more conscious ways than when I was a school-based mentor, the importance of forming a partnership with each PST I came to observe.

In writing '*Identity*', I came to realise how important 'knowing oneself as an educator' can be for effective mentoring. As a PPC, I needed to move between spaces and participate in interactions between mentors and PSTs. In this work, I appreciated the 'hybrid character of the 'Third Space'' (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 149), as I worked to establish and navigate between these different settings. This involved substantial time liaising between the university and the school, helping each to cross boundaries, in order to promote mentoring relationships that were mutually beneficial (Martin et al., 2011, p. 300). I got the chance to spend time in many different schools and community education spaces. Opening the door to these spaces was an eye opening experience for me; I learned first hand about the diversity of educational spaces in and around Melbourne, which I had only ever read about or heard about before. It was as if each door to a new educational space was a door to new knowledge. One door would open to reveal another, and another. And just as I relished the opportunities to explore the previously unknown in terms of educational settings, these opportunities enabled me to learn more about myself as an educator.

Bells did not bind the diverse spaces I found myself working in; nor did teaching timetables. My days became 'meeting rich' and varied in the knowledge I was learning and sharing with others. In my role as a PPC, I would be frequently crossing boundaries, professionally and personally, each time I stepped inside a different 'Third Space' with a different PST or mentor. I was working and learning across multiple settings (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 150), each one of them different – none of them could I classify as 'my own'. Across these multiple settings, I began to realise that my sense of identity would change depending on where I was physically, and the people with whom I was interacting.

The Gatekeepers of Knowledge

Writing the poem '*Who do you believe?*' in the second half of 2017 was an interesting experience for me. I had been thinking about the knowledge that I was bringing with me as a classroom teacher and comparing this to the knowledge of seasoned university lecturers, of other professional staff at the university, or of school-based mentors who had 30-plus years' experience. How would I as a new PPC be able to share or disseminate knowledge so that these education colleagues would trust or believe me? As I mused about these concerns, I began to ask myself big questions about knowledge and power in professional experience relationships – questions like: What types of knowledge are valued? Can that knowledge be distributed or shared in an open and inclusive manner by anyone in the professional experience space? It is these types of questions that I am grappling with in the next poem, '*Who do you believe?*'

Who do you believe? (August 2017)

Believing belief trust truth deepens
Who, whom, whoever

The holder of knowledge the knower of knowing
I imagine a bustling farmyard. The gate to the yard is rusty, noisy,
Creaking back and forth in a stilted, laboured fashion.
A little oil on the gate, and it swings freely, perhaps wildly, in the winds of change

In *'Who do you believe?'*, I wanted to explore the notion of knowledge in professional experience, and its relationship to belief and trust, and once again I use contrasts to do this. Olsen (2016) provocatively suggests that some people perceive a dichotomy between school-based mentor knowledge and knowledge that a PST acquires from the university. He describes how PSTs are sometimes 'confused and unclear about the roles and expectations of supervisors and their relationships with them' during professional experience placements (Olsen, 2016, p. 51). PSTs may feel caught between opposing perspectives of university-based supervisors (or consultants!) and their school-based mentors. They may be left feeling perplexed by a range of contradictory expectations. An additional level of confusion can arise when a mentor questions or even flatly dismisses the knowledge or information a PST has learned at university (or from research), and this can lead to a number of uncomfortable outcomes. In my role as PPC, I was sometimes required to engage with a PST and his/her mentor in order to resolve some problematic situations like this. I could never set myself up as the holder of all knowledge in this situation, but I felt I could draw on a range of knowledge or experience within educational settings and across sectors that could potentially help. But would I be believed? Would I be seen as 'a holder of knowledge a knower of knowing'?

On my visits to different school settings, I was occasionally privy to conversations between mentors and PSTs where they enthusiastically agreed that professional experience placements were valuable for the PST to gain practical experience of the classroom. Recalling their own memories of university, some mentors would characterise university-based teacher education as 'giving' PSTs a range of theory but 'ignoring' practice. These mentors tended to believe that the information 'located in books and articles from professors and researchers' (Olsen, 2016, p. 21) was not being translated into practical knowledge or that universities did not teach PSTs how to participate in the 'hands on' aspect of a professional experience placement. Needless to say, governments across the world have commissioned inquiries into the quality of initial teacher education, suspecting that teacher education in universities is deficient in some way. For instance, the recent Australian inquiry by the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, *Action now: Classroom ready teachers* (2014) reported that both school principals and recent graduates were concerned about the way teaching graduates emerged from their degrees with a weak understanding of the link between theory and practice. This inquiry also suggested that PSTs typi-

cally begin their professional experience placements with limited understanding of important aspects of teaching (TEMAG, 2014).

Rather than siding with universities or schools, Olsen (2016) argues that the knowledge acquired by PSTs during professional experience placements comes from both the university and from mentor teachers (p. 20), and that the different forms of knowledge should be seen to complement each other. And yet PSTs often ask themselves: who should I believe, my university lecturer or my school-based mentor? I saw this on school visits where I had important information to communicate, either to a mentor or a PST—sometimes even to a principal. I was conscious that effective communication with the various stakeholders in the professional experience setting was paramount, and yet I sometimes sensed that coming from outside the school I had to work harder to earn the trust of PSTs and school-based mentors than when I was a teacher inside the school. The teachers I had come to work with as a PPC were once my colleagues. Strangely, those collegial relationships seemed different when I was no longer a teacher. Communicating with PSTs and mentors became a 'sensitive balancing act' (Martin et al., 2011, p. 304) as I would attempt to remind them of university requirements while ensuring that I also explicitly honoured the knowledge of the mentors in the school space.

Williams (2013) references this 'balancing act' when as a teacher educator, on the outside as it were, she has to negotiate relationships with PSTs and mentors within schools. As a PST, I recall my mentors discussing this concern. However, as a PPC visiting placement partners, I rarely had open discussions comparing the university teacher education experience with the in-school teacher education experience. From very early in my time as a PPC, I was convinced that relationships founded upon trust between mentor, PST and PPC were a crucial part of what Cole and Knowles (1995) call 'the field-experience triad' (p. 45). But I was concerned that an argument about the relative merits of 'university experience versus school based professional experience' could potentially undermine that trust, and thus undermine one of the key objectives of my work as a PPC, to build stronger relationships between partner schools and the university. In the metaphor of my poem, it could make the 'rusty, noisy gate' that should enable a free flow of knowledge between university and school even more 'stilted and laboured'.

If trust was lost, the 'stilted and laboured' flow of knowledge could potentially break down altogether. As a PPC, I had a responsibility to sensitively apply 'a little oil on the gate' in the form of nurturing the relationship. If I was successful in applying this oil, then communication could flow more easily—the gate would swing 'freely'. When the gate was swinging freely, this meant knowledge and communication were flowing more readily, and each of us in the professional experience 'triad' was more likely to respect the knowledge shared with us by others. That was not a guarantee for harmony, however, as suggested by the poem's reference to the 'perhaps wildly' swinging gate. However, it did allow for a more positive third space of communication and knowledge sharing.

Negotiating Power in Professional Experience Placements

Writing 20 years ago, Fulwiler (1996) had described the work of university-based academic supervisors during PSTs' professional experience placements as 'challenging, intense' but also 'rewarding' (p. 22). My experiences as a PPC certainly reflected this at the time I wrote the poem, *'The power of the classroom (September 2017)'*. By then, I had made many visits to observe and speak with PSTs on placement. My visits often involved communicating and sharing knowledge with both mentors and PSTs. Many of these visits seemed equally rewarding for PST, mentor and me. Sometimes, however, conversations over the simplest of issues could feel like a push and pull wrestling match, with me moving around, looking for a position from which I could respectfully listen to explanations and propositions but also offer advice that I thought was important. The conversations varied greatly: from orienting the students at university level, to liaising between university and placement partners, to mediating in a conflict between PST and mentor (Fulwiler 1996; Cole & Knowles 1995).

The power of the classroom (September 2017)

A seesaw bearing weight on either side

Depending on the day, it could be a wrestling match: you pull, I push

I have to move around It's tough to create a shared balance

But when that balance is achieved, it's a powerful straight plank

Walk the plank, take the risk, dive in

'The power of the classroom' metaphorically explores the triadic relationships I was often part of when, as a PPC, I visited PSTs in schools. The poem centres on what I see as a crucial dimension of PST identity formation in professional experiences. For the PST as for me, it involved the pull and push of negotiating power and a sense of professional voice in an unfamiliar professional space. Martin et al. (2011) describe this as a 'jostling' for power in the relationship between PST, school-based mentor and university-based supervisor. They identify two elements in this jostling, 'cultivation' and 'navigation', and they argue that the exact nature of these elements can vary depending on the individuals involved. Nevertheless, as they say, the positive relationships that can result from this cultivation and navigation are crucial in developing triadic relationships from which all three people can learn.

Casting my mind back to my own professional experience placements as a PST, they often did feel like a *seesaw* of emotions. I would be trying to find ways of working with a new supervisor, and I would experience this as a 'you pull, I push' wrestle, hoping to acquire some sense of autonomy as a teacher, while of course realising I still had a lot to learn. Poststructuralist theory describes how power is an issue in all social situations, such as within relationships and human-to-human interactions (Taylor, 2014). It suggests that knowledge and power cannot be possessed like some commodity; rather they are exercised through the choices and interactions enacted between people. I had experienced this myself as a PST and mentor, and I was now

privy to new relationships experiencing the same moving around to achieve a shared balance. I could only do this if I kept in close contact with school classrooms, and maintained rich communication with mentors and PSTs before, during, and after the placement. When I was able to do this effectively, I felt we could 'recognize and celebrate teacher strengths…explore dilemmas…and collaboratively construct the next steps' (Fulwiler, 1996, p. 22) in the placement, in way that optimised the professional experience for all stakeholders.

Where to from Here?

Becoming an educator: an ongoing journey (October 2017)

An academic?
A professional staff member?
A researcher?
A teacher?
A mentor?
A learner?
An educator?
A PPC!

By October 2017, I was beginning to look back over the year that was rapidly drawing to a close, reflecting on who I had been and who I was becoming as a PPC. In writing this poem, I came to realise that all these different roles were part of my work as a PPC, but that they were only part of the story of my identity. In the first weeks of the year, my colleagues and my managers would often ask me how I felt the PPC experience was going. After one particular chat with a PPC colleague, I became acutely aware of the journeys of becoming that all of us PPCs had been living. This colleague and I discussed little things, like the dilemmas we experienced when having to tick one 'occupation' box from a drop down menu! 'Do we have to choose just one?!,' we asked each other. I remember another colleague explaining to me that she felt her role was as a manager, working in an educational context, and at the core of her work, she would always see herself as 'an educator'.

When I had been a teacher in a primary classroom, I had often spoken to my students about the identity of a teacher. I am not the only 'teacher' of this class, I would tell them. Their parents were teachers, their friends, the Principal, the other staff in the classrooms they'd passed through in their learning journey… they were all their teachers, in different ways. The other students in the class were also their teachers! As the end of my first year as a PPC approached, I came to believe that the role of PPC comprised elements of all those other roles. And yet these roles only defined *what I did*; they didn't define *who I was*. My identity was *associated* with all these roles, but it was always more than just them. I was *becoming* a different form

of educator from what I had been before, and this becoming continued with every new day of the job and every new visit to a school.

In October 2017, I had just begun to work with a new cohort of Monash PSTs, to liaise with new professional partners and to visit new professional experience settings. This offered new opportunities for teaching, learning, mentoring and researching. Whitchurch (2013) explores the poststructuralist idea of identity and the 'Third Space' in higher education, specifically discussing the identity of professional and academic staff within the sector. He suggests that new roles and identities appear to be emerging in recent years that have not existed previously (p. 20). These include higher education sector professionals who have a 'professional or academic background' (Whitchurch, 2013, p. 26) and who are overseeing projects such as learning support and building community partnerships. My experience as a PPC was bearing out Whitchurch's (2013) predictions of a new form of 'unbounded' professional, who could apply an exploratory approach to their work and draw upon external experiences and contacts to complete 'broadly based projects' (p. 8). These were the kinds of projects (and problem solving) that I was undertaking as a PPC. Experience and knowledge of teaching and learning were not just professional assets to do a defined job as a PPC; they gave me the capacity to do all manner of educational work within and across professional and academic domains (Whitchurch, 2013).

Conclusion

At the conclusion of 2017, I can say that my professional journey has taken me through a range of pathways that have enabled me to move into and grow through the role of PPC. Over the course of the year I sensed that my work and my identity were evolving and developing with every new experience. In this chapter, I have shown different elements of my journey from PST, to teacher, to mentor (in schools), and then to PPC, and considered how the year of being a PPC has itself been a journey. I have explored some complexities of the PPC role, including some challenges of negotiating triadic relationships with PSTs and school-based mentors on my visits to school settings and centres. Recounting my experiences through poetry was an important process for developing a deeper understanding of how the different experiences and roles were shaping my emerging identity as a PPC.

This understanding has continued to develop through the process of writing the narrative of this chapter. The processes of writing in my journal and in this chapter have enabled me to hold a mirror up to my journey through the myriad of 'Third Spaces' and see more clearly my identity within each space. In this professional journey, I have learned and developed across many spaces and settings (Gutiérrez, 2008) and my identity has stretched, changed and evolved as the settings and spaces grew in number. This is what I understand as the ongoing process of becoming an educator.

My identity today? I am a professional staff member, a 'consultant' for professional practice in teaching and learning, a teacher, a learner, an educator and a

researcher. I also see myself as 'unbounded' (Whitchurch, 2013) in my professional identity, striving to apply the knowledge, skills and experiences I have developed throughout my professional journey to this point. Where this role will take is still unknown. However, it is certain that the experiences will continue to shape who I am forging forward, back to the future.

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Chapter 12
(Re)navigating the Classroom as a Teacher Educator

Ange Fitzgerald

Abstract Using identity as a frame, this chapter captures the realities of the author grappling with her own practices in becoming a teacher educator through a series of raw and genuine narratives that draw on professional experience as a context for learning and growth. In the context of this work, professional experience is imagined as school-based experiences, which provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to engage with theoretical and conceptual ideas about learning and teaching in a supported classroom environment. From the perspective of pre-service teachers' learning, these experiences are relatively well documented. Drawing on journal entries spanning several years, this chapter instead explores how a teacher educator negotiates a professional experience space to make the most of this opportunity in terms of how it informs her own thinking, practice and ultimately ways of being.

> Experience is the best teacher.

Introduction

This timeless proverb certainly has a point. There is nothing quite like learning experientially to really understand something deeply, with a sense of purpose and in ways that you will not forget in a hurry. In supporting pre-service teachers for over a decade now in learning to teach, it is a message that I have heard time and time again. *'I want more time in classrooms'; 'My placements were my best experiences in the course'; 'I learnt the most about teaching when I was in a school setting'*. I am sure I voiced similar sentiments when I was a pre-service teacher too. What perhaps is underplayed in these scenarios is the role that reflection and mentoring play in maximising the learning from such an opportunity. Learning does not typically happen in a vacuum. Experiences are relived, remembered and re-experienced through

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discussion, critique and critical thinking. Often these acts happen in collaboration with another, who is knowledgeable of the context and the situation.

These considerations are interesting to draw upon in light of the context I found myself in when I started as a teacher educator in the Faculty of Education at Monash University in 2010. While I had been involved in sessional university work over the previous 3 years at a university interstate, this was my first academic appointment. I had very little understanding about where to even begin in this space, but I did quickly discover that a number of the units I had been allocated to were being taught off campus, in schools, and colleagues were very keen to know if I would continue these school-based experiences. I said, of course, why not? It was certainly a starting point and seemed like an opportunity that would be engaging and authentic to pre-service teachers, with learning and teaching coming to life.

School-based experiences are just as they sound—experiences that enable engagement with learning and teaching in school settings. They are different from practicum experiences in that they tend to be over shorter periods of time, in small groups and with a more focused purpose in mind. The context for which I found myself developing and implementing school-based experiences will be explained in more detail later in this chapter. However, in brief, my units were based in classrooms weekly or fortnightly for around an hour with pre-service teachers working in pairs to enact learning opportunities for small groups of students based on what they were focusing on in the particular academic unit. There are currently teacher education programs both nationally (e.g. Watson, Hay, Hellyer, Stuckey, & Woolnough, 2008) and internationally (e.g. Hardy, 1999; Moseley, Ramsey & Ruff, 2004) that have incorporated school-based experiences to support quality learning and teaching practices. I have seen the value of these opportunities for pre-service teachers first hand, and research tells us similar things (e.g. Buitink, 2009). For example, Moseley et al. (2004) discovered that pre-service teacher participation in their version of school-based experiences was beneficial in the construction of pedagogical content knowledge, but also, in their particular context, fostered positive attitudes and identity (in this case, sense of self as a future teacher of science) towards learning and teaching.

The impact of school-based experiences on pre-service teachers is relatively well documented. What is not so well understood is how teacher educators negotiate this space to make the most of this opportunity, not only in terms of maximising the learning of the pre-service teachers, but in how it informs their own thinking and practice. This chapter explores my own experiences of being thrown into the deep end and needing to (re)navigate the classroom as a newly minted teacher educator. It adds further insights to the extensive body of literature that exists around the transition from teacher to teacher educators, which grapples with notions of becoming, belonging and practising in this new space (e.g. Williams, Ritter & Bullock, 2012). This work is an opportunity to unravel the complexities of working in the professional experience space more broadly (in this case, through the use of school-based experiences) and further highlights the necessity of working differently (in this instance, choosing to base my academic units in a classroom setting) as a way to engage with this challenging and nuanced work.

Positioning the Context

Before continuing much further, in better understanding this chapter and its purpose, it is useful if I provide some insights into the context in which I have positioned this research and the documentation processes I have used. Below I introduce the first of six narrative sequences. These storied accounts span a period of 7 years and are based on journal entries from the time that have been reconsidered and reshaped to best capture the particular emphasis of this work. In enacting this approach, I draw on Lawrence-Lightfoot's (with Hoffman Davis, 1997) thinking about narrative, which she described as *portraiture*. Portraiture draws on a range of data sets, in this case lived experiences and formal reflections, to weave together more holistic and rich insights.

This first narrative provides some background to how I initially understood the notion of school-based experiences, what I imagined this looked like in practice and why I thought this was a beneficial approach to initial teacher education. It was written from a place of having just been employed as a science teacher educator with a focus on primary school education and preparing for my first semester in this role.

May 2010

I submitted my PhD thesis in the afternoon before we jumped into our heavily laden ute and made the crossing of the Nullarbor (a 1100 km stretch of road running east-west in a desert region situated in central to western Australia) for the sixth and last time. Making our way back to the east where I left as a teacher and return as a teacher educator. I arrived in the west with that common mix of excitement and nerves about the unknown ahead and leave feeling the same way, but with a completely different adventure ahead - one of being an academic and all that brings. It might seem like I write that with some sense of authority, but I still don't really know what means or what it will actually look like! At the moment, what lay ahead is more of a rough sketch than a carefully detailed illustration, but that will come. What I do know is that school-based experiences are part of the mix. I love the idea of basing my science education units in local primary schools. What's not to love, right? An opportunity for my students to put into practice the things we will be thinking about and discussing through our workshops as well as building confidence in working in collaborative ways with primary school kids. Science will be the vehicle for a lot of learning and teaching, both personally (in the sense of who they are as a teacher and what education means to them) and professionally (more the act of developing and implementing learning experiences). I really think the Monash students will see the spark that science brings to children and the curiosity and engagement that it engenders and my wish is that it will be contagious! I love the idea of all of this for selfish reasons too. It will be a chance for me to be in a place where I get great energy from and learn a lot about my own approaches to learning and teaching – the classroom. I'm not that long out of being a classroom teacher full-time and in some ways I haven't left. The last three years saw me in primary school classrooms regularly, for research and casual relief teaching work. But this experience will offer a different perspective again. I'm imaging a birds' eye view of all that is happening and the rich, reflective discussions that may flow from these first-hand experiences. Another aspect of what lays ahead I also know about is that the groups I will be working with in the coming semester are Bachelor of Education (primary) students in their first year of the course and Graduate Diploma of Education students who will be about halfway through their intense year of learning to be a teacher. So while they will have had some professional experiences prior to working with me, in the form of the usual practicum (I think it will be five days for the B.Ed. students and 25 days for the Grad Dip students), they still have had

limited time and opportunities to really immerse themselves in classrooms and schools. I'm aware of that shift in thinking about education from our perspective as a student, which we have all had long apprenticeships in, to the perspective of being a teacher, moving to the other side of the desk. Who knows how this will pan out, but this approach certainly seems like an innovative way to further induct students into the work of a teacher. Time, and my pauses for thought to reflect on and make sense of this, will tell.

With some clarification around the context of this work, it is important to restate that this chapter is a representation of my experience as a teacher educator developing not only in the area of science education, but the multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary space of professional experience. While science education plays an important role, it is much more a contextual feature than a defining characteristic of this work. The following four narratives play out over a period of two years and I use this series of reflections to reconstruct my lived experience of (re)navigating the classroom as a teacher educator. Each narrative is followed by interpretations intended to provide additional insights into identity development and notions of becoming a teacher educator. These reflections speak to times that represent the achievements and the challenges I faced as I grappled with thinking more deeply and differently about teacher education and the role of professional experience within it. The chapter ends with the sixth, and final narrative, which looks back on these stories after a number of years to highlight the value of this approach to professional experience for the learner and their learning, and in this case, as part of their journey to becoming a teacher and intertwines with my own journey to becoming a teacher educator.

Who Am I? Bringing Meaning to This Context

When I last wrote about my experiences and learning in the professional experience space (Fitzgerald, 2017), it was through the lens of border crossing (as articulated by Aikenhead, 1996). I was grappling with my role co-ordinating professional experience in international contexts and navigating my way of *becoming* through a process of negotiating the constant shifting between being a learner and teacher/leader. In that circumstance, border crossing was an appropriate frame for analysis as it articulated the sense of movement and shape shifting that I was encountering as I lead a new initiative for the Faculty. Fast forward to now and my experience as Director of Professional Experience: I look back on my understandings of and connections with the professional experience space in a different light. The following extract from my previous writing (Fitzgerald, 2017) captures where I got to in my thinking.

> As I reflect on the continuous shifting that occurred between my roles of learner and leader, it becomes apparent that this experience was much less about changing myself to manage a situation, and much more about adopting a constantly evolving sense of self. My narratives may give a sense of an evolution of my identity in these border-crossing spaces that is linear or progressive. The reality was, however, that I was required to draw upon aspects of being a learner and a leader all of the time. It was just that different dimensions of these identities were required to emerge, to be foregrounded, at different times for different purposes. The experiences reflected upon in these narratives certainly speak to Kamler and

> Thomson's (2006) understandings of identity, which suggest that this construct is plural in nature and that multiple identities may form in response to specific contexts and experiences. Of particular interest to this narrative, and the development of my own identity as a learner and a leader of the IPE [International Professional Experience] program, is the notion that identity is not fixed, but always under construction, being made and remade as we live out an experience (Kamler & Thomson, 2006).
>
> (Fitzgerald, 2017, p. 25)

It is from this place that I pick up the loose threads and delve into the area of identity, using Kamler and Thomson's (2006) work as a guide, rather than border crossing as I did previously. I do this as a way of further considering my role as a teacher educator and the continual pull I experience between being a learner and a teacher. In some ways this focus builds upon Zeichner's (2005) pivotal work highlighting his own personal journey to becoming a teacher educator. This is an opportunity to reveal and ruminate on what the development of my own professional identify as a teacher of teachers, or second-order practitioner (Murray & Male, 2005), means for not only me and my sense of self, but how this reverberates down to the pre-service teachers I work with, and to their development as future teachers. As someone who has been invested in professional experiences in various iterations and guises over a significant period of time, this becomes the context in which identity will be examined in this chapter.

Following this section are four narratives that trace my work as a teacher educator (with primary science education as the context) over two years, which also happen to coincide with the beginning of my academic career. They capture my lived experiences of providing pre-service teachers with professional experience opportunities in the form of school-based experiences as part of an academic unit focused on science learning and teaching in the primary years. But more than that, these narratives provide insights into how I was thinking and responding to this approach over time as well as revealing my burgeoning identity in the process of becoming a teacher educator. Emerging from this sequence is a characterisation of the steep learning curve that I was engaging with as part of my identify formation. Murray and Male's (2005) work connects the development of identity as moving between exhilarating and terrifying, which I can certainly relate to. However, through this chapter, I characterise my evolving identity as evoking a variety of emotions over time ranging from *discomfort* to *comfort* and *content* to *discontent*. Capturing this evolution reinforces Kamler and Thomson's (2006) view of identity as being, in a sense, a continual work-in-progress. My interpretations of these narratives shed light on my own personal journey to becoming a teacher educator and the role that professional experience had in challenging me to question, define and redefine what matters in the preparation of future teachers and why.

DISCOMFORT: Finding My Feet

June 2010

Not sure if the honeymoon is over, but the gloss of naïve optimism has certainly dulled slightly. This sounds a bit dramatic I know, it is probably more that the reality of the work and my new role has kicked in. It is definitely sleeves up now and time to make school-based experiences happen. I know that this has all happened before and very successfully (the baton wouldn't have been passed otherwise!), but I am now left to my own devices and feel a bit alone in the process. My sense is that I am now perceived as the academic overseeing this experience, so it is my responsibility. Luckily I love nutting out logistics! I use love loosely here, but this part of a process doesn't overwhelm me. I enjoy piecing the parts of the puzzle together to come up with a workable solution. Some of the considerations that are at the front of my mind include transport issues, parking at the schools, decisions about the materials we will need to bring, matching university timetabling with school times, putting risk management processes in place and the most appropriate ways to distribute students across classes. For example, the Grad Dip cohort is to be divided into three groups of forty students over a day and a half and keeping in mind that the school we are working with only has a couple of hundred students. See the logistical juggle?! For me, these are just details to work with and a process to move through. The bigger consideration is around the structure of the program and what the students will be doing during their school-based experiences, how they will do this and, importantly, why. Alongside this I need to also consider the learning opportunities and scaffolding I provide for my students, to support them in being able to subsequently support and enhance the primary school children's experience of learning science. It is quite the cycle! At this point, the confidence driving my relative youth in this space seems to be pushing me through. I know no better! I have an implicit trust that things will work out as others have experienced this as successful and as a valuable approach to continue. I also have a personal sense that this really must result in a powerful learning experience for our students and is worthy to pursue. But just under the veneer, I know I have self-doubts lurking. Being new to teacher education, I question that I will be taken seriously by my students, let alone the teachers in the schools we will work with. I am just pushing 30, am regularly mistaken as a pre-service teacher in the schools I visit, do not have decades of school experiences under my belt and haven't even been in the state for the last three and a bit years … what would I know? I don't want to scratch too hard just yet as I'm worried the stitching will come undone and the stuffing will all fall out, but if I let my mind wander there for a moment, I do worry that I lack any street cred to actually pull this off.

In revisiting this reflection, I am sharply reminded of what it feels like to be pushed outside your comfort zone. You do everything you can to cling onto some semblance of the familiar—an understandable coping strategy. I am looking back at my new-to-academia self here and am reminded of my many observations of pre-service teachers in the classroom since this time. Often there is a moment when you realise that while they have put hours into planning a very well thought out lesson, they have focused entirely on the teaching processes and have not really considered what the learner will be doing. In the case of this narrative, I was focusing energy on getting the logistical aspects of this work in order, which are important in terms of creating a seamless experience for both the students and the schools, but are a much lower priority than identifying the values and intentions underpinning this new (to me) approach. At this point, I note that there is a growing awareness of the duality that exists within this role in terms of supporting the pre-service teachers' learning alongside the school students' learning. Interestingly, this duality exists for all teacher educators—we

are all preparing our pre-service teachers to support student learning—but it is not something that I have been so acutely mindful of in other units because it is easy to feel one step removed from the realities of the classroom. In this instance, the inclusion of a school-based component hones the focus and brings the purpose of my practice to the forefront.

In reading this reflection, I am also reminded of a saying which suggests that the loneliest place to be by yourself is in the middle of a big crowd or, in this instance, a big organisation. With everyone busy with their own responsibilities, there is often an implicit sense of trust that you will step up to the mark, use your initiative and reach out for assistance if needed. While that is flattering to a point, it highlights that targeted support is still necessary in finding your way in a new role. Another contextual feature that is evident here is a sense of identity, which is tangled up in issues related to self-doubt. It is not uncommon for early career academics to feel like an imposter or somewhat fraudulent in their new role and setting. In this instance, it is further highlighted through the formation of relationships with a school and concern about how my position as a teacher educator will be perceived. While I had comfortably spent time building relationships in a number of different schools, there was something different about doing that in this new role. It may have been the sense that I was presenting myself as having some sort of expertise and authority because I was from a university or that I would be perceived as existing in an 'ivory tower' and disconnected from the realities of the classroom. I was also acutely aware of my age and the impression that this might give, further reinforcing these concerns.

COMFORT: Feeling at Home

May 2011

So my fears were unfounded. A year into working as a teacher educator in general and using a school-based approach specifically, I haven't been cast out as an interloper or accused of not having anything to offer (at least not to my face!). Having this lived experience has confirmed what I originally suspected. I can now say with insight that these experiences provide students with an enriched and enlivened introduction to science learning and teaching, which impacts their perceived confidence and competence in this area. I am noticing this not only anecdotally, but through some research I have been doing alongside my teaching, to better understand the impact. I am certainly no longer bogged down by concerns around logistics because I understand the routines now and what is needed (or not) to make things work. This is not to say that students don't still enter into these school-based units with some trepidation, but I have noticed that confidence is catchy! It seems that if I come across as being in control and managing things effectively then the students have trust in that. I have a level of confidence now where I can be open with the students about what this experience might look and feel like. For example, I can let them know that this is a messy and uncertain process with no one right way to approach it (a snapshot of what teaching can be like), but that things will come together. And what is the worst that can happen anyway? The activity doesn't work or a child disengages entirely? I am never far away if things unfold in unplanned ways, although I haven't quite reconciled for myself what my role is as the students go about engaging with their small groups of school kids. I feel a bit useless at times. A circling satellite. Well, maybe not a satellite, as I'm not trying to step in and communicate. This is

their learning and teaching sequence to facilitate and manage. Maybe this is my own internal battle, as I am used to being active and engaged in the classroom – participating and leading – but I know that I need to not be that person in this context. Or do I? Should I be pointing out the possible opportunities in the moment or offering suggestions for ways to proceed with an outcome or asking the probing questions to further learning? Or are these the points that I can be raising during the debriefing session? I have leaned towards the latter, but it is something that I am still certainly grappling with. What I have also realised is that the current approach to what happens in the hour or so that the Monash students are facilitating is not quite right. It runs directly counter to a key message from the unit, which is primary science education is more than 'fun' activities. It can be that, but there still needs to be strong connections to learning and relevance to the students' lives. Authentic and meaningful are important considerations, so a rethink from my end is in order.

This reflection is characterised by a growing sense of self as a teacher educator, evidenced by being able to move outside of my comfort zone (e.g. moving my focus beyond the logistics) and knowing how to better support the pre-service teachers in terms of their own anxieties and uncertainties with this experience. This was also evident in the deeper thinking I was doing around the value of the school-based approach and identifying where there may be some discordance between some of my beliefs around quality education and how this was being enacted through this experience. There also seems to be an emerging discordance between my practice in and outside of the classroom setting. My sense is that while I am developing an identity as a teacher educator, which is a completely new way of seeing myself, I already have a fixed identity connected with the classroom. However, it is not appropriate to enact that way of being in this context. It is a space that I have been comfortable and confident as a teacher in, but now find myself grappling with uncertainty about how to be and act. Therefore, I am in a period of having to reimagine and readjust who I am in the classroom—no longer the teacher, but the teacher educator instead, which is a theme that has been explored in other research focused on this transition period (e.g. Williams, 2013).

On the surface, this reflection vibrantly captures an increased sense of belonging and connectedness in my role as teacher educator. But scratch a little deeper and my sense of how I belong and connect in the classroom is still under question. This is a really interesting time in terms of how I perceive myself as an educator with one foot becoming more firmly planted in a tertiary setting, while the other one seems to be losing some grip in the school setting after a significant period of being steadfastly planted there. I think for many teacher educators as they move from classroom to lecture theatre, there is a period of transition and a withdrawal of connection with one setting to enable connection with the other. But in this instance, the classroom is proving to be a disruptor in my own transition as I remain connected to both settings, though not in the ways that I have previously known. There is a complexity at play here that is hard to capture and distil. But, for me, it is raising questions about how teacher educators can remain current and connected with teachers and schools while still applying their academic lens to these sites through critique of the state and structures of education. We do not want teacher educators to lose their empathy and understanding for the life and times of a school and being a teacher, but likewise

we do not want to diminish the value they bring in their push to look at education differently.

CONTENT: Locating the Learning

November 2011

This is no news flash, but reflection really is a powerful tool. Taking some time to think and chat with colleagues about the approach to the school-based experiences has enabled me to make some significant changes for the better. Another experience that has had an influence in this period has been stepping into a different context – supporting a different cohort of students on a practicum in the Cook Islands – during this last semester. My sense is that this had an impact on my thinking as I was seeing (reliving!) first hand the trials and tribulations of learning to teach. In bringing this knowledge back to the school-based experiences I was facilitating, what I started to realise is that I was falling into that old trap of focusing on the teaching rather than the learning and dragging the students along on that ride. In this context, the impact is twofold in a sense. For example, the focus had been on what was I *teaching* and what were the Monash students *teaching* instead of what were the Monash students *learning* about science learning and teaching and what were the school students *learning* in science. This signals a significant shift in emphasis. To make this shift has required me to shine the spotlight on myself and the beliefs and assumptions that I carry around to better understand my own patterns of practice. By having a handle on this, I can better articulate to my students why I do what I do and why I believe what I believe constitutes quality science education. This enables the students to draw on these insights and accommodate them into their own ways of being and doing (or not).

Another realisation was the need to reimagine what the school-based experience structure looked like to further enable this shift from being teaching-focused to learning-focused. The most recent iteration has drawn on the 5E inquiry model (see Bybee et al., 2006), which is commonly used in science education to structure learning sequences and is the backbone of a primary science education resource used in classrooms nationwide, *Primary Connections*. I supported the students by immersing them in an E (e.g. engage, elaborate) experience both theoretically and practically before they applied this learning to a relevant E experience with their small groups of students. Structurally, I also made a change this semester by having the students on campus one week to have their learning experience and then based in a local primary school the next week to enact the learning experience they had planned. This meant that the students were in the classroom six times over the semester and implemented a complete sequence of science learning experiences using the 5E model. These adjustments have helped me to clarify my own role in this space. I feel reassured about my decision to stand back during my students' teaching time and to embrace the opportunity to listen, look and learn. During this time, I scribble notes about things to raise during the reflection section that might encourage the students to think more deeply about their own practices. 18 months of experience in this in-between space – facilitating a closing of the gap for these students between theory and practice in science education specifically – has helped me to understand when to push thinking, where, for what purpose and why. And equally, when not to.

This reflection starts to capture a growing sense of control in this situation and an increased understanding of how to use school-based experiences to maximise the learning for the pre-service teachers. In getting to this point, it is evident that the act of reflection has been an important way to support the ways in which I can navigate around this new role and space. But it is an iterative process and one that

takes time as well as a willingness to wrestle around with the challenges, so that they can be reimagined or reframed as possibilities. Changes in practice do not happen in a vacuum. The previous reflection alludes to the use of research to inform my practice. While not mentioned directly here, informal discussions with the pre-service teachers, teachers at the schools and colleagues all feed into the ways I think about and act on improving this experience. Another interesting advance is a better alignment between the school-based experiences and the realities of classroom, with a stronger sense of mirroring, for example, planning practices and even the timing of learning experiences. This suggests that I am better harnessing my knowledge of learning and teaching to provide the pre-service teachers with a more authentic experience of classroom practice, that they might be able to draw upon and use in the future.

As teacher educators, we are certainly like bower birds when it comes to where we draw inspiration and ideas from, to inform what we do and how we think about what we do. In this narrative, I have drawn insights from another professional experience opportunity to help me better understand the challenges pre-service teachers face as they are learning to teach, and to consider some of the common pitfalls experienced during these early days in the classroom. What is particularly powerful about these insights is that they are not conversations in passing, but my lived experience of observing pre-service teachers in action. This was my first experience of participating in an international professional experience (e.g. in the Cook Islands) and in many ways it had quite a profound impact—it was like a light bulb moment. My learning certainly had a direct impact on how I subsequently thought about the school-based experiences and what could be changed to better utilise the context, both the school environment and the needs of the pre-service teachers. This impact was also evident in my recognition that I could make some structural changes to the program to better realise the value of being in the classroom, as well as maximise the learning that takes place in a broader context (e.g. practicum experiences). This is important because there is a greater realisation that I am not just preparing the pre-service teachers for success in this unit, but for their practicum experiences and beyond. This also reflects my increased sense of ownership of this space and ability to make decisions to improve the experience of all concerned – students, teachers, pre-service teachers and teacher educators.

DISCONTENT: Questioning the Intent

June 2012

The SETU (Student Evaluation of Teaching and Unit) feedback is brimming with positives, one of the school-based units received a 'purple letter' from the Vice-Provost (Learning and Teaching) placing it in the top 5% of units in the university for that given semester, based on student satisfaction. The students are also completing the unit with an increased sense of confidence and competence in primary science education. Two years on and by these counts things are humming along. But I'm not entirely happy, which I know makes me sound incredibly hard to please. I have become increasingly aware of the disconnect that

exists between what the Monash students are doing with their small groups and how this is positioned in relation to the learning happening at both a classroom and school-based level. Understandably, many teachers will sit back and use the time for planning or preparation, but it means that this experience exists in isolation and is disconnected from the bigger learning picture in the school. From my teacher educator perspective, it also disrupts a key message I share about science education, which is that science can be a vehicle for learning, and to think of science as a specialist subject removes this opportunity. This is not how science exists out there in the world and it can reinforce the message that science is practised only by specialists rather than being a lens that anyone can access as a way to make sense of their lives, their environment, the issues they face and the decisions they make. Again, understandably but somewhat disappointingly too, it seems that some of the teachers and schools who work with us in this program see this experience as ticking their science box for the year. With all this in mind, I have been starting to rummage around with the idea that the school-based experiences may be inadvertently reinforcing messages that I don't believe underpin quality learning and teaching. A possible resolution is working more closely with the leadership teams at the schools to raise the possibility of thinking differently about the approach. If it was more interconnected with the learning happening in the classroom and involved the teacher to a greater degree, which could help to empower and re-engage them to a greater degree in science education, this approach would potentially provide an opportunity for teacher professional learning. From these considerations re-emerges for me the old chestnut of why would principals or classroom teachers want to listen to me. So there are certainly some issues with my own confidence in feeling that I could elicit that sort of buy-in and that people would want to come on board. This begs the question: if they don't want to come on board, do I make a call to move away from working with them as partners, as their values and views are out of kilter with my own? A decision like this is never easy because of the energies expended from both sides to develop and maintain the relationship over time, but all good things do have an endpoint. It also gets me thinking about whose problem this really is and perhaps all the signposts point to me. When my students graduate they will most likely be faced with these views and attitudes from their colleagues, so this might actually suggest that as a teacher educator part of my role is to assist them in understanding how to navigate and negotiate these realities to ensure quality approaches shine through.

This reflection starts to reveal some of the challenges inherent in partnership work. One of the particularly difficult bumps in the road, which is evident in my experiences shared above, is when there is a mismatch in values. In this instance, it might not be so much about values as it is about the intentions of the school-based program and what each stakeholder is hoping to gain from the experience. While my grappling with this challenge comes from a place of continual improvement, if I want to see a realignment of values and intentions then I need to take this out of my own head and engage key people in discussions about where this partnership is heading and what we collectively want to achieve. This highlights a missed opportunity, which should have been embedded in the earlier aspects of my practice as these relationships started. I incorrectly made assumptions, based most likely on a combination of my own naïve sense that we would have a shared vision, that the partnerships were inherited as long standing, and from various challenges due to my being new in the role. Far from this being a criticism, it is much more of a critique of the importance of carefully considering the ways in which a partnership is set up, as these early discussions and exchanges form the foundation for a quality experience for all into the future.

It is interesting to consider partnership work as not only a practice, but embedded in place. Context certainly impacts on how we might consider our needs and goals in a partnership, but it also raises questions about the level of awareness we might bring. In this instance, I certainly had some insider knowledge and experiences of schools that helped me to interpret what their needs may be. It is worth considering, however, the difficulties that principals and teachers have imaging what the needs of a teacher education course are other than drawing on them as a location for professional experience. This suggests that not only are shared purposes and visions a necessary condition of a partnership, but that shared understandings and experiences of each others' contexts are also essential. Based on my current work and research in the professional experience space (Fitzgerald, 2017), notions of border crossing and the roles we take on to help or hinder these crossings come to mind. While there is a level of negotiation and compromise that can be reached between people in the partnership, there is a point at which as an individual you need to be cognisant of adopting different ways of being and acting to suit the situation. While self-doubt might be creeping in and self-worth starts to be questioned, there is recognition in the closing lines of the reflection above that I need to find a way to draw upon these challenges and reframe them as opportunities for learning. It is only by playing around and grappling with the greyness at the borders that I came to an understanding of this.

Making Sense of It All

Experience may certainly be a fantastic teacher, but it is the ability to reflect on and critically examine such experiences where much of the value lies. This chapter has drawn upon professional experience, in this case in the form of school-based experiences, as a context for documenting a personal journey of becoming. This has been considered, however, from the perspective of a teacher educator rather than the usually reported vantage point of the pre-service teacher. What became increasingly clear to me through this reflective process is the role that engaging with (and supporting pre-service teachers to engage with) a form of professional experience had in shaping my own practices, and in how I view myself as a practitioner. This subsequently influenced my ways of preparing future teachers, in this case, for the learning and teaching of science in primary settings. Using this different lens to consider the role and value of professional experience brings with it some challenges and complexities, particularly in relation to the relevance and applicability of this work.

In terms of my own learning, the embedding of professional experience in my own approach to learning and teaching acted to both challenge me about, and keep me connected to, the teaching profession. Part of the challenge for me lay in working in an environment where I felt connected as a teacher but needed to reimagine who I was in that space, and how it informed my practices. The connectedness and classroom currency, however, reminded me as a teacher educator about what matters in terms

of preparing pre-service teachers for the profession (in this case with a focus on science education). The use of professional experience as a learning and teaching tool essentially pointed out the gaps and inconsistencies in my ideologies (sometimes I was not practising what I was preaching) and honed my ability to articulate my own practice, which in turn supports pre-service teachers in the development of their own identities as future teachers.

Identity is a useful frame for making sense of this research as this work captures the realities of grappling with my own practices through a series of raw and genuine narratives that draw on professional experience as a context for learning and growth. While Kamler and Thomson's (2006) work around identity draws out the notion of multiple identities, this was not as evident on reflection in these series of events as it was in my lived experiences in the international professional experience program (see Fitzgerald, 2017). I didn't sense the sharp tug of being required to move between and within spaces to interpret and respond to what was happening, but more a gentle evolution in relation to a growing sense of self. More akin to Kamler and Thomson's (2006) thoughts was certainly identification with my identity as a teacher educator as being under construction. This work takes steps towards adding further insights to ways of thinking about how we prepare teacher educators for their (often new) roles and highlights the ways in which professional experiences can continue to inform this development.

In considering the relevance and applicability of this chapter, which documents a highly contextualised and personal journey, to the work of others, three key learnings emerge for me. First, there needs to greater acknowledgement of the powerful role that professional experience in its broadest sense (looking well and truly beyond just the practicum) can have in challenging ideas about learning and teaching, not just for pre-service teachers but for teacher educators too. Second, reflecting deeply and critically on your own practice and shining a light on your own incongruences creates an empathy with the experiences of pre-service teachers as they start to engage with the professional experience space and develop their own teacher identity. Third, and lastly, thinking differently about professional experience and the role that a complementary approach to practicum can play, provides an entry point to maintain a currency to our practice that is difficult to achieve if we continue to operate in isolation from the realities of the classroom.

Looking Back

November 2017

Two years ago, I bumped into some of the students from the last unit I had worked in that incorporated school-based experiences. Following a round of hugs, we had a great chat about that experience and what they had learnt. They had kept an eye out for me in their unit guides for the rest of their time in the course hoping that we would have a chance to work together again. While it is lovely to be liked, this is not a popularity contest. I was genuinely interested in why the unit had mattered so much to them. They were warm, open and shared a range of insights, but their thoughts boiled down to three key points. Firstly,

they had developed and implemented a unit of work positioned within the learning area of science that was driven by their small group of students' interest and need. There was a real sense of achievement tangled up in this and they progressed through the rest of the course, including their practicums, feeling secure in the knowledge that they had the abilities to plan and enact lessons in meaningful ways. Secondly, any nerves they felt about the science education totally dissipated and they were able to see science as a context for supporting literacy and numeracy learning, which is a high priority for many in primary education. They certainly felt more confident and competent in themselves to engage in science as a co-learner with their students and with a level of curiosity and questioning about how science helps us to make sense of our lives. Thirdly, the approach to the unit enabled them to form strong bonds with their teaching partner as well as with others within the group because of this shared experience. These peers became important go-to people for support through the course as well as partners for group work tasks in other units. There was also a sense that they viewed each other as future colleagues and would be supportive in this capacity as they graduated and moved into teaching positions. While this feedback is from such a small group, it does mirror findings from data that I collected during that period. Importantly, it was an experience that mattered to and impacted on those students at that time. Circumstance and context, namely large cohorts and equity and access issues for online students, have since conspired and become a barrier to me reintroducing school-based experiences to my practice. Instead, I have experimented with different ways to reach back into the classroom and bring the teacher voice into my units, for example, using podcasts, case studies of practice written by teachers, having teachers as guest speakers about a particular issue or topic, and holding panel discussion that enable questions and answers about practice. At a Faculty-level, we are experiencing a focus on co-teaching (which is explored in other chapters of this book) as a way to maintain currency in and with the teaching profession. The importance of bringing practice to life through professional experiences, and more broadly across initial teacher education courses, is not to be underestimated. Doing it using different approaches in different units with different intents in mind, is critical if we are to turn out well-prepared graduates. As I consider my own learning as explored through this chapter, I recognise that to achieve this goal we, as teacher educators, need to be brave in trying new things, to learn from our mistakes, to model quality practice and to be prepared to reflect openly and honestly about what we do and why.

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