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Attracting and Keeping the Best Teachers

Issues and Opportunities

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Check for updates

Anna Sullivan, Bruce Johnson, and Michele Simons

Abstract This chapter establishes the importance of attracting and retaining quality teachers to the profession. The chapter outlines emerging international concerns about changes in the teacher labour market and the importance of promoting early career teacher retention as demand for teachers intensifies. The chapter outlines the structure of the book and briefly describes each chapter and the contributions they make to the overall aims of the book.

1.1 Introduction

Effective planning and management of the teacher workforce is an ongoing concern of governments and education systems due to the difficulties of predicting the impact of economic, demographic and social factors on teacher supply and demand. Even sophisticated attempts at modelling teacher supply and demand are confounded by unpredictable changes in:

- The age, gender and location of qualified teachers seeking employment
- The numbers enrolling in teacher education courses and attrition levels from those courses
- Teachers' retirement intentions and behaviour across different locations, schooling levels and subject fields
- 'Non-retirement separations' or teacher attrition rates
- Teacher mobility across, and migration into, different countries

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- Student enrolments at different locations and schooling levels and within different education systems
- Student subject choices

In this introductory chapter, we highlight the extent of the problem of teacher attrition by drawing on research from developed countries and OECD projections for developing countries. We do this to establish the underlying rationale for this book – that downward trends in the supply of teachers, coupled with dramatic rises in the demand for teachers, necessitate an urgent reappraisal of how schooling systems and individual schools can retain quality teachers. We examine why the problems associated with attracting and retaining teachers to the profession continue to exist despite efforts to address the problems. To do this, we focus on retention because it is one of the factors that is most responsive to positive intervention in the complex field of teacher workforce management.

The retention of teachers in the profession continues to be an important issue in many countries (Craig 2017). Concerns about teacher shortages, the costs associated with teacher attrition and the impact of high teacher turnover on student achievement dominate the literature (e.g. Sutcher et al. 2016). In particular, teacher attrition is a major social, economic and educational problem because:

- Educating teachers who leave the profession early is a wasteful and inefficient use of public funds.
- Educational funding is diverted from school resources and facilities to recruitment and replacement.
- Schools are destabilised and disrupted by high staff turnover.
- Schools lose the expertise of new, high-achieving graduates.
- Student learning is compromised.
- The individual's costs are high when graduates' personal and career aspirations and plans are thwarted due to a negative transition to the teaching profession.

A recent collation of international research on teacher attrition 'International teacher attrition: multiperspective views' (Craig 2017) reported research on why teachers leave the profession. Some of these studies reported that teachers leaving the profession might be a positive move on a personal level (Smith and Ulvik 2017; Yinon and Orland-Barak 2017). This builds on earlier research that examines the tensions between attrition as a form of personal resilience and the situated and systemic failures to better support teachers to meet their professional and personal requirements (Sullivan and Johnson 2012). However, as Kelchtermans (2017) argues, teacher attrition and retention are interconnected as an 'educational issue', and there is a 'need to prevent good teachers from leaving the job for the wrong reasons' (p. 961). This need to retain good teachers is more pressing because of a diminishing supply of teachers.

The problem of teacher supply is a worldwide issue. There are extensive media reports of a current and impending teacher supply crisis in Germany (Isenson 2018), Sweden (Local 2017), Australia (Smith 2018), the United States (Picchi 2018), New Zealand (Newshub Staff 2018) and England (Syal 2018). The issue is so serious that the OECD has published the following projections of anticipated teacher shortages:

By 2030, countries must recruit a total of 68.8 million teachers: 24.4 million primary school teachers and 44.4 million secondary school teachers …

Of the 24.4 million teachers needed for universal primary education (UPE), 21 million will replace teachers who leave the workforce. The remaining 3.4 million, however, are additional teachers who are needed to expand access to school and underwrite education quality by reducing the numbers of children in each class to a maximum of 40.

The need for additional teachers is even greater at the secondary level, with a total of 44.4 million teachers need by 2030, of which 27.6 million are to replace those who leave and an additional 16.7 million to ensure that every pupil is in a classroom with no more than 25 students per teacher on average. (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2016, p. 1)

Whilst these figures are global projections, the nature and extent of teacher shortages vary across and within countries. There are teacher shortages in certain subjects, geographical areas, levels of schooling and in 'hard-to-staff' schools. For example:

- There are widespread shortages of mathematics and science teachers in England (Foster 2018), the United States (Sutcher et al. 2016), New Zealand (New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association 2018) and Australia (Weldon 2015).
- Countries like Germany are experiencing a shortage of primary school teachers (Isenson 2018).
- There are teacher shortages in 'hard-to-staff', low-SES schools in the United States (Sutcher et al. 2016), England (Foster 2018) and Australia (Weldon 2015).

The overall shortage of teachers is due to an increased demand for and decreased supply of teachers. A growing population is contributing significantly to the demand for more teachers in many countries (e.g. Sutcher et al. 2016; UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2016; Weldon 2015). Compounding the demand for more teachers is a waning supply of teachers because (a) fewer people are attracted to the profession of teaching (Bahr and Ferreira 2018; Foster 2018) and (b) too many teachers are leaving the profession before retirement (Sutcher et al. 2016). Overall, these supply and demand pressures are contributing to a shortage of teachers in many jurisdictions.

The problem of teacher attrition has been well researched, yet recently it has been argued that 'Teacher attrition, [is] a perennial problem receiving heightened attention due to its intensity, complexity, and spread' (Craig 2017, p. 859). Whilst the extent of teacher attrition in some countries is unclear due to inadequate datasets (den Brok et al. 2017; Weldon 2018), we understand many of the reasons for high attrition rates. In countries like Australia, for example, major policy changes have been introduced over the last decade. These include developing a national curriculum, implementing a National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and creating the 'My School' website to compare schools and results. More recent initiatives have targeted teacher quality and school performance. In many cases, these policy initiatives closely resemble those in other countries and constitute what Lingard (2014) calls 'policy plagiarism'. These changes have had a

profound effect on teachers and the conditions under which they work. There is now a greater emphasis in Australia on:

- School markets
- Test-based accountability
- Literacy and numeracy
- School 'winners' and 'losers'
- Criticism of teacher quality
- Performance pay
- School autonomy
- Undermining of the concept of public education (Graham 2013, p. 5)

These problems are shared in other countries, and they are compounded by cultural and structural issues. For example, teaching is largely recognised as a feminised profession and predominantly comprised of women (Moreau 2019). Moreau (2019) points to the body of research that has 'explored more specifically their career progression, including in relation to the conflicting relationship between paid and unpaid work and to how recruitment and promotion criteria and more broadly school cultures disadvantage women' (p. 5). She explains that the 'overall proportion of women in teaching fluctuates considerably across segments of the teaching labour market with, however, women consistently concentrating in the less prestigious and (financially) less rewarding segments' (p. 9).

A variety of studies of teachers' employment patterns and general welfare suggests that the effects of the problems for teachers have been profound. For example, in Australia:

- Up to 50% of new graduates leave the profession within 5 years of entry (Gallant and Riley 2014).
- Many low-SES and remote schools continue to be 'hard to staff' (Sullivan and Johnson 2012).
- The cost of mental health services for teachers doubled from 2010 to 2014 (ABC News 2015).
- Over a half of the teachers responding to a survey about student behaviour reported being stressed (Sullivan et al. 2013).

In times of teacher shortages, education systems 'cope' in a variety of ways by increasing class sizes (Sutcher et al. 2016), recruiting less qualified teachers (Foster 2018; Sutcher et al. 2016) and allocating teachers to teach outside of their field of expertise (Weldon 2016). Clearly, these ways of addressing a lack of teachers undermine the quality of education.

Governments have introduced policy initiatives that focus on increasing the teacher workforce by attending to the attraction of 'quality' teachers, but they have been criticised for not attending to teacher retention. For example, the government policy responses in many states in the United States, which are experiencing serious teacher shortages, have typically focused on new teacher recruitment and training, but there has been a lack of focus on retaining teachers (Sutcher et al. 2016). There have been moves to quickly recruit new teachers via 'employment-based pathways'

such as Teach for America. However, research indicates that such pathways are problematic because 'teachers with little preparation tend to leave at rates two to three times as high as those who have had a comprehensive preparation before they enter' (Sutcher et al. 2016, p. 4).

Governments that aim to develop and enact policy solutions that promote the retention of teachers need to understand the labour market and, more importantly, the complex relationship between retention and the development of the teaching workforce.

1.2 Early Career Teachers

In the context of teacher shortages, the gaze has turned to early career teachers because their attrition rates are high and there is a pressing need to retain them. Rather than dwell on the negative causes and consequences of high early career teacher attrition, this book builds on previous research which focused on the positive policy and practice contexts that support graduate teachers in their first years of teaching (e.g. Johnson et al. 2014, 2016; Sullivan and Johnson 2012; Sullivan and Morrison 2014).

In many countries, few concessions are given to early career teachers as they negotiate complex roles during their transition from their teacher education programs to the profession. Early career teachers are under increased pressure not only to be 'classroom ready' but also to perform at the same levels as more experienced colleagues. The focus has been on supporting them by providing induction programs, mentoring and extra release time from face-to-face teaching (Howe 2006; Sullivan and Morrison 2014). These types of support often position early career teachers as 'lacking' key knowledge and skills. Such a focus on the individual teacher ignores the broader contextual and systemic influences that are playing out across the teaching profession and reflects a growing preoccupation with deficit views of early career teachers (Day and Sachs 2004; Johnson et al. 2016).

Our earlier research showed that the nature of early career teachers' work threatens their retention as they transition to the profession (Johnson et al. 2016), and it needs to be reformed to 'address issues of intensification and performativity'. We explained:

> … common supports such as appointing mentors, providing induction programs and reducing teaching loads do not reframe early career teachers' work but locate them as the 'problem' and thus needing 'fixing'. This requires rethinking! Continuing to 'tinker' with the work of early career teachers will not suffice; rather, intellectual and collegial re-imagining of teachers' work is required. We need a much broader conversation around how we might begin the task of rethinking the nature of early career teachers' work. (p. 67)

This book challenges this type of thinking about early career teachers and their work. It offers a close and critical analysis of policies related to the work of early career teachers and how they are supported during this critical period of their working lives when they are vulnerable to being lost from the profession. It provides

good examples of practice which illustrate how early career teachers can be supported to transition into the profession in ways which are agentic for their development and which enable the profession as a whole to capitalise on the new knowledge and skills that these teachers bring to their classrooms and their students.

1.3   Assembling This Book

In 2015, we were conducting an Australian Research Council-funded project[1] to gain an understanding of the ways in which school leaders promote the retention of newly appointed teachers. As we were grappling with issues that were being debated internationally, we decided to bring together experts who could advance our research and ultimately the field of teacher development. In July 2015, we held a 3-day summit on 'Early career teacher retention: Bringing international perspectives from research to policy and practice' in Sydney, Australia. The summit was intended to be an innovative, provocative and question-raising forum addressing the pressing issue of teacher attrition and retention. The invited experts were asked to draft a chapter addressing some key provocations that drew on existing research and map possibilities for advancing the field. Two experts attending the summit were allocated to act as 'main reviewers' and the other experts acted as 'general reviewers'. In preparation for the summit, the main reviewers were asked to carefully examine the drafts and provide feedback addressing the following questions:

- Do you have any questions for the author/s?
- What do you like most about the chapter?
- What do you think is the main argument? Is the argument clear?
- What theoretical resources would you recommend?
- Do you have any suggestions for improvement?
- In what ways will the chapter contribute to the overall theme of a book on teacher retention?

At the summit, the authors presented their chapters to the summit participants. The main reviewers provided their feedback, and this was followed by a roundtable discussion that involved a broader discussion about each chapter and its significance to the overall theme of the book. An allocated moderator for each chapter provided a summary of the main points for the author to consider for revision.

Following this intense review process at the early stage of conception, the authors then addressed the suggestions for improvement and resubmitted their chapters. As editors of the book, we embarked on a considered editorial process which led to further revisions of the chapters. The final accepted chapters form this book.

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[1] The Retaining Quality Teachers Study was funded by the Australian Research Council Linkage Grant Scheme (LP130100830). See www.rqt.edu.au for further detail.

1.4   How This Book Is Organised

There are ten chapters in this book, organised in two parts.

1.4.1   Part I

The process of retaining early career teachers is difficult to define, because it is multifaceted and complex. A number of perspectives which embrace the interrelated processes of attraction, recruitment, induction and development of early career teachers are required to help better understand the problem and to shed light on new ways of considering theory, policy and practice. The chapters in Part I of the book consider these broad issues from an international perspective. They are intentionally provocative and challenge the normative and political nature of teaching and education. More specifically, the chapters examine how policies and practices impact on what happens in schools and what it means to be a teacher and to teach.

In Chap. 1, 'Introduction', we have explained why this book is important. We have also outlined the structure of the book and provided an overview of each chapter.

In Chap. 2, 'Unpacking Teacher Quality: Key Issues for Early Career Teachers', Maria Flores argues that the concept of 'teacher quality' is used extensively in educational discourse, but it is often very narrowly defined and used in simplistic ways. Flores reports on a large empirical study undertaken in Portugal to help understand the international issues related to teacher quality in the workforce. She argues that the 'view of teachers as leaders of learning lies at the heart of the view of teacher quality'. Importantly, Flores maintains that teacher quality needs to take account of political, social, professional and personal contexts.

In Chap. 3, '"Classroom-Ready Teachers": Gaps, Silences and Contradictions in the Australian Report into Teacher Education', Barry Down and Anna Sullivan present a critical policy analysis of a recent Australian report that claims that the quality of Australian teachers is being compromised by poor teacher preparation. They locate their analysis within a broader social context in which a 'manufactured crisis' over teacher quality is being played out in political circles and mainstream media. They identify the key values and assumptions inherent in the report and expose the contradictions within its policy discourses. Their examination of the dynamics of the 'conservative restoration' promoted in the report sheds light on the logic used to justify greater regulation, compliance and conformity in the field of teacher preparation.

In Chap. 4, 'Shifting the Frame: Representations of Early Career Teachers in the Australian Print Media', Nicole Mockler analyses two sets of Australian media texts to examine how early career teachers have been represented at different times in mainstream media. She identifies a significant change from a period in the late 1990s when early career teachers were implicated in hopeful attempts to address

problems in the teaching profession to the current era in which early career teachers are positioned as one of the causes of deficiencies in Australian schools. This shift in the representation of early career teachers as 'problems' is seen as the source of justifications for greater accountability, accreditation and regulation in teacher education.

In Chap. 5, 'Early Career Teachers and Their Need for Support: Thinking Again', Geert Kelchtermans identifies the pervasive deficit views about early career teachers. He argues that common teacher induction practices such as providing mentors are well intended but often have negative consequences. Kelchtermans maintains that new teachers enter the profession with strengths and experiences which should be valued. With this in mind, he offers three new ways to frame early career teachers: agentic, networked and an asset. This chapter challenges dominant thinking about early career teachers and what would help them as they transition to the profession, leading to their retention.

1.4.2   Part II

Rather than focus on how to 'fix' early career teachers, there is a need to reconsider the policies and practices that create the 'problem' and offer other ways forward. The chapters in the second part of the book draw on some of the bigger issues identified in the first part of the book and address the following key questions:

- What ideas dominate current thinking about practices relating to the retention of early career teachers?
- What are the policy drivers for current practices?
- What key ideologies justify these approaches?
- How can we present ethical alternatives to current approaches?

Each chapter addresses a theme related to the issue of early career teacher retention, contributing to a greater understanding of how we can rethink the work of early career teachers so that they can transition to the profession successfully.

In Chap. 6, 'How School Leaders Attract, Recruit, Develop and Retain the Early Career Teachers They Want: Positives and Paradoxes', Bruce Johnson, Anna Sullivan, Michele Simons and Judy Peters discuss how school leaders influence new teachers and foster their professional commitment. They identify the micropolitical activities that school leaders deliberately use to promote the engagement and retention of the early career teachers they want to keep. They present data and analyses which reveal the dilemmas and paradoxes that school leaders encounter when they attempt to reconcile the competing demands of different stakeholders in the staffing process. They contrast the mostly benevolent actions of leaders with their often-unintended consequences to establish the need for ongoing critical reflection about the impact on early career teachers of taken-for-granted human resources processes.

In Chap. 7, 'Reforming Replacement Teaching: A Game Changer for the Development of Early Career Teaching?', Barbara Preston exposes the parlous conditions early career teachers experience when they enter the profession as temporary replacement teachers. She implicates poor pay and conditions and low professional status as factors that contribute to high levels of early career teacher attrition. She argues for the 'professionalisation of replacement teaching' involving a number of interrelated strategies designed to position relief teaching as a desirable option for experienced teachers. Linked to this is her controversial call for early career teachers to be denied entry to the profession through replacement teaching by regulating and reorganising the forms and areas of work open to early career teachers.

In Chap. 8, 'Connecting Theory and Practice: Collaborative Figured Worlds', Jamie Sisson offers a critique of the dominant pre-service teacher education model, which promotes an artificial and contrived distinction between educational theory and practice. She explores the sources of the theory–practice divide by examining the values and assumptions that underpin the dominant discourses used in teacher education programs. She proposes a more collaborative approach that breaks down barriers between pre-service teaching students, school-based teachers and university teacher educators. She argues that positioning these actors as 'co-learners' and 'co-educators' challenges deficit perceptions of pre-service teachers and promotes a more ethical alternative to contemporary, university-based teacher education.

In Chap. 9, 'Recruiting, Retaining and Supporting Early Career Teachers for Rural Schools', Simone White examines a policy mechanism aimed at attracting and recruiting teachers to difficult-to-staff schools in rural Australia. She argues that incentives are often used to attract and retain teachers, but that they ignore the nature of rural contexts and might actually exacerbate the overall problems faced by rural schools. White challenges negative views of rural schools and repositions them as sites that have rich benefits for early career teachers. She argues that pre-service teacher education should raise awareness of the benefits of working in rural schools. This chapter has important implications for understanding the complexities of the attraction, recruitment, development and retention process more broadly.

In Chap. 10, 'Quality Retention and Resilience in the Middle and Later Years of Teaching', Christopher Day provides us with a reasoned and timely reminder that the quality of the teaching profession does not reside solely with the newest entrants to the profession. He argues that retention, in and of itself, is not sufficient to ensure a quality teaching workforce; instead, he makes a case for quality retention based on an enriched notion of teacher resilience. This form of resilience does not just embrace the innate capacities of individual teachers; it is both a psychological and sociocultural phenomenon which can enable teachers to move from 'coping' to managing and having the 'bounce back' required to meet the intellectual and emotional challenges that make up teachers' work. This chapter is important for the insights it offers for those concerned with developing and nurturing resilience as part of quality retention processes for teachers.

1.5   Summary

This book aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the issues related to the retention of teachers, particularly early career teachers. The chapters examine how policies and practices impact on what happens in schools and what it means to be a teacher and teach. Their insights into the issue of retention contribute to a greater understanding of how we can rethink the work of early career teachers so that they can transition to the profession successfully.

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Part I
Examining Issues Related to Retaining Early Career Teachers

Chapter 2
Unpacking Teacher Quality: Key Issues for Early Career Teachers

Maria Assunção Flores

Abstract Teacher quality is seen as a key factor influencing the quality of education. However, while there is consensus on the importance of quality teachers for improving teaching and learning in schools, there is less agreement on how to define and assess quality. The aim of the chapter is twofold: (i) to identify and contrast the ways in which teacher quality has been defined internationally and (ii) to analyse (and deconstruct) the term "quality", drawing upon empirical evidence from diverse stakeholders. Teacher quality has often been defined narrowly and related to standards, performativity and managerialism. However, it is also possible to identify more comprehensive understandings of teacher quality which take into account contextual, professional, political and personal dimensions. Contradictory trends may be identified in the ways in which teacher professionalism has been defined as well as in real conditions of teachers' work in schools and classrooms. The chapter discusses the view of teachers as leaders of learning and its core dimensions, namely, motivation, resilience, innovation of practice and committed professionalism, and it concludes with key issues for early career teachers.

2.1 Introduction

Teacher quality has been a hot topic and a political priority (Flores 2012b, 2016b). It has been identified as one of the most important school-related factors influencing student achievement (Darling-Hammond 2000; Hattie 2003; Darling-Hammond et al. 2005; Barber and Mourshed 2007). School reform and changes in teacher education programs worldwide have been driven by globalisation and by governmental pressure to enhance the quality of teachers and teaching. In general, the drivers of change in education are related to the need to do well in international

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assessments but also to the need to meet the challenges created by social, scientific, technological and cultural transformations.

Teacher quality is seen as a key factor influencing the quality of education. However, while there is consensus on the importance of quality teachers for improving teaching and learning in schools, there is less agreement on how to define and assess quality. As Darling-Hammond suggests (2013), there has been growing recognition that expert teachers and leaders are key players in improving student learning, and therefore the highest-achieving nations make substantial investments in teacher quality. She argues that in top-ranked nations supports for teaching have included universal high-quality teacher education, expert mentoring for beginners, ongoing professional learning, leadership development and equitable, competitive salaries.

Concerns about performativity, funding challenges and external compliance have had implications for academics and also for teacher educators: "competition rather than cooperation came to be seen as a key driver of quality with accountability measured by performativity and compliance with raising achievement as key" (Alcorn 2014, p. 447). In many contexts, a rather narrow view of teacher quality related to standards, performativity and managerialism may be identified. It is therefore essential to overcome a "naïve view of teacher quality" which has been associated with "a linear relationship between policy and educational outcomes without accounting for school culture, resources and communities" (Mayer 2014, p. 471). Focusing on England, Maguire (2014) argues for the need to ensure teacher quality "by reforming teaching at source by regulating and controlling initial teacher education" (p. 779). She discussed the "technology of erasure" which relates to "the erasure of the work of progressive and reforming teacher educationalists who have in different times attempted to produce new ways of using school-based experiences to produce new forms of teacher (and trainee teacher) knowledge" (p. 780).

In other countries, however, it is possible to identify high-quality systems leading to the preparation and development of high-quality teachers. According to Darling-Hammond (2017), these systems, found in Finland, Singapore, Canada and Australia, despite their differences, include "multiple, coherent and complementary components associated with recruiting, developing, and retaining talented individuals to support the overall goal of ensuring that each school is populated by effective teachers" (p. 294). Amongst other issues are the recruitment of highly able candidates into high-quality programs and the connection between theory and practice through thoughtful coursework and the integration of high-quality clinical work in settings where good practice is supported (Darling-Hammond 2017, p. 306). The ways in which different countries look at teacher quality, teacher competences and standards and the priorities for teacher education depend upon the wider social and cultural context, the policy environment as well as the views and aims of education and the role ascribed to teachers in curriculum development.

This chapter analyses – and deconstructs – the concept of teacher quality by looking at both international research literature and policy texts, as well as at the perspectives of various stakeholders (head teachers, teachers and pupils). Data are drawn from a wider piece of research which included a national survey of teachers in mainland Portugal (n = 2702), interviews with head teachers (n = 11) and focus

groups with teachers (n = 99) and pupils (n = 108). I argue that, in many contexts, teacher quality has been associated with a rather narrow view which is related to standards, performativity and managerialism. However, it is also possible to identify more comprehensive understandings of teacher quality which take into account contextual, professional, political and personal dimensions. Contradictory trends may be identified in the ways in which teacher professionalism has been defined as well as in real conditions of teachers' work in schools and classrooms. This chapter looks at these contradictory trends and discusses the implications for teacher education and for rethinking issues of quality for early career teachers. In the next section, I will look at trends and tensions in attempts to define and assess quality, drawing upon international research literature and policy texts.

2.2   Unpacking Quality: What Does the Literature Tell?

The notion of quality has been widely used in education by policymakers, academics, researchers and other stakeholders. Teacher quality, quality education, quality teaching and quality teacher education are but few examples that may be found in the literature. "Quality" has been subject to sometimes uncritical understandings and to simplistic and narrow views, many of which have been associated with performative cultures marked by accountability and a standardised conception of education. Ng (2015, p. 307) states that the term quality education is "vague and perhaps over-used" and that "there is a high degree of eclecticism in its definition, rhetoric and practice" (p. 308).

It is often argued that quality teaching depends on quality teachers and that quality teachers depend greatly on the quality of teacher education programs. However, it is possible to identify a wide array of understandings of teacher quality and teacher education quality in diverse contexts (Darling-Hammond and Lieberman 2012; Hilton et al. 2013; Laurie et al. 2016). For instance, in Europe, quality teachers have been described as those "equipped with the ability to integrate knowledge, handle complexity, and adapt to the needs of individual learners as well as groups" (EC 2013, p. 7) and "quality initial teacher education is associated with teachers' knowledge, skills and commitment" (EU 2009, p. 8).

Similarly, the European Commission defines quality teaching as enabling students to achieve "successful learning outcomes, by developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that learners need in order to realise their full potential both as individuals and as active members of society and the workforce" (EU 2014, p. 1). A cross-national study of teacher education in nine countries suggested that initial teacher education quality had become a major issue (Conway et al. 2009). The report identified a number of principles underpinning quality teacher education, particularly the quality of knowledge integration, opportunities for observation, thoughtful feedback and critical reflection on classroom and school situations, and professional values and identity.

It is important, however, to draw a distinction between "the related but distinct ideas" of teacher quality and teaching quality (Darling-Hammond 2010, p. 200). The former is related to the "bundle of personal traits, skills, and understandings an individual brings to teaching, including dispositions to behave in certain ways", whereas the latter "has to do with strong instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn" in order to meet "the demands of the discipline, the goals of instruction, and the needs of students in a particular context" (p. 200). In other words, "teaching quality is in part a function of teacher quality – teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions – but it is also strongly influenced by the context of instruction" (p. 200).

In Europe, it has been argued that teacher education reforms need to be:

> founded upon a shared agreement in each education system about what it takes to be a high-quality teacher: what competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) they need, how those can be understood, described and deployed – and what policies and practical provisions can support teachers to acquire and develop them throughout their careers. (European Commission 2013, p. 5)

In Portugal, for instance, Amaral (2005) argues that policy directives related to the Bologna process had more to do with structural features and solving economic problems than enhancing the quality of education. Similarly, a look at international literature suggests that many countries around the world (e.g. the USA, the UK and Australia) have focused on a standards-driven education system "as a means of improving the quality of education provided and to increase student achievements" (Townsend 2011, p. 488). Standards are widely seen as "part of the general move in the direction of accountability based on notions of performance (performativity) and have been seen as unnecessarily restrictive" (Menter and Hulme 2011, p. 394). This perspective is associated with increasing government intervention in the definition of a set of standards, competencies and criteria against which the education of prospective teachers and practising teachers, including early career teachers, is to be set up and evaluated. This is visible in many systems for teacher education and teacher evaluation worldwide (e.g. Flores 2012a; Vekeman et al. 2015; Flores and Derrington 2017).

For instance, in the USA, there has been an alignment between school practices with high-quality content standards and teacher education in the light of greater focus on accountability measured by "large-scale test results with persistent efforts to find ways to measure teacher education using similar measures or performance indicators" (Imig et al. 2014, p. 66). This outcome-led conception of teaching entails pre-specified and standardised learning goals developed through a linear process in which quality is assessed by a focus on effectiveness and efficiency. This view implies that teachers are seen more as technicians or consumers of curriculum rather than agents or curriculum makers. Within the context of a European project on identifying teacher quality, Hilton et al. (2013) highlight six statements that underpin the use of the concept of quality: (i) teachers are professionals; (ii) reflection on professional quality is a stimulus for professional development; (iii) ownership is a condition for learning and change; (v) quality is a personal and contextual construct;

(v) personal involvement in defining professional quality stimulates ownership and therefore learning and change; and (vi) education asks for an interactive relationship between policy, research and practice.

2.2.1 Teacher Quality and Quality Education

Research literature has focused on the characteristics or qualities of good teachers and on the meanings of quality education. For instance, in Singapore, Ng (2015) investigated how middle-level leaders look at "quality education" and how they think it can be achieved. Findings suggest that quality education embodies holistic development, equips students with knowledge and skills for the future, provides students with the right values and imbues them with a positive learning attitude. The same study revealed that quality education is delivered by good teachers, enabled by good teaching and learning processes, and facilitated by a conducive learning environment.

Quality education is dependent on context and, therefore, it may take many forms worldwide (UNESCO 2004). However, it is possible to identify two basic principles underlying quality education (UNESCO 2004, p. 17). The first principle is that learners' cognitive development is the major explicit objective of all education systems. As such, success in terms of student achievement is one indicator of the system's quality. The second principle is that education should promote values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and nurture creative and emotional development.

Writing in the context of low-income countries, Tikly and Barrett (2011) argue for a social justice approach as a new way of thinking about quality education. For the authors this approach can provide an alternative rationale for education, rooted in individual freedoms and education's role in promoting capabilities, that encompasses but also challenges human capital and rights approaches. In other words, Tikly and Barrett (2011) draw attention to the key importance of public dialogue and debate at the local, national and global levels about the nature of quality education and quality frameworks at all these levels.

Also, Nikel and Lowe (2010), in their synthesis of studies on quality education, proposed a framework which consisted of seven dimensions: (i) effectiveness, the extent to which stated educational aims are met; (ii) efficiency, economic considerations, such as ratio of outputs to inputs, to maximise the use of resources; (iii) equity, issues of access to education for all people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability and so on; (iv) responsiveness, meeting the needs of individual learners in classroom interactions by taking into consideration the uniqueness of each learner's abilities; (v) relevance, the usefulness of education to the life of the learner; (vi) reflexivity, the ability to adjust to change, especially rapid change, which is important to engaging with an uncertain future; and (vii) sustainability, focusing "on behaviour change and acceptance of responsibilities … in a process of goal-setting, decision-making, and evaluation" (Nikel and Lowe 2010, p. 599).

In Europe, it has been argued that "the motivation, skills and competences of teachers, trainers … are key factors in achieving high quality learning outcomes" (EC 2007, p. 3). Also, a European study looking at the use of the concept of teacher quality in four European documents and nine national documents shows that there is a wide variety of definitions of teacher quality and that a common language does not exist (Snoek et al. 2009). In general, this study suggests that, in each country, teacher quality is defined in a specific way and by means of different competencies. By and large, there were three common qualities that were found in all nine countries: (i) teaching effectively, (ii) working together with others within and outside the school context and (iii) reflection and professional development. The same report states that other dimensions of teacher quality vary depending on the country and its specific societal requirements for teachers. In addition, Snoek et al. (2009) state that in policy debates there is an awareness that the quality of teachers is strongly influenced by the quality of teacher education, and therefore the concept of quality is widely used in policy documents.

Teacher quality needs therefore to be understood in the light of the legal framework and international research in so far as it is possible to identify a body of knowledge and a set of competences, attitudes, behaviours, dispositions and values that quality teachers demonstrate. But this is not enough. Teacher quality also needs to be seen in context as "the quality of teaching is determined not just by the 'quality' of the teachers … but also by the environment in which they work" (OECD 2005, p. 9). This was one of the key features of the study described in the second part of this chapter to which I now turn. Data from this multi-perspective and mixed-method project illustrate the ways in which quality is understood in context with implications for defining and developing quality teachers especially in the early years of teaching. In the next sections I will examine key findings from the research project carried out in Portugal by discussing the importance of context as well as the nature and enactment of policy initiatives that shed light on understandings of quality teaching and quality teachers.

2.3   Methods

This chapter reports on data drawn from a broader 3-year piece of research (January 2011–June 2014) funded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (National Foundation for Science and Technology) (PTDC/CPE-CED/112164/2009). Policy initiatives associated with a context of austerity and economic crisis in Portugal have affected teachers and the teaching profession in many ways including an increase in workload and bureaucracy and the deterioration of teachers' working conditions including their socio-economic status. Drawing from the major research project, this chapter addresses the following research questions:

- What are the conditions of teaching in challenging circumstances?
- To what extent do they affect teachers' work?
- What kinds of factors affect teacher quality in the workplace?
- How do teachers, pupils and school leaders look at teacher quality?

A mixed-method research design was devised. Data were collected in three phases. Phase I consisted of a national survey in which 2702 teachers participated. The questionnaire included both closed- and open-ended questions focusing on two main areas: (i) motivation and job satisfaction (including questions about current motivation, areas in which teachers experienced the greatest increase in satisfaction and the most dissatisfaction, etc.) and (ii) leadership, autonomy and school culture (factors that hinder or promote teacher leadership, opportunities and motives for engaging in professional development activities, etc.). In order to analyse the main findings from the quantitative data further, 11 schools located in different regions of the country participated in phase II which included semi-structured interviews with the 11 head teachers and focus groups with pupils (n = 108) and with teachers (n = 99). The third phase involved a professional development program in 5 schools located in northern Portugal, in which 66 teachers participated. In this chapter data from phases I and II will be reported.

2.3.1 The Participants

In total, 2702 teachers from mainland Portugal participated in the national survey which was administered online. Out of the 2702 participants, 78.5% were female, 42.8% were between 40 and 49 years old, 28.6% were between 50 and 59 years old and 25.5% were between 30 and 39 years old. Only 1.7% were between 20 and 29 years of age. This is in line with the "General profile of the teachers 2014/2015" published by the Ministry of Education (Direção-Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciências 2016), whose statistics reveal that less than 2% of Portuguese teachers are 30 years of age or younger. Most of the teachers held a *Licenciatura* degree (59.3%) and 21.4% held a master's degree. The majority of the teachers had between 11 and 20 years of experience (37.6%) or between 21 and 30 years (34.9%). The vast majority of them had a permanent post at a school (83.3%). In addition, the majority taught in urban schools (51.1%), and they came from all sectors of teaching (from preschool to secondary school: 3- to 18-year-old pupils).

Of the 99 teachers participating in the focus groups (22 in total), the majority of them were female teachers (76.8%). As for their age, 31.3% were between 51 and 60 years old and 27.3% between 41 and 50 years old. The participating teachers came from all sectors of teaching, from preschool to secondary school, and taught a variety of subjects. In regard to their experience as teachers, 36.4% had between 21 and 30 years of service, 26.3% between 31 and 40, and 22.2% between 11 and 20 years of experience.

Out of the 11 head teachers, 54.5% were female, and they came from all sectors of education, including big clusters of schools (from preschool to secondary schools) (63.6%); 36.4% only taught in the secondary school sector.

Of the 108 pupils participating in the focus groups (23 in total), most of them were female (52.8%). Most were aged between 11 and 15 years of age (39.8%) or between 16 and 20 (30.6%). The participants came from all sectors of teaching, from kindergarten, primary school, elementary school and secondary school. Out of the 108 pupils, 32.4% were in secondary school and 25.9% in elementary school (students aged 10–15).

2.3.2 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed statistically with the use of SPSS (version 20). The process of qualitative data analysis was undertaken in two phases. The first was an analysis of data gathered in each school through the voices of teachers, pupils and head teachers. The second phase involved a comparative or horizontal analysis (cross-case analysis) (Miles and Huberman 1994). In this phase, the research team looked for common patterns as well as differences, using semantic criterion to look for key themes.

2.4 Findings

The findings are presented according to two key themes, each of which contains subthemes: (i) changing policy environment: unstable social and teaching contexts; and (ii) understanding quality teaching and teacher quality in context.

2.4.1 Changing Policy Environment: Unstable Social and Teaching Contexts

Teachers reported that their working conditions have been affected by the severe financial and economic crisis that has had an impact on all sectors of society, particularly education. Salary cuts, high rates of unemployment, high taxation and worsening career progression are a few examples of the ways in which the teaching profession has been affected, including issues of poverty and increasing social demands that affect school and teachers' work (Flores and Ferreira 2016). Along with this are significant changes in the policy environment resulting from legislation which affected schools and teachers' work in many ways, namely, new mechanisms

for teacher evaluation, new protocols for school governance, reduction in the school curriculum and the introduction of national exams from primary school upward.

2.5 "Tsunami" of Legislation and Endless Changes in Education

Teachers' accounts revealed an increase in workload, an increase in administrative tasks, professional instability and insecurity, precarious jobs, and intensification and bureaucratisation of their work as a result of the changes that have affected teachers and teaching:

> Bureaucracy is all over your work … you need to report on everything, bureaucratic tasks have increased over the last few years … Every year there is something new. It is more and more demanding in terms of bureaucratic tasks. (Secondary school teacher, 23 years of teaching)
>
> Some tasks that have never been done by teachers in the past are now done by the teachers. It feels like as a teacher you need to be superman or superwoman. (Secondary school teacher, 27 years of teaching)
>
> It is just too much bureaucracy. I am talking about the school, but legislation never ends, there is always something new and as a teacher you can hardly follow everything that is published in terms of legislation. I speak for myself. It is very hard to follow all changes at school and on top of that the workload is very heavy. (Elementary school teacher, 25 years of teaching)

As this last quotation illustrates, the endless changes in education policy and the new legislation that has invaded schools and teachers' work have had a negative impact. This "tsunami" of legislation has created even more difficulties for schools and teachers who are struggling to cope with ongoing changes in education. Teachers question the relevance and usefulness of meetings and of the documents that they have to fill out. They are also critical of the legislation that attempts to impose changes in schools. For many of them, despite the attempts to impose change, their practice remains unchanged:

> There are lots of documents that you need to fill in. I mean you could do important work at the department meetings. But because of changes you always need to adapt documents. So each year there is always something new to be done. Changes in government mean ongoing changes. People don't change anything, they change the vocabulary but everything remains unchanged in practice. But pressure is too high, you need to do meetings, you need to adapt things that sometimes in practice are meaningless. (Primary school teacher, 26 years of teaching)
>
> There are documents that are not important at all. I think you do them because you must. But then as a teacher you need to question the real meaning of what you do. What are the documents for? What is the purpose? And then you need to ask whether your students are going to be more successful with these kinds of documents. (Primary school teacher, 25 years of teaching)

2.6   Deterioration of Teaching and Working Conditions

Teachers as well as head teachers claim that working conditions at schools have deteriorated over the last few years, including an increase in workload and in bureaucracy, greater public accountability and greater control over teachers' work. The participating teachers referred to external factors which led to lack of motivation and dissatisfaction, such as policy initiatives, deterioration of working conditions, heavy workload, changes in teachers' careers (no career prospects) and intensification of their work:

> There is a heavy workload … Nowadays you need to do more in schools with fewer resources. This means extra work for you as a teacher … and you need to do your best against the odds. (Elementary school teacher, 27 years of experience)
>
> What you see is the proletarianisation of teachers' work … There are things that were in place before but others are a result of the situation of the country and of the intervention of Troika, including salary cuts and all of the negative images about teaching and teachers in the media. (Head teacher, secondary school, 21 years of experience)

As this head teacher highlights, austerity measures have intensified since the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding with the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission (known as the Troika). All these changes have affected teachers' motivation. In the survey, teachers were asked about their current levels of motivation. They reported that their motivation (in 2012) was moderate (45.5%), although 27.4% admitted that their motivation was high and for 17.4% of the participants it was low. However, when asked about their job satisfaction and motivation over the last 3 years (2009–2012) (during which major reforms in education and in teaching had been put into place), the majority of the participants reported that their motivation and their job satisfaction had decreased (61.6% and 44.5%, respectively). Issues such as salary cuts, increased bureaucracy, the deterioration of the social status of teaching, lack of motivation on the part of students, lack of valorisation of school by parents, lack of career prospects, low morale and recent policy initiatives were at the forefront of their accounts:

> I feel really tired and my motivation is low. I have 27 years of teaching and with all this intensification of your work it is hard to stay motivated for 18 years more. (Elementary school teacher, 27 years of teaching)
>
> The lack of motivation is leading many people to leave teaching. They have asked to be retired ahead of time. As a teacher you are confronted with something new almost every day and this is hard especially for the oldest teachers. (Secondary school teacher, 23 years of teaching)
>
> I feel exhausted. My students say: "Mrs, why do you care so much?" But I do care and I feel awful because I think about my responsibility as a teacher. (Secondary school teacher, 28 years of teaching)

Amongst the policy initiatives that have affected teachers' work are teacher evaluation, a new system for school governance (the merging of schools in big clusters of

schools), an increase in the number of pupils per class and classes per teacher, and the increase in workload. The deterioration of the teaching profession, according to the participating teachers, is due, at least to a certain extent, to the negative image of teaching and teachers portrayed in the media: 90% agree or strongly agree that "Our image as teachers has been deteriorated in terms of social recognition and economic status".

Similarly, pupils also identified issues such as complexity, tiredness and lack of time, which they associate with the work of teachers:

> The school influences teachers' lives. They spend lots of time at school in order to prepare their teaching and the written tests. I mean, it must be really tiring. (Pupil, 14 years old)
>
> My mother is a teacher and I can tell how much she works! Almost every day she gets home tired and with lots of work to be done … and she says to me, "Please, don't be a teacher!" (Pupil, 13 years old)
>
> For instance, now with Troika, and the financial crisis, there was a reduction in teachers' salary. And I guess they are upset about that. (Pupil, 11 years old)
>
> Teachers have to do lots of marking and they need to check homework and everything. They need to work a lot. And they need to work at home too. I also think that it is hard for them to get us motivated and have confidence in teaching. (Pupil, 10 years old)

The challenging and demanding nature of teaching within a context of austerity measures was also reiterated by the participating teachers. Teachers described how they try to manage tensions and dilemmas in their workplace mainly due to the competitive atmosphere associated with the systems for school, pupil and teacher evaluation. Some of them also spoke of the ways in which they overcome the difficulties in their daily work by focusing on their pupils and on their classroom practice, and they try to resist and to maintain their motivation and joy of teaching despite "all the things that go wrong in education".

2.6.1 Understanding Quality Teaching and Teacher Quality in Context

Teachers' work has been intensified and routinised and has become more and more outcome-oriented. Thus, innovation and creativity are hard to develop, as one teacher stated: "Your work as a teacher has been more and more technical and bureaucratic, and it does not leave room for creativity and innovation". However, both teachers and head teachers were able to identify "niches of excellence", in their own terms. According to them, it is possible to remain creative and to take risks in challenging times, which they associate with dedication, and to remain committed to the core values of the teaching profession and professionalism. This includes dedication to students and to their learning as well as to the social and moral purposes of teaching. These were key elements reiterated in their discourses when they talked about "niches of excellence" and teacher quality.

2.7 Being Creative and Innovative in Challenging Times: The Importance of Commitment

Despite the difficulties and demands of the political, social and economic environment and of the workplace context, most of the teachers and head teachers spoke of the need to find the best solutions and make the best choices in adverse times. As one head teacher mentioned: "It is imperative to innovate in times of disenchantment" (secondary school head teacher, 21 years of experience).

Most of the teachers mentioned that their motivation has decreased over the years due to precarious job conditions, a decrease in teachers' status, lack of career progression, reduction in salaries and so on. Yet they also highlighted that the adverse contexts in which they work do not negatively affect the ways in which they act as teachers and their interaction with their pupils. Many teachers stated that, despite their lack of motivation (due to external circumstances mentioned above), their professional performance is marked by care, commitment, professionalism and creative responses to meet the expectations of their students:

> As a teacher you may be unmotivated in regard to salary cuts, and to your career, but in regard to your work with your pupils, your classes, the families, etc. you do the best you can. (Elementary school teacher, 17 years of teaching)
>
> All these changes in legislation are demotivating but in your work itself you don't feel any effects. It is a big concern but it doesn't affect your work as a teacher. (Preschool teacher, 31 years of experience)

At the heart of teachers' work are decisions about what is essential and non-essential in teaching. They stress the ethics of care and the moral and social purposes of teaching as well as hope and resilience and a commitment to pupils, to their learning and well-being.

2.8 Beyond Survival: Pupils as Sources of Motivation

Many teachers spoke of the ways in which they deal with the many challenges and demands they face in their workplace. The centrality of classroom work as a place of job satisfaction and particularly the importance attached to pupils as sources of motivation were at the forefront of their accounts:

> The image that I have in regard to my colleagues is that they are tired, exhausted, unmotivated but willing to be with their pupils. You can influence your pupils and this has to do with your action as a professional, your ability to mobilise knowledge and to enhance pupils' motivation … Each day you take all your energy and you go to the classroom to get your work done. (Primary school teacher, 25 years of teaching)

As the above quotation illustrates, many teachers highlighted the hard working conditions and lack of valorisation of their profession, but they also stressed what they

termed the core values of teaching and of being a teacher. They identified personal, professional and contextual factors. The former is related to the joy of teaching, the commitment to pupils' learning and development and the desire to keep learning throughout their professional lives; the latter two factors are associated with the "ecology" of their workplace such as collaborative work, school ethos marked by positive working relationships, time management, involvement in individual and collective projects, supportive school leadership and trust:

> I have always said that teaching has always been my profession. I enjoy what I do and I think I am a good teacher. (Primary school teacher, 26 years of teaching)
>
> My motivation comes from the fact that I really enjoy what I do. I really enjoy being a teacher. If I haven't had this motivation I wouldn't be able to get up early in the morning and come to school sometimes with great sacrifice … I love my kids and I do enjoy working with them. (Primary school teacher, 20 years of teaching)

The valorisation of their work as teachers draws on their commitment to pupils, to their learning and well-being. It is about the concern to create the best conditions for pupils to learn and develop as people and citizens. Issues such as inclusion, successful and meaningful learning, the affective-relational element in the teaching and learning process and promoting pupil involvement at school were recurring themes in their accounts. This is in line with earlier research in the context of changes in educational policies marked by bureaucratisation in Portugal which showed that negative emotions were related to policy reform whereas positive ones were related to classroom interactions (Bahia et al. 2013):

> There is not a single teacher who does not have a concern in regard to an ethical and social attitude … at the end of the day it is about pupils … the concern of not segregating anyone, of including everyone. (Preschool teacher, 28 years of experience)
>
> My motivation may be low at the moment but my dedication is the same. I have hope in teaching, you know. (Elementary school teacher, 16 years of teaching)
>
> What makes you feel good in your profession is the capability to deal with the kids even in such adverse conditions such as the crisis we are handling now. (Primary school teacher, 25 years of teaching)

For the teachers, classroom context is a space for autonomy. It is a space in which interactive communication, decision-making and curriculum implementation in context as well as affective and organisational elements play a pivotal role. The teachers therefore see the classroom as a space for autonomy, the last stronghold of professional satisfaction and a place to renew their energy and personal and professional motivation:

> Classroom work is key. It is about learning and interaction. We are proud of what we do in the classroom with kids, who are not the ones to blame for what is going wrong in education. (Primary school teacher, 22 years of teaching)
>
> I have never felt so fulfilled and it may sound unbelievable but I feel I am a better professional now. I feel that my experience and my feeling a better professional makes me a better teacher in the classroom … I have never felt so good about myself as a professional in my relationship with my pupils in the classroom, which is in my view the real role of a teacher. (Elementary school teacher, 20 years of teaching)

In other words, teachers want to make a difference in their pupils' lives. Their professionalism is closely linked to what they do in the classroom with their pupils:

> And now you can ask where am I going to look for strength and willingness and energy to change? I believe this is an inner thing … the desire to make a difference. (Preschool teacher, 28 years of experience)
>
> As a teacher I am stubborn. I really want to make a difference. (Elementary school teacher, 20 years of teaching)

The teachers referred to issues such as positive relationships with colleagues, collaborative work, a supportive climate and encouraging leadership. The existence of team work, teacher engagement at school, a sense of belonging and identification with the school ethos were recurring themes in some teachers' accounts:

> There is a true supportive school climate and we need to participate a lot in school activities. I feel good in doing that. I like to teach and I am still learning in this school. I think this is a key factor for your sense of job satisfaction. (Elementary school teacher, 25 years of teaching)
>
> There is great freedom for you to do what you are willing to do at school. If I want to develop a project, I feel supported. (Elementary school teacher, 15 years of teaching)
>
> The effort that you make is recognised and valued. And this gives you strength to carry on and to get involved in activities at school. I guess it has to do with leadership. (Elementary school teacher, 20 years of teaching)

2.9   Being a Good Teacher Is Being a Leader of Learning

Teacher leadership emerged as a theme from the data when the participants talked about good teaching and quality teachers in the complex settings in which they have to work. However, leadership is not only the exercise of a formal role or position in school management structures; rather teachers proposed a non-positional perspective (Frost 2012). In other words, it has to do with different ways in which teachers make a difference in their school contexts. Some of them are informal leaders who are able to influence and mobilise others. In this context, Poekert (2012) argues for the centrality of leadership that is built "on influence and interaction, rather than power and authority" (p. 171). Teacher leaders are, therefore, key elements at school not only in terms of decisions and knowledge but also in the ways in which they influence the dynamics of the school by leading projects, mobilising their colleagues and pupils, interacting with parents and the community and so on. Teachers are therefore seen as agents of change and leaders of pupils' learning and also of their own learning:

> In the classroom I see myself as a leader. (Elementary school teacher, 27 years of teaching)
>
> As a teacher you need to be a leader in the classroom context, right? Everyone is a leader in his/her own way. (Primary school teacher, 26 years of teaching)

The classroom context is associated with this informal dimension of leadership. For the participants, teachers are leaders of teaching and learning in the classroom when

they suggest and develop pedagogical activities. This kind of leadership is also visible in the pedagogical interaction with the pupils, which is related to the capacity to mobilise others, to influence them and to make a difference in their lives:

> As a teacher you may influence your colleagues and your pupils. You may also be led by your pupils … You have to be a leader in the classroom. (Secondary school teacher, 33 years of teaching)
>
> I see myself as a leader. I like to lead things I believe in. (Secondary school teacher, 17 years of teaching)

The head teachers participating in the study also stressed the role of teacher leaders, their ability to influence and mobilise others, to get people motivated and to lead learning in their workplace:

> Teacher leaders are able to motivate, to get people involved for instance in a project or with a group of teachers … they are able to get people engaged and make them do things at school. (Head teacher, 19 years of experience)
>
> A teacher leader is able to bond to others and to foster a good climate at school. You get people engaged at school. (Head teacher, 23 years of experience)

Pupils also spoke of the leadership element in their teachers' work. Issues such as inspiration, motivation and passion were at the forefront of their accounts:

> A leader is the one who is able to motivate you, someone that you respect and respects you. You feel like doing what they say. (Pupil, 16 years old)
>
> He inspires you and you feel like working with him. (Pupil, 12 years old)
>
> Teacher leaders are competent. Many of their characteristics come from them being good teachers, they have good relationships and they are able to maintain a formal but not strict relationship with their students. (Pupil, 16 years old)

2.10   Good Teaching Goes Beyond Outcomes: Care, Dedication and Focus on Learning

Some teachers also spoke of factors that they consider to be important when defining good teaching. They stressed teachers' good performance, despite the existence of competitiveness and individualism due, to a great extent, to teacher evaluation marked by a summative orientation. Some of them stress that good teaching is related to outcomes but goes beyond that. It has to do with teachers' professionalism and their commitment to students, to their learning and well-being. The following quotations illustrate teachers' views of the quality of the work that they do in schools:

> You need to triangulate teaching, learning and assessment. In terms of outcomes, this school is one of the top schools in this district. We have had the best marks ever in the final external exams. This is ongoing work done by all of us. That is why we make connections among all sectors, especially with the primary sector and even in regard to preschool projects. These projects are fruitful. (Elementary school teacher, 24 years of teaching)
>
> In terms of teaching this is a very good school, even in terms of outcomes. We have reached a very good stage. And even if the national average was not so good, this school did

well in terms of teaching. So you can see that there is a good quality of teaching. (Primary school teacher, 12 years of teaching)

Similarly, head teachers also spoke of quality teaching and teacher quality when they described the "niches of excellence". The following quotation is an eloquent description of the holistic and transformative view of education in which teachers play a key role:

The school is a means of transformation for excellence. The school needs to transform social realities; it needs to change the contexts that we know are not positive. School needs to transform a given reality: if there is a literacy problem, school needs to face it and solve this problem … therefore the school has to provoke a positive effect in the community. It needs to provide pupils with tools for critical analysis of the world and to create the conditions for them to learn by participating in the educational process. (Head teacher, 18 years of experience)

Another head teacher highlighted the pivotal role of teachers in improving education. They are seen as the face of the school and their work needs to be recognised, valued and supported:

Teachers are the face of the school. The school is what its teachers are. If you want to develop a negative image of a school the teachers will keep this negative view; if you want to demonstrate a positive view of the school, teachers also have this kind of image. So, it has to do with what teachers do and how persistent they are in their daily lives at school. (Head teacher, 18 years of experience)

Many pupils were also clear in describing their good teachers. They referred to the joy of teaching but also to the joy of learning and to their teachers' passion for what they do:

They know how to be teachers; we work but sometimes we do also have fun in order to learn. (Pupil, 10 years old)

There is a balance … they are not too authoritarian nor laissez-faire. You end up liking them, they keep the order in the classroom, they are demanding but they are very clear when they teach us and you feel that you can learn. (Pupil, 14 years old)

Issues such as commitment, joy of teaching and learning, focus on good relationship and care are but a few examples of the ways in which pupils described the qualities of their teachers as well as their quality teaching. This is in line with previous work. Bakx et al. (2015), in their study on pupils' perceptions of teacher quality in primary education, found that pupils' perceptions were extensive. Pupils identified a wide range of different characteristics encompassing the personality of the teachers, didactic skills and guidance, and authority. Similarly, Beishuizen et al. (2001), in a study comparing students' and teachers' views about what makes a good teacher, concluded that primary school pupils described good teachers primarily as competent instructors, focusing on transfer of knowledge and skills, whereas secondary school students emphasised relational aspects of good teachers. Teachers associated good teachers with establishing personal relationships with their students. Kutnick and Jules (1993) also found that older pupils stated that good teachers must be well trained and highly motivated and should be sensitive and responsive to the needs of pupils, drawing the pupils into the learning process:

My teacher has a good relationship with the other teachers. (Pupil, 9 years old)

He is great. He is able to get you motivated. It has to do with his way of teaching … you feel like you want to listen to what he has to say. (Pupil, 10 years old)

It has to do with their attitude. They insist so that you are able to learn. They don't give up on you. They have lots of experience in this school and they understand if we are learning or not. Even if you say, "I got it", they would guess that you didn't get it and they help you in your learning. (Secondary school student, 18 years old)

You notice that they like you and they care about you. (Female secondary school, 18 years old)

Despite the various constraints and obstacles teachers have to face in their working contexts, their accounts also revealed examples of "niches of excellence" in the classroom context. Committed professionalism, dedication and care for the students were at the forefront of their accounts. Added to this are issues of resilience and identity, which teachers related to their professional values and beliefs about teaching and being a teacher.

2.11   Being Resilient and Maintaining the Joy of Teaching

Gu and Day (2007) state that resilience, as a multidimensional, socially constructed concept, is situated in the discourse of teaching as an emotional practice and it is relative, dynamic and developmental in nature. Some teachers were very clear when they talked about the ways in which they resisted and became more resilient in order to keep motivated and to maintain their joy of teaching despite "all the things that go wrong in education":

As a teacher you feel unmotivated with all that is going on in education, but you need a positive attitude in order to motivate your students for learning. (Secondary school teacher, 21 years of experience)

Even though you are unmotivated you need to focus on your pupils' motivation. You want them to do well at school. You are concerned with their learning and wellbeing. I try to be professional as much as I can. (Primary school teacher, 26 years of teaching)

Teachers participating in this study stressed that what made them stay in teaching were the pupils as well as the positive relationships at school and a supportive and encouraging school culture and leadership. They draw upon their sense of vocation (their commitment and willingness to make a difference in their students' lives) in order to face adverse contexts of teaching. Students were seen as sources of motivation and the classroom as a safe and enjoyable context, which stands in sharp contrast to the external environment marked by the lack of recognition of the teaching profession, the lack of trust and the criticisms of teachers and their work:

I try to focus on my pupils and on my work with them in the classroom. That is why I became a teacher in the first place! (Elementary school teacher, 16 years of teaching)

As a teacher you may lack motivation in regard to everything, to salary cuts, to what has been taken away from you, but as far as your work with the students is concerned you do everything you can. You do your best. (Elementary school teacher, 17 years of teaching)

> It is professionalism that makes you do what you do … nobody is able to deal with so much work … it is because teachers are professionals that they do what they do. (Elementary school teacher, 33 years of teaching)

Issues of professionalism and a sense of vocation were recurring elements in teachers' accounts. The positive and supportive "ethos" of their workplace was also a key factor in teachers' resilience and hope. They spoke of the supportive and encouraging leadership, trust and positive relationships with colleagues and the core element of teaching, namely, the relationships in teaching:

> Maybe you learn more when you have a chat with a colleague in the staffroom having a cup of tea or coffee rather than in those compulsory in-service activities that you have to do in order to get credits to progress in your career. Your day-to-day experience is important … trying to figure out what and why you are doing so and so. This is very important for your professional growth as a teacher as well as sharing materials with colleagues and working closely with them. (Secondary school teacher, 33 years of teaching)

Although, in general, there is a negative policy environment along with the deterioration of working conditions, some teachers seemed to remain committed to their students and to the social and moral purposes of teaching. They have strong motivations and beliefs about what it means for them to be a teacher, which relate to their professionalism and sense of identity and to their capacity for resilience in adverse contexts:

> I can say that it is a pleasure to come to school and work with my pupils. You may find this a bit awkward due to the status of the teaching profession nowadays. But I do feel this way. It is really a pleasure for me to work with my pupils in the classroom. (Elementary school teacher, 20 years of teaching)
> I feel happy when I am with my pupils. My coming to school is not a pleasure anymore but I still enjoy working with my pupils. (Preschool teacher, 33 years of experience)

In the next section, I will summarise the main findings and discuss them in the light of existing literature. Drawing upon empirical evidence from this study, I will promote a view of teachers as leaders of learning and discuss four core issues, namely, motivation, resilience, innovation of practice and committed professionalism.

2.12   Conclusions and Discussion

This chapter sets out to examine teacher quality drawing upon international literature and empirical work carried out in Portugal. Existing literature points to a diversity of understandings of teacher quality which depend on a wide array of factors, particularly specific visions of professionalism and goals for education. Added to this are also issues pertaining to knowledge, skills, attitudes, dispositions and values of teachers, resources allocated to them and the contexts in which they work. Quality is then a complex, multifaceted personal construct, reflecting the views of learning

that the teacher and the learner (and other stakeholders) use which are dependent upon the local context (Hilton et al. 2013). It is therefore important to take into account the perspectives of the various stakeholders as well as the context. The last part of the chapter discusses the key issues arising from the study as well as from existing literature to try to form a more holistic view of teacher quality.

2.12.1 *The Dynamic and Context-Dependent Nature of Quality*

Teacher quality is a complex concept that needs to be understood in context. It entails consideration of the political, social, professional and personal dimensions in order to move beyond a simplistic view of quality, which is often associated with an outcome-oriented perspective. As a dynamic concept, it relates to different expectations of various stakeholders. As seen in the first part of this chapter, the existing literature points to a focus on pupil outcome and on teachers' characteristics. However, context does need to be taken into account in order to unpack teacher quality. Santelices et al. (2017) found that context (both at the school and municipal levels) plays an important role in teacher effectiveness and in standards-based measures of teacher quality.

The study described in this chapter also points to a number of key issues that may be used to frame teacher quality, not only in teacher education but also in the early years of teaching. A number of questions might be asked. Are we training teachers for the complex and changing contexts of teaching (at the social, economic, political and cultural levels)? How should they be prepared for being creative and resilient in adverse contexts, as illustrated in this study? What kind of support and guidance should be provided for new teachers in order for them to deal with tensions and contradictions inherent in their work? How can highly motivated and resilient teachers be better educated and supported not only during initial teacher education but also in the early years of teaching? How can we provide early career teachers with high-quality mentors, especially in challenging contexts? These are key questions when discussing teacher quality, particularly in the early years of teaching. As Ben-Peretz and Flores (2018) stressed, the current tensions and paradoxes in teaching have implications for teacher education. They stress the need to prepare teachers for professional autonomy in a world of externally imposed educational policy along with the tension between achieving immediate results and success in external exams versus the need to prepare students in an era of migration and growing multiculturalism.

Figure 1 summarises some of the key issues arising from the analysis of the international literature as well as from findings of the research project described in this chapter.

Fig. 1 Key issues for
understanding teacher
quality
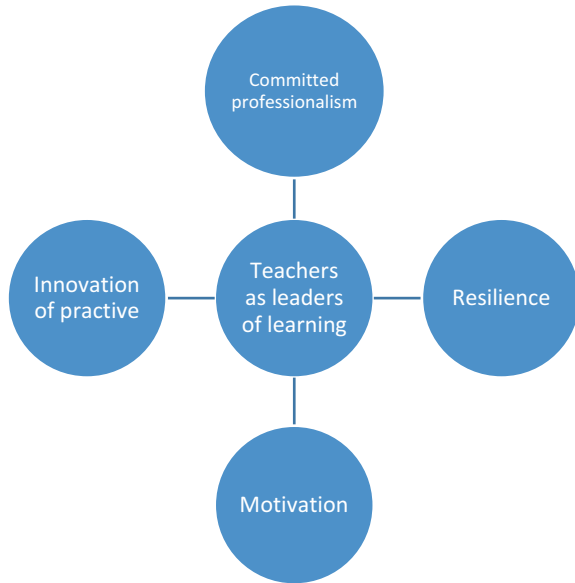
2.12.2   Teachers as Leaders of Learning: Motivation, Innovation, Commitment and Resilience

Teachers play a key role in fulfilling the mission of the school. The view of teachers as leaders of learning lies at the heart of the view of teacher quality arising from the empirical data. Teachers have to be engaged in their own learning as well as leading the learning of their pupils and colleagues. It is within this perspective that teacher leadership plays a key role. Teachers can make a difference in the contexts in which they work by influencing and mobilising their colleagues, pupils, parents and the community. This entails a notion of leadership that includes a formal but also an informal dimension; the former is related to the exercise of a designated role in the school structures (e.g. head of department); the latter is associated with the ways in which teachers are able to influence others in their workplace. Additional research is needed on the role of teacher leaders: who they are, what they do, how they exercise leadership and the outcomes of their leadership in the schools in which they work.

In the study reported in this chapter, the participating teachers saw the classroom as the professional space for autonomy and job satisfaction. Despite a number of constraints, teachers exercise professionalism in the classroom and are involved in the creation of a positive climate in which affective and cognitive dimensions of teaching can flourish. Innovation of practice therefore becomes a key element in their professional action. Teachers talked about the importance of being creative in different ways in order to meet the challenges of their workplace in adverse circumstances. Thus, in order to be leaders of learning, teachers have to possess knowl-

edge, attitudes, behaviours, values and dispositions to develop creative ways to foster pupils' learning and to create an innovative classroom practice. These are key issues in educating and developing teachers as leaders of learning not only in initial teacher preparation but also in their professional growth. This entails a view of teaching that goes beyond an outcome-oriented approach, one which emphasises the process of teaching and learning in creative ways, even in challenging contexts, and not only on mere summative assessing of what pupils have learned in or outside the school (Flores 2016a).

Therefore, motivation and resilience are also two key features that teachers as leaders of learning possess. In the study described in this chapter, external factors and sources of disillusionment were identified on the one hand, namely, greater control over teachers' work by the Ministry of Education, greater accountability, bureaucracy and intensification along with the deterioration of working conditions. On the other hand, the participants identified internal factors linked to sources of motivation and encouragement at the school and classroom level. Despite the increased complexity and demanding nature of their work, some teachers were able to exercise their professional activities in a more proactive way. They spoke of the relevance of pupils as source of motivation as well as the existence of a supportive climate at school, namely, encouragement from the school leadership and positive relationships with colleagues. Through their voices it was possible to identify committed professionalism as a pivotal factor in determining the ways in which they are as teachers and the ways in which they act. Their beliefs as teachers, their strong professional values, their sense of professionalism and their capacity for resisting and for being resilient (despite the negative policy environment and, in some cases, workplace context) as well as their sense of identity as teachers explain why some teachers are more resilient than others. Day and Gu (2014) argue that resilience is a relational concept which "recognises the interactive impact of personal, professional and situated factors on teachers' work and lives and contextualizes teachers' endeavours to sustain their professional commitment" (p. 11). Despite the external factors leading to lack of motivation such as lack of career prospects, salary cuts and worsening of working conditions, the relational and affective dimensions of teaching emerged as important sources of motivation and resilience. Teachers might be situated within constrained professionalism as their autonomy in the classroom context might be influenced by standardisation of curriculum and national exams (Willis and Haymore Sandholtz 2009) or they might make use of their professional space even in contexts marked by growing standardisation (Oolbekkink-Marchand et al. 2017). It is therefore possible to identify a tension in teachers between disenchantment and resignation versus being proactive and resilient. It is within this tension that some of the teachers make decisions, take risks and make choices between what is essential and non-essential in their work, and they choose to stay committed to their learning, the learning of their pupils and their well-being. In other words, quality teachers are motivated and passionate about teaching. They are able to develop differentiated pedagogies in the classroom, they are leaders of learning, and they are resilient and engaged professionals maintaining their core values as teachers and their personal and professional commitment.

Thus, if teacher quality is to be enhanced, a broader and contextual perspective needs to be considered. Such a view needs to go beyond the identification of a set of standards, which is generally associated with issues of performativity and managerialism. A more comprehensive understanding of teacher quality takes into account contextual, professional, political and personal dimensions. As such, there is a need to deconstruct the sometimes over-simplistic views and discourses of teacher quality and to question the tensions and contradictions in teacher professionalism and in teacher education. This has implications for the ways in which teachers' work is understood and supported, particularly for those in the early years of teaching. Teachers, and in particular early career teachers, may benefit, for instance, from mentors who are leaders of learning, who are highly committed and resilient professionals, who are able to read and respond to the complex contexts in which they work and to position themselves in a more proactive and leading role for the benefit of their pupils. Teacher education needs therefore to go beyond a normative and instrumental view of teaching in which teachers are seen as mere consumers and doers of the curriculum and to entail and develop a view of teachers as agents of change and leaders of learning.

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Chapter 3
"Classroom-Ready Teachers"

Gaps, Silences and Contradictions in the Australian Report into Teacher Education

Barry Down and Anna Sullivan

Abstract Internationally, there has been considerable political activity around the question of how to better prepare quality teachers and make training institutions more accountable. In Australia, the 2014 report *Action now: classroom ready teachers* illustrates many of the underlying assumptions, perceived problems and potential solutions driving this agenda. This report, similar to reports in other countries, reinforces the public perception that the "quality" of teachers is deteriorating and the only solution is to intensify accountability regimes through increased levels of control. To this end, the Australian federal government committed $16.9 million to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership to ensure that "teachers are better trained". This involves a greater focus on accountability, accreditation, regulation, selection, assessment, content and evidence about "what works". This chapter critically reflects on the Australian *Action now: classroom ready teachers* report as a case study of policy rhetoric and policy reality. Drawing on the tradition of critical policy analysis, the chapter sets out to examine (i) the broader social context in which this reform initiative is located, (ii) the key normative values and assumptions underpinning the report, (iii) gaps, silences and contradictions in policy discourses, and (iv) alternative conceptions of teacher education grounded in a more relational and intellectually engaged response.

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3.1 Introduction

Internationally, there has been considerable political activity around the question of how to better prepare quality teachers and make teacher training institutions more accountable. Reports such as the *Carter review of initial teacher training (ITT)* (Carter 2015) in England, the *Teacher prep review: a review of the nation's teacher preparation programs* (Greenberg et al. 2013) in the United States and *Action now: classroom ready teachers* (TEMAG 2014) in Australia provide some clues into the underlying assumptions, perceived problems and potential solutions driving this agenda. Each of these reports, in its own way, reinforces the public perception that the "quality" of teachers is deteriorating and the only solution is to ratchet up accountability regimes through increased levels of control. This chapter critically examines a recent report released in Australia to gain a better understanding of the policy rhetoric and policy reality facing teacher education today.

In December 2014 the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) submitted its report *Action now: classroom ready teachers* (hereafter *Action now*) to the federal Minister of Education at the time, Christopher Pyne. Professor Greg Craven, TEMAG Chair and Vice Chancellor at the Australian Catholic University, wrote to the minister declaring that "Teachers matter". He went on to say that teachers "deserve the very best preparation so that they can be successful from their first day in the classroom. Strengthening initial teacher education is critical to ensure that the quality of Australian teaching is world class" (TEMAG 2014, p. v).

At one level, it is hard to disagree with Craven's sentiment; who would not want the very best teachers for their children? The desirability of preparing good teachers is, therefore, not the issue here; it is a given. Instead, we want to start from a different place by arguing that policy discourses contained in educational reports such as *Action now* are neither neutral nor innocent but reflect a particular vision, conception and practice of teaching. Our intention is to critically reflect on the bigger question of what it means to teach in neo-liberal and neoconservative times (Giroux 2004), how this translates into a narrowly conceived and instrumentalist understanding of the "good teacher", and how these constructions of teachers' work are legitimated, disseminated and governed. Importantly, we want to advance a new set of possibilities based on a more relational and intellectually grounded conception of teaching. To this end, the chapter is organised around a number of key themes. First, we provide an overview of the main messages and recommendations contained in the *Action now* report. Second, we identify some key features of critical policy analysis and why it matters in these uncertain times. Third, we examine some major gaps, silences and contradictions in the report. Finally, we open up some new lines of inquiry as we endeavour to reimagine what it means to teach, ethically, politically and intellectually. But first, we want to say something about our theoretical and methodological orientation in this analysis.

3.2   Theoretical and Methodological Orientation

In this section we elaborate on the major theoretical tenets of critical policy analysis to help us make sense of the *Action now* report. We shall briefly describe what it means to engage in critical policy analysis and why it is important at this time.

"The meaning of policy is frequently either taken for granted and/or seen as an attempt to 'solve a problem'" (Maguire et al. 2015, p. 485). We argue that this normative view of policy is problematic because it ignores the messiness and complexity of how policies are enacted in context. Adopting a critical perspective allows policy to be understood in more nuanced ways. It allows policy to be "understood as complex, inherently political, and infused with values rather than as a linear process that parallels a rational model of decision making" (Winton and Tuters 2015, p. 123). Also it allows for policy to be understood as "both product and process" which is "ongoing and dynamic" (Taylor et al. 1997, p. 23). That is:

> Policy is much more than a specific policy document or text. Rather, policy is both process and product … policy involves the production of the text, the text itself, ongoing modifications to the text and processes of implementation into practice … we see policy as being more complex, interactive and multi-layered. (Taylor et al. 1997, pp. 24–25)

One of the main goals of critical policy analysis "is to shed light on how everyday policies, structures, and processes perpetuate and reproduce systems of domination and oppression" (Young and Diem 2014, p. 1065). Critical policy studies pay close attention to the policy context, that is, the "complex systems and environments in which policy is made and implemented" (Diem et al. 2014, p. 1073), and provide a "contextualized understanding of their research findings, reflecting the complexity of the policies, people, schools, and communities they impact" (p. 1082). Additionally, critical policy studies investigate policy constructions. They examine the construction of a specific policy by "'unpacking the assumptions,' exploring the foundational ideas 'underpinning the policy,' or 'unpacking the sense making' of policy discourse" (Diem et al. 2014, p. 1077). In this analysis, the silences are explored by attending to "what the policy says and doesn't say, looking at how problems and solutions are defined and not defined" (Diem et al. 2014, p. 1077). Critical policy analysis is particularly important because, as Codd (1988) explains:

> Policy documents can be said to constitute the official discourse of the state (Codd, 1988). Thus policies produced by and for the state are obvious instances in which language serves a political purpose, constructing particular meanings and signs that work to mask social conflict and foster commitment to the notion of universal public interest. In this way, policy documents produce real social effects through the production and maintenance of consent. (p. 237)

Diem et al. (2014) argue that the emergence of critical policy analysis is both "a response to conditions in education and signal[s] an important shift in the field" (p. 1069). They assert that critical approaches to policy analysis:

1. involve an interrogation of the policy process, the use of policy symbols and rhetorical devices as well as the delineation of the differences between policy rhetoric and policy reality;

2. examine the roots and development of policy, including how policies emerge, what problems they are intended to solve, and how they reinforce dominant culture;
3. uncover elements of social stratification, the distribution of power, resources, and knowledge in policy creation and implementation, and the creation of winners and losers;
4. explore the broader and deeper effects of policy work, such as the institutionalization and internalization of dominant culture; and
5. promote agency, resistance, advocacy, and praxis. (p. 1083)

Concerns have been raised that teachers have been written out of the policy process by a range of interest groups and need to be reinserted back into the policy process (Gale and Densmore 2003, pp. 47–51). Critical policy analysis "emphasises the importance of examining policy within its historical, social, economic, cultural, and political contexts" (Winton and Tuters 2015, p. 123).

In Australia, the policy context is complex. There are two main levels of government responsible for schooling: federal and state/territory governments. The state/territory governments have constitutional responsibility for education, and thus they have primary responsibility for its regulation and funding. However, the federal government imposes national policies and a regulatory regime that often ties federal funding to performance outcomes. The *Action now* report is a federal "mechanism" aimed at influencing education in the states and territories. In this chapter, we provide a critical policy analysis of the *Action now* report.

3.3 The Four C's: Concern, Competence, Compliance and Conformity

In this section we argue that the *Action now* report is preoccupied with the four C's: concern, competence, compliance and conformity. This should hardly be surprising given the political and media controversy surrounding teacher quality at the time (see Mockler, this volume). Significant column space was handed over to conservative commentators who effectively shaped what Berliner and Biddle (1995) describe as a "manufactured crisis" based on a set of neo-liberal and neoconservative views about standards, teacher quality, teacher training and back-to-basics teaching methods. Ball (2006) describes such attacks as "discourses of derision" or the deliberate attempt to portray "an imagery of crisis and chaos" (p. 28) in order to reassert control over education and return to traditional teaching methods. Typically such criticisms are focused around three themes: falling academic standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy; left-wing teachers and academics influenced by the ideas of socialism, feminism, sustainability and egalitarianism; and poor behaviour and discipline (pp. 28–29).

We argue that these debates are a part of the wider "culture wars" initiated by the former Prime Minister John Howard (and his successor Tony Abbott) who wanted a return to more traditional teaching methods focused on the heritage of western civil-

isation and the study of the three R's. For conservative media commentators such as Donnelly (2004) this means:

- adopting a strong, discipline-based approach to school subjects (especially maths and science);
- enforcing system accountability and explicit rewards and sanctions (identify under-performing schools and reward successful teachers);
- defining clear educational standards (not outcomes, as is the case in Australia) linked to textbooks, teacher training and classroom resources;
- having greater time on task in the classroom and an emphasis on formal teaching;
- having regular testing and high-risk examinations; and
- providing a differentiated curriculum and a range of school pathways (recognising that students have different abilities, interests and post-school destinations). (p. 179)

The aim was to remove the influence of the so-called *soft left*, which Howard warned still held sway in educational and cultural life (Shanahan 2006, p. 4). In this climate, progressive educators (and ideas) were blamed for everything that was wrong with education and society in general. In the words of Welch (1996), it was "a moral-political campaign to wrest control of society from supporters of tolerance, difference and democratic self-expression, and return to those who hanker for a more monolithic, certain and authoritarian world" (p. 101).

Our argument is that the *Action now* report can only be properly comprehended in the context of these wider ideological struggles. Let us elaborate on this argument a little further, by first summarising the major concerns of the report and then explaining why competence, compliance and conformity seem to flow so easily. At the outset, the *Action now* report acknowledges the "significant public concern over the quality of teacher education in Australia", a situation "intensified by both media comment and political intervention" (TEMAG 2014, p. viii). Following extensive consultation across the education community, the report identified seven key concerns (findings), among them:

1. National standards are weakly applied. The assumption is that if the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures were more rigorously applied and implemented teaching quality would improve.
2. Australians are not confident about the suitability of entrants to initial teacher education including academic and personal characteristics. The response is to increase academic entry scores (ATAR) and mandate a compulsory literacy and numeracy test to restore confidence.
3. There is evidence that initial teacher education programs are not equipping graduates with appropriate content knowledge, evidence-based teaching strategies and skills required to meet different student learning needs. Thus, greater emphasis should be given to content- ("subject") based knowledge and skills training, especially in the field of STEM.

4. Teacher education providers are insufficiently integrated with schools and systems especially regarding school experience and the integration of theory and practice. The solution is to give greater weight to school-based practice at the expense of philosophical, sociological, aesthetic and critical inquiry.
5. Teacher education providers are not adequately applying (professional) standards when assessing the "classroom readiness" of teacher candidates. To address this problem the report supports heightened levels of quality assurance, regulation and accreditation processes.
6. Beginning teachers are not receiving sufficient professional support as they transition into the workplace. The report urges employers to take a more proactive approach to the induction and retention of graduate teachers.
7. There are gaps in crucial information, including workforce data related to the effectiveness of initial teacher education and students entering the profession. In other words, more data is required to evaluate whether training providers are meeting employers' needs and expectations (TEMAG 2014, pp. viii–ix).

In light of these concerns, the report proceeds to identify a number of regulatory actions to address the problem of teacher quality, among them:

1. *A strengthened national quality assurance process*: That will "rigorously" assess the quality of graduates based on "solid research" and "ongoing monitoring and examination of the impact of programs". Programs that fail to reach these goals "should not continue to operate" – the report states. Quality is best achieved, it argues, by having "a strengthened accreditation process" ideally administered by "a national initial teacher education regulator" (TEMAG 2014, p. x).
2. *Sophisticated and transparent selection for entry to teaching*: The report acknowledges "a unanimous view" on the necessity of having the "best people" in teacher education. This requires "a blend of sophisticated approaches to select entrants that have both the academic skills – including literacy and numeracy skills – and the desirable personal attributes for teaching". (p. x)
3. *Integration of theory and practice*: Pre-service teachers must be given opportunities to integrate theory and practice and in the process develop "a thorough knowledge of the content they will go on to teach". (p. x)
4. *Robust assurance of classroom readiness*: The report endeavours to instil public confidence by ensuring that all graduates "have been rigorously assessed and found to be ready for the classroom". (p. xi)
5. *National research and capability*: Finally, the report highlights the necessity to create national leadership and capability to "drive strong, evidence-based practice" combined with "a strengthened teacher registration system". (p. xi)

We contend that these kinds of regulatory mechanisms reveal a fundamental distrust of teachers and the professions more broadly (Connell 2009, p. 222). Lynch et al. (2015) put this issue into context when they argue that the new managerial and neoliberal project has led to "market-led models of control and regulation as the new prototype for work organisations" (p. 4). In the process, it has effectively "redefined

what counts as knowledge, who are the bearers of such knowledge and who is empowered to act – all within a legitimate framework of public choice and market accountability" (p. 4; see also Smyth et al. 2000).

The upshot is that new managerialism has effectively reconstituted the nature of teaching through a range of disciplining techniques, such as intensification, performativity, accountability, casualisation, deskilling and de-professionalisation (Gleeson and Husbands 2001; Smyth 2001; Gewirtz et al. 2009; Clarke et al. 2000). Furthermore, it has diminished the relational and ethical dimensions of teaching especially as it relates to the complex lives of students (e.g., poverty, health and well-being, mental illness, disengagement, alienation, drug and alcohol abuse, family violence and unemployment). Against this backdrop, politicians have shown a greater willingness to blame the victim, hence the focus on "fixing" individual deficits rather than locating the problem in the context of historical, institutional and structural arrangements (Mills 1971; Schwalbe 1998). As a consequence, individual teachers are held accountable for things over which they have little or no control. Put simply, we argue that teaching cannot be divorced from the wider social context in which it is located.

Whilst these muscular forms of accountability might have broad popular appeal, there are two major limitations as we see it. First, there is an assumption that top-down educational reforms actually work. As Cochran-Smith and her colleagues (Cochran-Smith et al. 2016) explain in the American context, there is "thin evidence to support the claims proponents make about how the assumed policy mechanisms will actually operate to improve programs" (p. 3). In other words, there is no attempt to explain the theory of change behind the report or how its recommendations will actually meet its stated goals. Cochran-Smith et al. (2016) point to the irony of policies which call for teacher education programs and institutions to make decisions based on evidence, even though the policies themselves are not evidence-based (p. 3). We are in agreement with Cochran-Smith et al.'s (2016) argument that there needs to be

> a conceptual shift away from teacher education *accountability* that is primarily bureaucratic or market-based and toward teacher education *responsibility* that is primarily professional and that acknowledges the shared responsibility of teacher education programs, schools, and policymakers to prepare and support teachers. (p. 5)

In other words, it would be helpful to have a clearly articulated understanding both conceptually and practically of the change process itself. It seems to us that without some explanation of how change happens, or not, there will be a mismatch between the stated policy goals (rhetoric) and implementation and outcomes (reality). We need look no further than the concerns surrounding the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education (LANTITE). Again, there is no evidence to indicate that simplistic standardised tests of this kind will lead to improved teacher quality in literacy and numeracy. In fact, some would argue that there is in fact no "general literacy crisis" based on the evidence (Welch 1996, pp. 84–90). Furthermore, it provides no basis on which to help teachers build the sophisticated knowledge and skills required for teaching in an increasingly complex, diverse and rapidly changing world.

Second, there is a default view that "good teachers" are those who best comply with "organizational requirements" which are couched in the language of standards and corporate managerialism (Connell 2009, p. 219). Therefore, it is hardly surprising to find words like "effectiveness", "improvement", "quality assurance", "evidence", "capabilities", "stakeholders", "outcomes", "achievement", "best practice" and "benchmarking" scattered throughout the report, hardly words associated with the everyday vernacular of classroom teachers. Here, we are in agreement with Connell (2009) when she argues that corporate language provides a "powerful rhetorical effect" in shaping the notion of the "good teacher" – an "entrepreneurial self" moulded on "specific, auditable competencies and performances" (p. 220). As a consequence, the report falls back on a low-level "teacher competency model" linked to the emergence of "a market-oriented political and cultural order" (p. 217). In this context, the notion of the "good teacher" is reconstituted within a set of neoliberalising discourses divorced from the broader social context and a diminished vision of what it means to teach.

In contrast, we advocate an orientation to educational reform that avoids the pitfalls of what Daniels (1995) describes as "centralized, top-down, Nation at Risk, policing-orientated, rap-their-knuckles" approaches (p. 18). Like Daniels, we are committed to a "teacher-driven, grassroots, bottom-up, basically democratic movement that says that what we do in schools doesn't work. We've got to change what we teach and the way we teach it" (p. 18). As Shor (1999) argues, such approaches "represent [a] different politics, different models for teaching and learning, and finally different visions of the people and society we should build through education" (p. vii). We will expand on this alternative vision of teaching in the final part of the chapter.

3.4   Gaps, Silences and Contradictions

In the context of these introductory remarks, we want to identify some fundamental gaps, silences and contradictions in the *Action now* report. It is our contention that if we are serious about raising the standard of teaching then we need to challenge the dominant discourses represented in the report and, at the same time, generate some alternative possibilities. In pursuing this task, we have organised this section around six key questions (or provocations) to help us reframe existing conversations in a more critical manner, namely:

- What is happening to teachers' work?
- What is wrong with standards?
- How do we account for complexity?
- What happened to the relational?
- What and whose evidence counts?
- What does it mean to teach?

We believe each of these questions can help us to rethink the issue of teaching quality and how we might better understand and improve practice.

3.4.1 What Is Happening to Teachers' Work?

In the previous section we argued that an understanding of what is happening to teachers' work cannot be divorced from the broader neo-liberal and new managerial project. Pasi Sahlberg (2011) uses the term Global Educational Reform Movement (GERM) to describe an unofficial exchange of global educational policies and practices based on a particular set of assumptions about how to improve education systems (p. 99). He argues a new educational orthodoxy has been promoted and widely disseminated through "the strategies and interests of international development agencies, bilateral donors, and private consultants through their interventions in national educational reforms and policy-making processes" (p. 99). In this environment, educational reform imitates management and administration models based on the operational logic of private corporations (p. 103). There are two underlying assumptions driving these GERM reform efforts: first, "external performance standards, describing what teachers should teach and students should do and learn, lead to better learning for all"; and second, "competition between school, teachers, and students is the most productive way to raise the quality of education" (pp. 104–105).

Sahlberg (2011) argues that GERM has had significant consequences for teachers' work and students' learning, for example, standardising teaching and learning, the focus on literacy and numeracy, teaching prescribed curriculum, borrowing market-oriented reform ideas and test-based accountability. In contrast, the successful Finnish model, he argues, places greater emphasis on customising teaching and learning, focusing on creative learning, encouraging risk taking, learning from the past and owning innovations, and sharing responsibility and trust (p. 103).

Therefore, it is indeed surprising that Australia continues to pursue neo-liberal and managerial policy initiatives:

- That require teachers to work within more rigidly defined policy frameworks and guidelines, of one kind or another;
- That place greater emphasis on determining the worth of teaching in terms of measurable outcomes;
- That supposedly make teachers more accountable by linking outcomes to the actions and activities of individual teachers, classrooms, and schools;
- That move teachers and schools in the direction of processes that are more appropriate to those of the corporate and industrial sector – performance appraisal, curriculum audits, quality assurance, and the like; and
- That preach the virtues of education and schooling being no different to any other commodity – to be measured and calibrated according to quality standards; packaged and delivered to targeted audiences; and haggled over in the artificially constructed user-pays marketplace of education. (Smyth and Shacklock 1998, p. 23)

We need look no further than the proliferation of testing and accountability regimes at global and national levels to appreciate the damaging impact on teachers' work (Lingard et al. 2013). Driving this policy obsession is the assumption that high-stakes standardised testing will "drive up standards and enhance the quality of a nation's human capital and thus their international economic competitiveness" (Lingard et al. 2013, p. 540). As Lingard et al. (2013) explain it, "we have entered

the era of 'big data' where computer capacity and the 'datafication' of the world …
has particular policy effects in terms of mobilizing biopower and driving neoliberal
forms of governance" or what they term "global panopticism" (p. 542). We share
their concerns about these developments: first, there is no "horizontal accountability
of schools to their communities or communities to their schools" (p. 544); second,
the "involvement (both actual and potential) … of private interests, edu-businesses
and philanthropic organisations" creates a potential "democratic deficit" (p. 545);
and finally, testing "decontextualizes schools, denying the impact of structural
inequality (both within and between nations) and lays all responsibility for perfor-
mance at the feet of teachers and individual schools" (p. 546). Yet, despite all the
rhetoric, "little evidence exists that there's any educational substance behind the
accountability and testing movement" (Stack 1999, p. 155). In reality, what we are
witnessing is the subordination of teachers' work to the political, economic and
ideological interests of politicians, educational bureaucrats and business elites.

3.4.2   What Is Wrong with Standards?

The debate over standards in teacher education has been a twin-edged sword.
Kincheloe (2001b) contends that, on the one hand, it has offered hope to many edu-
cators and policymakers wanting to improve the quality of teaching. On the other
hand, however, the quality of the debate itself has been disappointing (p. 1). We
share Kincheloe's (2001b) concern especially as it relates to the failure to problema-
tise the notion of standards beyond a narrowly conceived and technicist interpreta-
tion of teaching. In other words, teacher education is too often focused on practical
matters related to classroom survival, transmission of knowledge and classroom
management, thus "leaving the scholarly role of the teacher unaddressed" (p. 52).

Herein lies a major contradiction of the *Action now* report. Whilst it advocates
improving the standard of pre-service teachers, it assumes that the existing stan-
dards document actually fosters the qualities that characterise "the academic/practi-
cal/cognitive skills of a rigorously educated person in the twenty-first century"
(Kincheloe 2001b, p. 2). The *Action now* report assumes that the "rigorous" imple-
mentation and auditing of the national standards will provide a panacea that will
improve teacher quality. There is a leap of faith here that a list of standards organ-
ised under the broad headings of "Professional Knowledge", "Professional Practice"
and "Professional Engagement" will enhance the quality of teaching (AITSL 2011).
In doing so, the report portrays a sense of common purpose, agreement and accom-
plishment about what is required to enhance the quality of teachers. No doubt, the
attributes identified in these standards are important and even necessary; however,
they are insufficient (Down 2014).

Returning to Kincheloe's (2001b) argument for a moment, he says that the exist-
ing standards have two major flaws: first, they fail to deal with the context of com-
plexity and, second, they do not articulate "a compelling vision of the purposes of
education" (p. 11). What is required, he argues, is the fostering of a "rigorous set of
scholarly abilities" whereby teachers

not only possess knowledge but also know where it came from, the conditions of its production, the ways it can be used to bring desired states into being, the problems its unexamined use may create, and alternative information that may exist about similar topics produced by differing logics of inquiry. (p. 39)

In short, if we want to raise academic standards for teachers, then we must move beyond "the methods fetish" (Bartolome 1994) to envisage a more scholarly conception and practice of teaching that asks questions like why teach, what to teach, who to teach, when to teach, where to teach and so on (Kincheloe 2001b, p. 60).

Pursuing this critique a little further, Weil (2001) argues that top-down "standards serve as a straightjacket" because "they impose teaching as an act of functional, instrumental control – of technological device – not an act of compassion, caring and love" (p. 519). He goes on to argue that standards

> surreptitiously beguile students, teachers, and the community into believing that there is no political agenda, no advocacy of cultural norms, no prevalence of hierarchical classifying and sorting, that standards are a neutral, generic conception and operation applicable equally in the interests of everyone. (p. 518)

Connell (2009) is also circumspect about the usefulness of the standards document with its list of "dot points" that have "no connection with each other" or any "systematic view of Education as a field of knowledge" (p. 218). Connell (2009) believes the standards document is "very traditional", serving to reinforce the "background knowledge, pedagogical skills, organisational know-how, ideology and social conformity" of schooling since the nineteenth century (p. 219). In other words, standards are primarily concerned with "how-to-ism" (Brosio 1994, p. 323) or "means–end thinking" (Phelan 2009, p. 106). Thus, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers document (AITSL 2011) focuses on a range of knowledge, skills and dispositions geared to:

- Understanding subjects, curriculum content and teaching strategies;
- Designing lessons to meet the requirements of curriculum, assessment and reporting;
- Interpreting student assessment data;
- Creating rapport and managing student behaviour;
- Demonstrating knowledge of legislative requirements; and
- Providing clear direction to students.

Whilst useful at one level, these kinds of standards fail to address a range of fundamental questions around the nature, purpose and processes of education. As we have already mentioned, perhaps the most serious shortcoming is the manner in which they strip away the contextual and intellectual foundations of teaching (Kincheloe et al. 2000). Phelan (2009) explains the problem with reductionist views of teaching in the following way:

> There is no deliberation about educational purposes, no consideration of authority in teaching, no apparent concern for the manner in which schools shape and are shaped by social inequities, no reference to the complex responsibility of the teacher and teacher educator towards the life of children and for the continuance of the world (Phelan and Sumison 2008). When did (teacher) education become so small (Smits 2008)? (p. 107)

The consequence is that "commonsensical ideas" about teaching and learning are reinforced and certain pedagogical knowledge privileged (e.g., psychology, measurement and management) over social justice (Kumashiro 2004, p. 6). Ball (1989) puts it succinctly when he states that "pragmatism and technologies of control replace ideological dispute" (p. 143).

3.4.3   How Do We Account for Complexity?

Underpinning the *Action now* report is a simplistic and naïve view that quality teaching can be broken down into a series of discrete components, standardised for easier management and delivery, and measured through predefined forms of assessment or "management pedagogies" (Giroux 1988, p. 124). From this perspective, the "preferred" teacher is, in the words of Smyth and Shacklock (1998), "one who conforms to the new marketised, customer-orientated teacher able to demonstrate government policy through the satisfaction of pre-determined criterial indicators of performance" (p. 8). Revisiting the formative writing of Waller (1932) and Lortie (2002) on these matters, we are quickly reminded of the complexity of teaching. As Lortie (2002) says, teachers face "endemic uncertainties" (p. x) in their daily work; hence reducing teaching to what is easily identifiable, calculable and measurable is an impossible task. Whilst the *Action now* report recommends a much stricter adherence to national standards, the daily realities for teachers are far less predictable and difficult to specify. Connell (1989) pursues this line of argument further when she argues that "teaching is a labour process without an object" because "the minds of the kids, or their capacity to learn … cannot be specified in any but vague and metaphorical ways" (pp. 123–124). In other words, teachers' work is never complete, like producing a thing or a product, because "there is no logical limit to the expansion of an individual teachers' work" (p. 125). Hatton (1994) put it well in her book *Understanding teaching* when she said:

> Some take the view that teaching should be simplistically presented for beginning teachers, and that its complexities, dilemmas and contradictions should remain unaddressed or even hidden until beginning teachers are "ready" to address them (that is, when teachers have a few years' teaching experience and have put their survival concerns to rest). We challenge this view. We think it both demeaning and fundamentally wrong. For one thing, it undersells teaching as a form of work, which, if done well, is intellectually challenging and much more than mere mastery of technique. (p. xvi)

As a result, Hatton (1994) argues, beginning teachers often see their pre-service programs as irrelevant and lacking in credibility, for two main reasons:

> First, because the codified, simplistic version of teaching presented to them in preservice preparation is far removed from the complex reality they encounter when they enter schools. Second, because they are not given opportunities to develop the characteristics that they actually require for the complex work of teaching. These characteristics include enjoyment of intellectual struggle; critical reflection on policy, practice, curricula and the like; the formulation of adequate, justifiable educational goals; and the capacity to choose strategies appropriate for achieving their goals. (p. xvi)

The point is that teaching cannot be reduced to management and technique alone because the work is far too complex and nuanced for that. Furthermore, it is intensely relational work, something that seems self-evident to most but increasingly absent in official documents and pronouncements.

3.4.4   What Happened to the Relational?

In addressing this question, we endeavour to reassert the deeply relational and emotional dimensions of teaching. Whilst Standard 1 of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers identifies the importance of "knowing students and how they learn", it is primarily confined to an instrumentalist view of relationships, one based on an exchange value whereby teachers need to have some understanding of developmental psychology and cultural diversity in order to engage students in the mastery of subject content (AITSL 2011). In contrast, Connell (1993) helps us to develop a much richer understanding of the relational when she says:

> Being a teacher is not just a matter of having a body of knowledge and a capacity to control a classroom. That could be done by a computer with a cattle-prod. Just as important, being a teacher means being able to establish human relations with the people being taught. Learning is a full-blooded, human social process, and so is teaching. Teaching involves emotions as much as it involves pure reasoning.
>
> The emotional dimension of teaching has not been much researched, but in my view it is extremely important. Teachers establish relations with students through their emotions, through sympathy, interest, surprise, boredom, sense of humour, sometimes anger or annoyance. School teaching, indeed, is one of the most emotionally demanding jobs. (p. 63)

Expanding on this idea, Connell (1997) explains:

> Through educational relationships … new capacities for practice come into existence. They cover the full range of types of social action: productive capacities used in economic life; symbolic capacities, used in making culture; capacities for collective decision-making, used in politics; and capacities for emotional response, used in personal life. (p. 4)

These qualities are even more acute when dealing with marginalised students and those deemed to be least advantaged in schools and society. Consider for a moment how good teachers "regularly perform astonishing (and unheralded) feats of human relations, overcoming age, class and ethnic barriers, breaking through resentment, suspicions and fears, to establish workable educational relationships" (Connell 1993, p. 63).

So how might we begin to rethink the relational dimension of teaching in more helpful ways? Smyth, Down and McInerney (2010) provide a useful starting point when they identify four key defining features of the "relational school":

- De-institutionalisation of relationships (Osterman 2000) – which means removing the petty and impersonal bureaucratic rules and regulations that insulate schools from students and communities;

- Fostering of relational power (Raider-Roth 2005; Warren 2005) – whereby people work together to get things done collectively so no one gets left behind;
- Building of relational trust (Bryk and Schneider 2002) – in the form of social exchanges based on trust, care and respect and personal regard for others; and
- Creation of capabilities (Sen 1992) – to assist students to identify the kind of lives they wish to lead and to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to achieve their goals (pp. 74–75).

By way of summary, the *Action now* report glosses over the intensely relational dimensions of teaching. The consequence is that we end up with a very thin version of teaching (e.g., standardisation, testing, accountability, auditing, transparency, registration and performativity) that serves to "screen out the faces and gestures of individuals, of actual human beings" (Greene 1995, p. 11). As a remedy, we seek to advance a much deeper understanding of the relational and intellectual dimensions of good teaching.

3.4.5   What and Whose Evidence Counts?

The *Action now* report puts considerable emphasis on the importance of developing "robust evidence" of "classroom readiness" in order to meet the requirements of "provisional registration" (TEMAG 2014, p. 38). It states that there must be "a clear demonstration of evidence of course outcomes and, in turn, student outcomes in the classroom" (p. ix). Furthermore, it recommends the establishment of a national research base on the effectiveness of Australian programs with a focus on "longitudinal analyses of the effectiveness of initial teacher education programs; pre-service teacher selection; pathways through teacher education; graduate standards and teacher effectiveness in early career; and subject matter and pedagogical knowledge" (p. 48). The question then becomes what and whose evidence counts?

Take, for instance, the dominant narrative in the media about the "poor" quality of teacher candidates entering university. This increasingly derogatory and demeaning public discourse (Graham 2015) is based on a set of assumptions about the declining quality of students entering pre-service teacher education programs and graduating with low levels of literacy and numeracy. This was the basis for the TEMAG inquiry in the first instance. Ironically, Gore et al. (2016) contend that these very discourses contribute to an image problem that deters the "best and brightest" (p. 528). Furthermore, in response to the argument that Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) entry scores are declining, they conclude that "there is no evidence that the quality of students in the top 30%, … is changing from year to year". On the contrary, they argue, "ATAR has been mis-used to strengthen critiques of the quality of entrants to teacher education and teachers in general" (p. 532). Their study of the career aspirations of 6492 Australian school students in years 3–12 challenges "the contemporary policy view that teaching is no longer attracting 'bright' or academically capable students. Indeed, 31% of those interested in teaching were in the highest achievement quartile" (p. 541).

Whilst *Action now* draws attention to the importance of research, it provides little clarity about what this means and for whom. There is brief mention of the "teacher-as-researcher" approach favoured in Finland and the "creative-critical culture" of Singapore (TEMAG 2014, p. 19). Both approaches are steeped in a culture of professional learning, self-reflection and teacher autonomy. However, there is a danger, intentionally or not, that "robust evidence" really means positivist, multivariate quantitative research on school and teacher "effectiveness" (Angus 1993; Thrupp 1999). This kind of research treats teachers and students as variables (objects) to be correlated against outcomes, as measured on standardised test scores. It assumes a rational–empirical approach that requires the direct application of knowledge based on "what works" according to statistically significant correlations devoid of social context (Smyth et al. 2009).

We can begin to see how this plays out through the positioning of John Hattie's meta-analysis of over 800 studies on "what works". Teachers can now purchase "bundles" of his books based on the "science" of "visible learning" abstracted through statistical analysis. Of course this kind of research is highly problematic, as we have indicated, but it has powerful and seductive effects on policymakers, systems, school leaders and teachers, all wanting "quick fixes" to some persistent and protracted problems in education. Snook et al. (2009) provide a useful set of warnings about the ways in which Hattie's research is being adopted:

- Despite his own frequent warnings, politicians may use his work to justify policies which he does not endorse and his research does not sanction;
- Teachers and teacher educators might try to use the findings in a simplistic way and not, as Hattie wants, as a source for 'hypotheses for intelligent problem solving';
- The quantitative research on 'school effects' might be presented in isolation from their historical, cultural and social contexts, and their interaction with home and community backgrounds; and
- In concentrating on measurable school effects there may be insufficient discussion about the aims of education and the purposes of schooling without which the studies have little point. (pp. 104–105)

Hattie (2008) himself acknowledges the limitations of his analyses in the following way:

> [This] is not a book about what cannot be influenced in schools – thus critical discussions about class, poverty, resources in families, health in families, and nutrition are not included but this is NOT because they are unimportant, indeed they may be more important than many of the issues discussed in this book. It is just that I have not included these topics in my orbit. (pp. x–xi)

Given these concerns, especially the manner in which social context has been erased from official educational conversations, there is a need to foster teachers who have a critical sensibility about such matters. In an era of "re-emergent scientism" (Denzin et al. 2006), we believe teachers require an understanding of what constitutes legitimate educational research and what methods are most relevant to their everyday needs (Mills and Goos 2017). Garman (1995) argues that novice researchers need to be aware not only of their own "dysfunctional stereotypes of research" but also "the logic of justification" for doing research and critiquing the research of

others (p. 8). By this she means teachers should be taught the scholarly traits of philosophic inquiry to help them understand the nature of epistemology (how is truth defined?), ontology (what is the nature of social and educational reality?) and axiology (what values are embedded in the approach?) (p. 8). In short, we need to develop "teachers as researchers" (Kincheloe 2003), capable of investigating their daily practices in scholarly and socially critical ways (Smyth 1987, 1992, 2001; Kincheloe 2011).

3.4.6   What Does It Mean to Teach?

The final provocation relates to the question of what it means to teach. Because the *Action now* report operates in a vacuum around this fundamental question, it falls back on a compliance model linked to a set of technical standards divorced from a broader vision of the purposes of teaching. Without such a conception, it is difficult to imagine what kind of teachers we want to produce, what kind of abilities they should have or what kind of society we want to build (e.g., Counts 1978). In short, we want to advance the conversation about what it means to teach (and be educated) – ethically, politically and intellectually – in these uncertain times.

In pursuing this task, we find the ideas of Thomas and Schubert (2001) helpful (see also Down 2014). Commenting on the American equivalent of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, known as the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium of the Council of Chief State School Officers (INTASC), Thomas and Schubert (2001) argue that the kind of teacher identity provided in certification standards is limited and needs to be expanded in at least three key directions. First, teachers should be "*engaged in philosophic inquiry*", that is, "investigating the value assumptions of their students, their colleagues, and their own metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological convictions" (original emphasis, p. 234). Second, teachers need to develop as "*democratic connoisseur[s]*" or "critical interpreters of existent curriculums and creators of new curriculums, novel forms of instruction, and appropriate methods of assessment" (original emphasis, p. 235). Third, teachers should see themselves as "*progressive activist[s]*" committed to "democratic practice understood as … public advocacy for social policies that attempt to redress injustice and public criticisms of state actions that oppress or institutionalize inequality" (original emphasis, p. 235).

Freire's (1998) seminal work further illuminates what it means to teach in critical democratic ways:

> to know how to teach is to create possibilities for the construction and production of knowledge rather than to be engaged simply in a game of transferring knowledge. When I enter a classroom I should be someone who is open to new ideas, open to questions, and open to the curiosities of the student as well as their inhibitions. In other words, I ought to be aware of being a critical and inquiring subject in regard to the task entrusted to me, the task of teaching and not that of transferring knowledge. (p. 49)

Ayers (2004) in his book *Teaching towards freedom: moral commitment and ethical action in the classroom* alerts us to the importance of teachers "figur[ing] out what

they are teaching *for*, and what they are teaching *against*" (p. 18). According to Ayers, this means "teaching against oppression and subjugation … exploitation, unfairness, and unkindness" and for "freedom, for enlightenment and awareness, wide awakeness, protection of the weak, cooperation, generosity, compassion, and love" (p. 18). Such language is rare in official policy discourses; hence the notion of teaching quality is constricted through an emphasis on technique and "a conservative survivalist mentality among novice teachers" (Bullough and Gitlin 1991, p. 38). What we have endeavoured to offer is an alternative vision of "why teaching matters" (Connell 2009, p. 225) based on "a more dynamic, vital understanding of the educator's craft" (Thomas and Schubert 2001, p. 235).

3.5 Towards a Socially Critical Teacher Education

In this final part we want to scaffold an alternative conception of teacher education that is more attuned to the kinds of socially critical principles and values outlined so far. Again, Connell (2009) provides some important clues when she identifies four key issues relevant to developing "good teachers". First, teaching needs to be seen as a form of labour, especially the emotional, relational and collective nature of teachers' work (p. 220). As well, there is a need to locate an understanding of teachers' work in the context of what Braverman (1998) describes as the "degradation of labour", whereby there is an increasing separation of conception from execution, that is, the de-professionalisation and deskilling of teachers' work. Second, the occupational dynamics of teaching under neo-liberal ideology are based on a mistrust of teachers. Connell (2009) argues that the standards document is designed to codify teachers' work and teacher education "in such a way as to make them auditable and allow control at a distance" (p. 222). In this context, we need to cultivate teachers who have "The capacity to talk back to management, to dissent, or to follow independent judgement" so they can "pursue the interests of the pupils they actually have in front of them" (p. 222). Third, the "competencies"-based model views teachers as technicians/civil servants rather than "scholar-teachers" (p. 224). Like Connell, we believe the idea of "teachers as intellectuals" (Giroux 1988) should be the cornerstone of teacher education programs because it provides the kind of rigour required of teachers in these complex times. Lastly, Connell (2009) says the process of education itself needs to be seen as more than simply social reproduction: transmitting culture, producing a workforce or handing on traditions. A more dynamic response lies in seeing education as "a process of forming culture" and "the creation of capacities for practice" (p. 225). In the Freire (1998) sense, it is about helping teachers and students to become more fully human.

Turning to Giroux (1988), we gain some clarity about the idea of "teachers as intellectuals". He writes:

> teachers as intellectuals will need to reconsider and, possibly, transform the fundamental nature of the conditions under which they work. That is, teachers must be able to shape the ways in which time, space, activity, and knowledge organize everyday life in schools. More

specifically, in order to function as intellectuals, teachers must create the ideology and structural conditions necessary for them to write, research, and work with each other in producing curricula and sharing power … As intellectuals, they will combine reflection and action in the interest of empowering students with the skills and knowledge needed to address injustices and to be critical actors committed to developing a world free of oppression and exploitation. (p. xxxiv)

At the core of this vision, teachers become what Kincheloe (2001a) describes as "knowledge workers" (as opposed to technicians/civil servants) who "research, interpret, expose embedded values and political interest, and produce their own knowledge" (p. 241). These teacher scholars, according to Kincheloe (2001b):

- take into account the democratic, moral, ethical and cognitive context;
- push students to understand where content came from, the means by which it was produced, and how it was validated as knowledge worthy of inclusion in the curriculum;
- induce students to use these contextual understandings to reflect, research, and evaluate information presented to them;
- cultivate skills that can be used after the confrontation with content to enable them to learn new content in novel situations; and
- prepare students to produce new content in relation to the context in which they are operating. (p. 22)

Here we can begin to see how teachers can "take charge of constructing their own pedagogies and educational philosophies" (Kincheloe 2001b, p. 66). These new "standards of complexity", as Kincheloe (2001b) describes them, put a new inflection on the debate about quality teachers and the notion of "classroom readiness". He explains:

1. Teachers possess an expert knowledge of the liberal arts and sciences, understanding the historical development of the disciplines and the various schools of thought within them.
2. Teachers learn to promote the welfare of their students. They are attuned to students' physical and emotional well-being and the contexts that exert an impact on them.
3. Teachers appreciate the complexity of the ways students learn and develop.
4. Teachers become knowledge workers capable of a variety of research methods depending on context.
5. Teachers study the community surrounding the school drawing on community expertise.
6. Teachers are experts in pedagogical methods and strategies for teaching and classroom management.
7. Teachers achieve profound expertise in the contextualizing disciplines of education as they learn about the historical, social, cultural, political, economic, psychological and philosophical contexts that frame education.
8. Teachers become scholars of education in a democratic society, exploring the ways that an unequal distribution of power and resources undermines the performance of students. (pp. 66–67)

Whilst some of these are familiar in the existing Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (e.g., 2, 3 and 6 in particular), we can see how the remainder of these features expand our understanding of the intellectual foundations of teaching (e.g., 1, 4 and 7) as well as the relationship between power, knowledge and society (e.g., 8). These standards of complexity are far more ambitious and rigorous than what *Action now* is proposing. Also relevant here is the extent to which Finland, which is

held up as the exemplar of high standards for teachers and students alike, has produced a society in which "Fairness, honesty, and social justice are deeply rooted in the Finnish way of life … people have a shared sense of responsibility" (Sahlberg 2011, p. 10). It seems to us that debates about quality teaching must be located in the context of these broader structural and institutional arrangements. In short, quality teaching is highly contextual work requiring teacher-scholars nurtured in "standards of complexity" and capable of articulating a clear conception and practice of what it means to teach morally, ethically and politically.

3.6 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter we have presented a critical policy analysis of a key Australian government education report *Action now: classroom ready teachers* (TEMAG 2014) to illustrate the ways in which such reports naïvely attempt to attend to a perceived policy problem. The perceived policy problem is the declining quality of teacher education. Despite this concern being unfounded, it is shared in other countries including England (Carter 2015) and the USA (Greenberg et al. 2013). We have argued that:

- *Action now* is preoccupied with accountability, accreditation, regulation, selection, assessment, content and evidence about "what works".
- The policy rhetoric and policy reality are disparate.
- Teachers' work is being politicised in ways that threaten their ability to teach well.
- The imposition of teacher standards has led to the de-professionalisation of teachers, as they are forced to comply to narrow technologies of reductionist policy products.
- The complexity of schools and the nature of teachers' work are simplified beyond recognition. In doing so, the deeply relational and emotional dimensions of teaching are largely forgotten and therefore devalued.
- The pressure to develop "robust evidence" in all aspects of teacher education is laudable but the policy rhetoric suggests a narrow view of research. It misunderstands the need to develop "teachers as researchers" who are capable of investigating their work in scholarly and critical ways.
- *Action now* reflects a narrow view of what it means to teach.

Finally, we have presented an alternative conception of teacher education that reflects a set of socially critical values. At the heart of this conception is the understanding of the teacher as an intellectual. We argue for the need to move beyond controlling teachers' work using policy mechanisms that are regulatory in their intent.

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Chapter 4
Shifting the Frame: Representations of Early Career Teachers in the Australian Print Media

Nicole Mockler

Abstract Issues around the retention or attrition of early career teachers are shaped by the policy discourses that frame their work, and the way that these discourses are articulated in the public space. This chapter explores public representations of early career teachers through a critical and systematic examination of print media texts, drawn from the Australian context. It interrogates two sets of media texts, dating from different 'policy settlements' in Australian education in 1998–99 and 2014–15. A critical shift has taken place in this time, from a positioning of early career teachers as a possible solution to the problems of low morale and declining status for the teaching profession, to early career teachers being positioned as a problem themselves, to which the solution of greater accountability and regulation is required. It suggests some implications of this shift for early career teachers themselves and the teaching profession more broadly.

4.1   Introduction

Issues around retention of early career teachers are shaped to a great extent by the policy discourses that frame their work. Understanding the particular policy arrangements that sit around entry to and retention within the profession, and their nuances and manifestations in the public realm, can aid our understanding of the factors that enable and constrain early career teacher retention. These policy arrangements relate to teacher education and teacher quality more broadly, and policy discourses in Australian education over the past two decades have increasingly focussed on the 'quality' of pre-service and early career teachers. Entry criteria for initial teacher education courses; the scope and efficacy of teacher education; and early career teachers' skills and capabilities have been rendered both symptoms and consequences of the early career teacher 'quality problem'. Concurrently, a range of

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policy solutions, from literacy and numeracy testing for pre-service teachers to the establishment and application of teaching standards, to large-scale 'overhauls' of teacher education, have been applied in the name of improving quality. This contrasts strongly with policy arrangements in the late 1990s, where the key education policy problems were seen to be low morale within the teaching workforce and the impending teacher shortage (Mockler 2018).

Media attention to early career teachers has grown over this time period, corresponding with the increased focus on education policy in public discourse. In this chapter, I explore public representations of early career teachers by critically and systematically examining print media texts. I build on earlier work that used a critical policy historiography approach (Gale 2001) to contrast the current 'policy settlement' in relation to early career teachers and teacher education with that of the late 1990s. I interrogate two sets of media texts, dating from 1998–99 to 2014–15, arguing that a critical shift has taken place in this time, from a positioning of early career teachers as a possible solution to the problems of low morale and declining status for the profession, early career teachers being positioned as a problem themselves, requiring greater accountability and regulation. I suggest some implications of this shift for early career teachers themselves and the teaching profession more broadly.

The chapter is presented in three parts. The first provides background to the study and an overview of the methodological approach, which utilises both Altheide and Snow's notion of 'media logic' (Altheide 2013; Altheide and Snow 1979) and Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) approach to 'framing' in media discourse. The second section presents the data through the lens of the framing analysis, while the third explores the shifts in the framing of early career teachers, and the implications of these shifts.

While this analysis is clearly drawn from Australia, this local context shares many similarities with others that have engaged in 'policy borrowing' in education (Steiner-Khamsi 2004), particularly from the various elements of the Global Education Reform Movement (Sahlberg 2014), over the past three decades. As Lingard has noted, global education policy flows have significantly impacted Australian education, and in particular

> the global policy convergence in schooling has seen the economisation of schooling policy, the emergence of human capital and productivity rationales as meta-policy in education, and new accountabilities, including high-stakes testing and policy, as numbers, with both global and national features. (Lingard 2010, p. 136)

Of course, such globalised education policy discourses are enacted according to 'local vernaculars', shaped by local histories and concerns. However the analysis presented here speaks to 'teacher quality' concerns and debates that are manifest within the ongoing politicisation of teaching and teacher education in many jurisdictions, including the USA (Cochran-Smith et al. 2016), the UK (Menter 2016), Canada (Hales and Clarke 2016), and Australia (Nuttall and Brennan 2016).

4.2   Background and Approach

This chapter builds on a body of work that has explored representations of teachers and education in the print media over time, including that undertaken in the Australian context by Thomson et al. (2003), Blackmore and Thorpe (2003), Blackmore and Thomson (2004), Thompson and Lasic (2011), and Baroutis (2016). In the international realm, recent work of this kind has been undertaken by scholars such as Goldstein (2011) and Ulmer (2016) in the USA, and Robert (2012) in Latin America. All of this work shares a common understanding that print media texts hold the capacity both to shape and to reflect dominant understandings of teachers and their work, playing a key role in 'issue visibility' (Winburn et al. 2014), and it is for these reasons that in this analysis I focus on print media texts.

The analysis is not predicated upon a view of a linear or predictable interplay between policy and media texts; rather that these different types of texts reflect different manifestations of similar public concerns (Elmelund-Præstekær and Wien 2008; Street 2001). Here, I aim to provide two contrasting 'snapshots' of print media work around early career teachers, in two different timeframes, asking questions about the positioning of early career teachers by the media in relation to the dominant policy of the day in each case, and contrasting the two timeframes to explore how and by what means a shift has occurred.

The chapter reports on one half of a larger study, which included both policy and media texts and aimed to chart the policy and media representations of early career teachers in 1998–99 and 2014–15 in Australia. I chose 1998–99 as one focus for the study because of the influential Senate inquiry that gave rise to *A class act: Inquiry into the status of the teaching profession* (Commonwealth of Australia 1998), broadly regarded as something of a turning point in terms of processes of standards and accountability in Australian education (Campbell and Proctor 2014). I chose 2014–15 as the second focus because of the commissioning of the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group and the publication of their subsequent report, *Action now: Classroom ready teachers* (Craven et al. 2015), which aims to radically reshape contemporary teacher education policy in Australia (Savage and Lingard 2018).

4.2.1   The Media Texts

I included in the analysis newspaper articles published in the twelve Australian national and capital city daily newspapers around the time of both reviews. Ten of the Australian newspapers are state- or territory-based, including two based in each of New South Wales and Victoria, the two most populous states. Furthermore, newspaper ownership in Australia is concentrated in two 'camps', with seven of the

Table 4.1 National and capital city daily newspapers, listed by weekday circulation

Publication	Location	Circulation (Mon–Fri)[a]	Owner
The Herald Sun	Vic	655,000	News Corp
The Daily Telegraph	NSW	544,000	News Corp
The Age	Vic	394,000	Nine
The Sydney Morning Herald	NSW	372,000	Nine
The Courier Mail	Qld	333,000	News Corp
The West Australian	WA	350,000	Seven West
The Advertiser	SA	257,000	News Corp
The Australian	National	295,000	News Corp
The Australian Financial Review	National	182,000	Nine
The Mercury	Tas	48,000	News Corp
The Canberra Times	ACT	41,000	Nine
Northern Territory News	NT	26,000	News Corp

[a]As at March 2019. Source: Roy Morgan Research (2019)

twelve owned by News Corp Australia, and four of the twelve owned by Nine Publications (and until 2018, FairfaxMedia). One newspaper, *The West Australian*, is owned by Seven West Media. Table 4.1 provides an overview of newspaper locations and ownership.

I gathered articles using a focussed search on the Factiva database, employing the search terms 'graduate teachers' and 'teaching graduates', over the time periods from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 1999 and 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015. I removed identical duplicate articles from the search. I took a relatively broad temporal sweep of articles in order not only to include those published in response to the key inquiries, but also to capture broader attitudes toward early career teachers as reflected in the print media of the day.

All articles identified in the search were included in the analysis, a total of 228 articles: 55 drawn from 1998 to 1999 and 173 from 2014 to 2015. Figure 4.1 highlights the breakdown of articles over these two timeframes by news source. The most notable difference between the two timeframes in terms of the number of articles is the spike in articles produced in *The Australian*, eight times the number in 2014–15 than in 1998–99, explained perhaps by the general interest that the News Limited flagship has taken in education since the lead-up to the 2007 election in particular. The sharp rise in the number of articles published in *The Courier Mail* similarly reflects the newspaper's interest in education, sparked since 2008 by Queensland's comparatively poor performance on national standardised testing and an associated 'watchdog' role taken on by the Brisbane daily (Mockler 2016). The prominence of education within the policy platform taken by both parties to the 2014 South Australian state election accounts for the spike in the comparative number of articles published in *The Advertiser* in 2014–15.
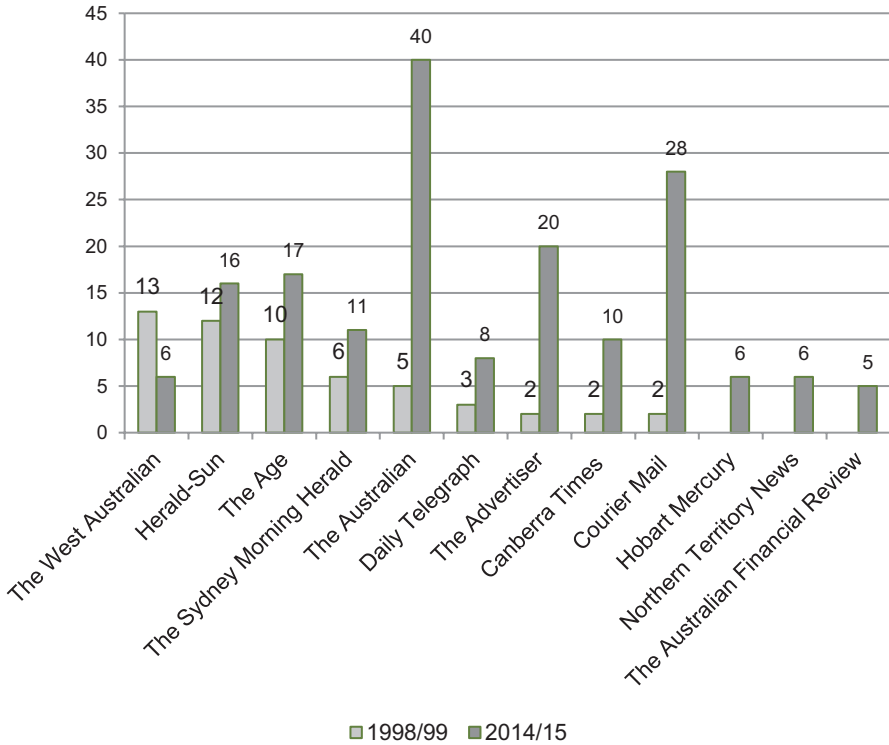
Fig. 4.1 Number of articles by news source

4.2.2 Analytical Framework

For my analysis, I make use of Altheide and Snow's notion of 'media logic' (Altheide 2013; Altheide and Snow 1979). Altheide has expressed the central premise of media logic as follows:

> The key element of a thoroughgoing theory of mediation built on media logic is that the institutional media forms not only help shape and guide content and numerous everyday life activities, but also that audiences-as-actors normalise these forms and use them as reality maintenance tools. (2013, p. 225)

Much of Altheide's work on the enactment of media logic has focussed on the notion of the 'problem frame', which he has presented as a product of the adoption of an 'entertainment format' in news media, a central characteristic of what he and Snow have termed the 'postjournalism era' (Altheide and Snow 1991). Conceptualised by Altheide as 'a secular alternative to the morality play' (2013, p. 232), the concept of the 'problem frame' draws on Goffman's (1974) and Iyengar's (1990, 1991) work on framing theory, which was subsequently developed by Entman (1993, 2003, 2007, 2010) as a tool for analysis of media texts.

While a range of different approaches to framing have emerged since the early work of Goffman and Entman (Scheufele and Iyengar 2012), in this analysis, I use the definition of 'frame' advanced by Entman, Matthes and Pellicano in 2009:

> A frame repeatedly invokes the same objects and traits, using identical or synonymous words and symbols in a series of similar communications that are concentrated in time. These frames function to promote an interpretation of a problematic situation or actor and (implicit or explicit) support of a desirable response, often along with a moral judgement that provides an emotional charge. (2009, p. 177)

Frames, then, render complex issues accessible to mass audiences by linking to existing cognitive schemas (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). Additionally, and pertinent to the current analysis, they hold the potential to connect policy to life experience: 'individuals bring their own life histories, social interactions and psychological predispositions to the process of constructing meaning' (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, p. 2). Gamson and Modigliani (1987, 1989) conceptualise frames as the central organising ideas within *packages*, which also contain a set of 'framing' and 'reasoning' devices that communicate to the reader: 'a package offers a number of different condensing symbols that suggest the core frame and positions in shorthand, making it possible to display the package as a whole with a deft metaphor, catchphrase, or other symbolic device' (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, p. 3).

The 'problem frame', in Altheide's conceptualisation, 'promotes a discourse of fear that may be defined as the pervasive communication, symbolic awareness and expectation that danger and risk are a central feature of the effective environment' (1997, p. 648). He further outlines the problem frame as

> an important innovation that satisfies the entertainment dimension of news. It is an organisational solution to a practical problem: how can we make real problems seem interesting? Or, more to the practical side of news, how can we produce reports compatible with entertainment formats? (p. 653)

For Altheide, the 'problem frame' implies that:

- Something exists that is undesirable.
- Many people are affected by this problem (it is relevant).
- Unambiguous aspects or parts are easily identified.
- It can be changed or 'fixed'.
- There is a mechanism or procedure for fixing the problem.
- The change or repair agent and process is known (usually government) (Altheide 1997, p. 655).

Furthermore, as I have argued elsewhere, 'the "problem frame" often involves a range of different dimensions or articulations of a coherent problem, each with their particular nuances, fixes and dispersals of blame' (Mockler 2016, p. 183). Based on Altheide's approach, I began my analysis with the questions 'what does the news message look like?' and 'what words and powerful cultural symbols are used in discussing this event?' (Altheide 1997, p. 659). I have thus sought to identify the various manifestations of the problem frame in relation to early career teachers across the two timeframes identified, along with an examination of the framing

devices (such as evocative images and metaphors) and reasoning devices (such as explanatory appeals to common sense) used in the texts to bring these manifestations to life.

4.2.3 Early Career Teachers and the Policy Context, Then and Now

As noted above, I identified the two timeframes purposively, with reference to government inquiries conducted at the federal level that brought discussion of early career teachers into the public view. Here, I will provide a brief overview of this policy context in 1998–99 and 2014–15, focussed on the two inquiries at the centre of each timeframe, each of which gives a sense of the particular preoccupations and interests of education policy at the time. (For further discussion and analysis of the two policy settlements, see Mockler 2018). Prior to this overview, however, I will briefly describe the structure and interplay of state and national levels of governance in Australian education.

The provision of school education in Australia was retained as a responsibility of individual states and territories at Federation in 1901, each jurisdiction having passed 'free, compulsory and secular' education Acts in the 1870s that established their public education systems. The Australian Constitution does, however, provide for the possibility of federal parliament exercising some control over education, through the granting of 'financial assistance to any State on such terms and conditions as the Parliament thinks fit' (Commonwealth of Australia 1900, section 96), a mechanism that has been used in relation to education numerous times since Federation (Lingard and Sellar 2013). The establishment of national policies on school education generally requires significant and ongoing negotiation and 'buy-in' from the states and territories. Since the federal government's initial failed attempt to institute a national curriculum in the late 1980s, the federal field of education has strengthened, and in recent years, a national standardised testing program, national curriculum, and national professional standards for teachers have been developed and implemented despite the Commonwealth owning no schools and employing no teachers. (For more on federalism and Australian schooling, see Hardy and Lingard 2008; Lingard 1991.) At the same time, higher education, including initial teacher education, is a responsibility of the Commonwealth, which in recent years has stepped up its control of teacher education programs, in line with the expansion of 'teacher quality' discourses at both state and federal levels.

4.2.3.1   1998–99: A Class Act

Shortly after the election of the Howard Liberal (conservative) Government in 1996, a Senate inquiry into the status of the teaching profession was established, which led to the publication of *A class act* (Commonwealth of Australia 1998) in March

1998. While the inquiry had been the 66th held into teacher education nationally in the 19 years since 1979 (Parliament of Australia 2016), it was of particular importance, as it was a catalyst for action around teaching standards and accreditation in Australia at federal and state levels. The inquiry itself was undertaken by the Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, at the time comprised of four Australian Labor Party Senators, three Liberal Party Senators and two Australian Democrats Senators. A 'minority report' was appended to the committee report, comprising the government Senators' report, and the Howard Government's response to the inquiry's findings and recommendations drew largely upon this report when read into Hansard by Senator Ian Campbell (who had not been a member of the committee) in November 1999, over 18 months after the publication of the report (Commonwealth of Australia 1999, pp. 11054–11066).

The Senate inquiry focussed on developing an enhanced understanding of the teaching profession, in terms of demographics, community attitudes, teachers' career expectations, initial teacher education (including entry), induction to the profession and professional development (Commonwealth of Australia 1998). The recommendations from the inquiry pointed to the need for action to raise the status of the teaching profession, and encouraged the federal government to establish national structures and processes for the development of teaching standards, registration and accreditation of teachers, and accreditation of initial teacher education programs, among other recommendations related to school funding and teacher professional development. The government agreed with the broad directions of the report, but dissented from the view that national structures were required, and instead placed the responsibility for action onto MCEETYA, the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, comprised of the ministers responsible for education and related areas in each of the six states and two territories.

4.2.3.2   2014–15: Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers

The Review of Teacher Education, conducted by the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG), which culminated in the publication of *Action now: Classroom ready teachers*, was initially flagged by the then Shadow Minister for Education, Christopher Pyne. In February 2013, seven months prior to the election that installed the Abbott Liberal (conservative) Government, and Pyne as Minister for Education, he indicated in an interview on ABC Radio National that

> the first thing we would do is address issues of teacher quality in our universities. The first thing we could do is to make sure that the training of our teachers at university is of world standard … We would immediately instigate a very short-term ministerial advisory group to advise me on the best model for teaching in the world. How to bring out more practical teaching methods, based on more didactic teaching methods or more traditional methods rather than the child-centred learning that has dominated the system for the last 20, 30 or 40 years, so teaching quality would be at my highest priority, followed by a robust curriculum, principal autonomy and more traditional pedagogy. So I want to make the education debate, move it on from this almost asinine debate about more money and make it about values because while money is important ... what we are teaching our children and how we are teaching them and who is teaching them is all much more important. (Kelly 2013)

TEMAG, comprising eight ministerial appointments, was duly established in February 2014, five months after the election. The associated report was published, along with the government's response, in the 'Teacher Quality' section of the Department of Education and Training *Students first* website (Department of Education and Training 2015b) in February 2015. The review's terms of reference required the committee to provide advice to the minister 'on how teacher education programmes could be improved to better prepare new teachers with the practical skills needed for the classroom'; to use 'an evidence-based approach' to 'identify common components regarded as world's best practice in teacher education', particularly in relation to pedagogical approaches, subject content and professional experience; to 'consider the Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, as potential mechanisms to give effect to its recommendations for improvement to teacher education, as appropriate'; and to 'identify priorities for actions to improve teacher education and suitable implementation timeframes' (Craven et al. 2015, p. 57). TEMAG was required to undertake public consultations with key stakeholders and invite written submissions from the public. In the course of the inquiry 145 public submissions were received, and consultations held with 33 'key stakeholders' (Craven et al. 2015, pp. 54–58).

The TEMAG report's 32 recommendations relate to raising the standards and quality of teacher education, more stringent accreditation regimes for initial teacher education programs, and more selective recruitment of teacher education candidates. The report calls for the government to 'lift confidence in the preparation of all new teachers' (Department of Education and Training 2015a, p. 5), such that through 'swift and decisive action, the Government will seek to make a real difference to the training of our teachers and work to make sure the teaching profession has the confidence and respect of the Australian community' (2015a, p. 4). The next section will explore the media representations across these two timeframes, beginning with 1998–99 and then moving to 2014–15.

4.3   Representations of Early Career Teachers in the Print Media

4.3.1   'Wanted by the State': Early Career Teachers in Print Media 1998–1999

In the 1998–99 media texts, the question of how to build the status of the teaching profession to attract the number and quality of desired teacher education students was a central concern. This was particularly the case in the light of a predicted teacher shortage and generally accepted poor workforce planning on the part of governments in a number of states and territories. The practice in Victoria under the Kennett Government of routinely placing newly graduated teachers on short-term

contracts, for example, was the focus of a high proportion of articles published in *The Age* over the course of 1998:

> What the Government has not done, however, is address the issue of contract employment, under which teachers' security of employment may be limited to one year. Teaching is a vital profession and we believe our teachers deserve career paths that give them more security than just employment on 12-month contracts. ('A gain for teachers' 1998)

> The use of employment contracts, under which teachers' security of employment may be limited to one year, is now widespread, with about 12 per cent of teachers now on contracts. Teaching is a vital profession and we believe teachers deserve better career paths than this allows. ('Restoring status' 1998)

The recurring motif of the fundamental importance of the teaching profession, expressed in the two extracts above in terms of teaching as a 'vital profession' was one of the central reasoning devices used in the 1998–99 texts. It provided a strong appeal to principle on the part of readers, underpinning an argument that the teaching profession, and recently graduated teachers, are 'worthy' of a higher level of career security than that currently on offer.

The 'declining interest among school leavers in teaching as a career' (Garcia 1998), wherein 'few of today's best and brightest young people regard teaching as an attractive career option' ('Restoring status' 1998) was a recurring theme in the 1998–99 media texts. This was regarded as a consequence of the low morale of the teaching profession brought about by inadequate salaries, poor working conditions and lack of other incentives to join the profession. An editorial in *The Australian* in May 1998, reporting on the findings of the Senate inquiry, had the following to say:

> The Senate Committee report on the Inquiry into the Status of the Teaching Profession, released in March, found it was 'generally agreed that there is a widespread crisis of morale among teachers' and that 'the status of the profession is disturbingly low'. However the report, *A Class Act*, found there was no crisis of quality in the country's teaching force. ('The new breed' 1998)

It continued, summarising the report's findings in relation to young people's lack of interest in joining the profession in the following way:

> The report found reasons for the fall in young people entering the profession include fear of litigation, especially for men in connection with paedophilia allegations; the impact of university fees and charges; uncertain job prospects and a greater range of career options, especially for women. ('The new breed' 1998)

The 1998–99 texts thus presented low morale and uncertain career prospects as causes of disaffection, and declining interest on the part of the 'best and brightest' as a key consequence of this disaffection. Furthermore, the problem of the status of the teaching profession was seen to be multifaceted and complex. Faith was placed in the power of the soon-to-be-developed teaching standards to raise the status of teaching and position it alongside other professions such as medicine and law (Garcia 1998). Poor workforce planning on the part of government employers of teachers, along with a failure to respond to the predicted teacher shortage in a timely fashion, was seen to be another dimension of this loss of status, and the question of

how to attract the 'brightest and best' ('Wanted by the state' 1998) to teaching was framed by this understanding.

Questions about the quality of teacher education students at point of entry to their undergraduate degrees were also present in the 1998–99 media texts. Coverage of both a Victorian state government review of teacher education and the Australian Council of Deans of Education *Preparing a profession* report focussed partly on the need to attract higher quality candidates into initial teacher education (see, e.g. Ashworth 1998; Jones 1998); however, in each case, this discussion was contextualised within a broader discussion of the low status of teaching and the strategies that might be employed to make the profession more attractive to prospective students. The key problem was clearly identified in the texts as the status of the profession, not the quality of teaching graduates. Additionally, the voices of the Deans of Education were relatively strong in these texts, often juxtaposed with an alternative 'take' on the issue of quality amongst teacher education students. The views of the then Presidents of both the Victorian Council of Deans of Education and its then NSW equivalent, the NSW Teacher Education Council, were provided in a number of articles (see, e.g. Garcia 1998; Jacobsen and Raethel 1999; Jones 1998, 1999a; McGilvray 1999; Raethel 1998, 1999; 'Teacher-baiting' 1999). The 'influential' (Lloyd 1998) Australian Council of Deans of Education was cited both in the *A class act* report and the accompanying media texts as an organisation with an important understanding of and position on the issues surrounding teacher education and beginning teachers (see, additionally, Ashworth 1998; Gough 1998; Jamal 1999; Jones 1998; 'Restoring status' 1998; Richards 1999; 'The new breed' 1998). The authority of the Deans of Education, either individually or collectively, was a key reasoning device used in these texts to lend authenticity to the arguments.

The 1998–99 media texts contain the kernels of debates that by 2014–15 had taken on much larger significance and proportion. While minimum literacy and numeracy requirements for prospective teachers were raised in reporting on *Preparing a profession*, for example (Ashworth 1998; Jones 1998), these ideas did not give rise to editorialising around the poor quality of teaching graduates as they did in subsequent years. Likewise, in relation to reporting on falling entry scores for teacher education courses (Jacobsen and Raethel 1999; Jones 1999a, b), comment from the deans was generally sought in lieu of declaring a state of crisis:

> 'If we could do our job by taking 60 a year, we could have UAIs of 90. We need 10 times the number of teachers as we do doctors. We need more teachers than lawyers. We need more teachers than almost any other profession,' [Professor Lovat, President of the NSW Teacher Education Council] says. 'We should be concerned about our intake. We should be concerned about good standards in the teaching profession generally. But I do not believe we have a chronic problem with simply not being able to get good people in.'

> [President of the ACDE, Professor Richard] Bates says teacher education courses are now so demanding that bad students won't manage to finish the course. And the quality issue could be blown out of proportion, he warns. 'If you can't produce good teachers out of the top 20 per cent of people in a country [that go to university], then you are not doing a good job,' he says. (Jacobsen and Raethel 1999)

A small number of articles in the 1998–99 sample focussed on the need for teacher education courses to provide a greater emphasis on practical skills and 'classroom management' (Ashworth 1999; McGilvray 1999), or less emphasis on such trivialities as 'educational psychology, measurement theory, research methods and curriculum studies, not the practice of teaching' (Coorey 1998). Here, appeals to common sense were used as a reasoning device in the creation of a forerunner to the motif of 'classroom readiness' which came to dominate the 2014–15 media texts.

4.3.2   'Graduate Teachers Not Up to Scratch': Early Career Teachers in Print Media 2014–2015

A causal link between graduate teachers' poor literacy and numeracy and Australia's falling international rankings on standardised literacy and numeracy tests was a recurring motif in the 2014–15 media texts, particularly in the work of one journalist whose work appears in six of the News Limited newspapers, and constitutes over 10 per cent of the articles in the 2014–15 sample.

> The Herald Sun understands the Federal Government is planning to make all new graduate primary and secondary teachers prove they are capable of teaching maths and English by undertaking a mandatory new competency test from 2016. The move is expected to be a central part of the Coalition Government's shake-up of teaching qualifications, *designed to arrest Australia's slide down international rankings in maths and reading skills*. (Wilson 2015a, emphasis added)

> The Federal Budget will invest $17 million to reduce the numbers of substandard teaching graduates who leave university unprepared for careers in the classroom. Despite the tight education budget, *the funds have been put aside to address concerns about poor teaching standards and Australia's slump down international literacy and numeracy rankings*. The money will be used to fund new mandatory literacy and numeracy tests for teaching graduates. (Wilson 2015b, emphasis added)

In these media texts, early career teachers were variously positioned as lacking intelligence and 'the right' motivations for entering the profession in the first place; and then, once through their initial teacher education, lacking specialist knowledge, basic skills and 'classroom readiness'.

Despite concerns that 'falling ATAR cut-offs have prompted fears about student skill levels' ('Education policy must recognise' 2014), and an argument that 'big enrolments in easy-entry education courses may be good for university finances, but are bad for teacher quality' (Lane 2014), the TEMAG report did not recommend that universities raise minimum entrance scores for teacher education courses. Instead, the recommendation, accepted by the government, was for 'enhanced' selection processes for prospective teacher education students. This prompted Justine Ferrari of *The Australian* to declare the TEMAG report to be a 'lost opportunity', arguing: 'It remains unclear how a student who has struggled academically at school can be transformed through university into a teacher with the capacity to help students reach high academic standards' (Ferrari 2015a).

In this, Ferrari echoed the perspective of Centre for Independent Studies Research Fellow and recently appointed Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Board Member Jennifer Buckingham, in a piece also published in *The Australian* in late 2014:

> There are two ways to address the low quality of teacher education and oversupply of some teachers. One is to restrict entry to teaching degrees to highly capable students. To most people, this is an obvious place to start. At the recent Australian Primary Principals Association conference, ABC journalist Emma Alberici put to a panel of speakers (including me) the proposition that some people enrol in teaching degrees because they can't get into any other course. Five of the six panellists supported higher entry levels for teaching degrees. Tellingly, the lone dissenting vote was that of the president of the Australian Council of Deans of Education. (Buckingham 2014)

Here, the Deans of Education, far from the voice of authority employed in the 1998–99 texts, were positioned as out of touch and out of step with prevailing common sense. While the deans were referenced many times in the 2014–15 texts, rarely was their voice presented as authoritative; indeed, more usually it was juxtaposed with the opinions of others that were presented as the more reasonable, common-sense-oriented view (see, e.g. Ferrari 2014; Morton 2015; Patty 2014).

The 'graduate glut', in which universities were seen to be producing 'substandard teachers' via 'dodgy degrees' (Wilson and Vonow 2015) and contributing to the 'culture of mediocrity' ('Time for better quality control' 2014) in schools was a recurring motif in the 2014–15 media texts (see, e.g. Aston 2014; 'Big lesson to learn' 2014; Bita 2015; Buckingham 2014; Patty 2014). In writing of the 'looming disaster' rendered by an oversupply of primary teaching graduates, the *Daily Telegraph*'s Bruce MacDougall highlighted this deficit in the case of 'Nigel', the strongest example of an extended framing device in the form of an 'exemplar' (Gamson and Lasch 1983) present in these texts:

> Along with thousands of other school leavers, Nigel had his sights set on becoming a primary teacher.
>
> But his Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) was just 69 and he needed 78 at least to get into a teaching degree at his chosen university.
>
> No problem, Nigel (not his real name) found two other universities offering 'pathway courses' to teaching that required an ATAR of only 65 and he readily gained entry.
>
> But the would-be teacher lasted just three weeks, dropped out of the course and became an electrician instead.
>
> Of her son's experience, Nigel's mum said: 'The problem is it is too easy to get into a teaching degree. The bar is not set high enough and the unis will not change because they want the numbers.' With evidence that some students are being accepted into teaching degree courses with ATARs as low as 40, debate is raging about the quality of candidates trying to enter the state's classrooms.
>
> While education leaders are quietly happy that people like Nigel drop out, his story lends weight to a perception that too many who seek a career in teaching may be ill-equipped for it. (McDougall 2014)

The technique applied here where the conclusion drawn from the 'evidence' provided bears no logical relationship to the evidence itself was a common one. Nigel's experience more strongly suggests that the 'looming disaster' wrought by 'low entry degree courses' may in fact be foiled by the expectations and requirements of those very same degree courses themselves, presumably an aim of the enhanced accreditation procedures recommended by TEMAG.

Finally, graduate teachers were positioned in the 2014–15 media texts as lacking 'classroom readiness'. The 'gap between the knowledge and skills universities are preparing their teaching graduates with and those that are needed for new teachers to thrive in the classroom', as expressed in *Action now: Classroom ready teachers* (Department of Education and Training 2015a, p. 8), resonates with the media texts on the disconnect between theory and practice in education, particularly in relation to teaching reading:

> Many primary school teachers are ill-equipped to help students learn to read, with an audit of education degrees revealing the teaching of reading is mired in theory, with too little focus on practical skills. (Ferrari 2015b)

> The NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards investigation into how the state's universities were preparing teachers has found many primary school teachers were poorly trained to help students learn to read, and overloaded with theory at the expense of practical skills. (Morton 2015)

And also more broadly:

> In February last year, Education Minister Christopher Pyne commissioned a review into teaching qualifications, amid concerns university degrees were letting down graduate teachers by focusing too heavily on theory and not on necessary classroom skills. (Wilson 2015a)

This focus on 'theory' as a symptom of graduates' lack of 'classroom readiness' was another recurring motif in the 2014–15 texts. The minister was said to want 'more focus on the practicalities of teaching and less on theory' ('Open minds needed' 2014). Elsewhere, it was claimed that 'education theories, which have been the focus of many university courses, are no substitute for learning how to teach' ('Boost tertiary courses' 2014), while the teaching of reading was said to be 'mired in theory, with too little focus on practical skills' (Ferrari 2015b). In other texts, teacher education generally was positioned as 'overloaded with theory at the expense of practical skills' (Ferrari and Morton 2015; Morton 2015). 'Theory' emerged as a strong reasoning device in the texts, proving a shorthand for universities' lack of capacity to measure up to community expectations of graduates' classroom readiness.

4.4   Shifting the Frame

In this final section of the chapter, I will contrast these two sets of representations. As I have discussed at length elsewhere (Mockler 2018), the 1998–99 and 2014–15 'policy settlements' with relation to early career teachers reflect the growth of corporate federalism (Lingard 2010) in Australian education over this timeframe, and the growing dominance of the federal government in teacher education policy (Savage and Lingard 2018). This is reflected in the prevalence of state-based concerns around teachers' employment opportunities and conditions, common to a number of jurisdictions, in the 1998–99 media texts. Remedies for these issues were seen very much to lie in effective workplace planning, which was regarded as the province of the states and territories. In the 2014–15 texts, by contrast, federal responsibility for shaping the quality of the teaching profession was implicitly assumed.

Alongside this shift in orientation, we see a shift in the articulation of the 'problem frame' across the two time periods, and in the corresponding policy solutions advanced, either overtly or by implication. In the 1998–99 texts, the problem frame rests on the status of the teaching profession and the low morale of teachers, seen to be brought about primarily by precarious employment conditions and less-than-desirable working conditions. The 'fixes' posed in the texts related to the reform of industrial conditions, addressing precarious employment and improving the job prospects of education graduates and other teachers, and state and territory governments were broadly identified as the 'change agents' for these fixes. Additionally, the associated goal of 'attracting the best and brightest' to the teaching profession was seen as both a 'fix' for the status and morale problem, and also a sign that this problem was 'on the mend', for when perceived conditions and opportunities are such that teaching appears a good option for the 'best and brightest', the 'status problem' will have been addressed. Finally, standards and accreditation for teachers were also advanced as remedies for problems of status and morale.

In the 2014–15 media texts, universities and graduate teachers were constituted as the primary problems, contributing in turn to the problem of Australia's slide down the ranking scales on international standardised tests such as PISA and TIMSS. Tighter regulation of universities' initial teacher education programs was seen as a key 'fix' for the 'university' problem, while requiring higher entry scores on the part of initial teacher education candidates and mandating literacy and numeracy testing for graduate teachers were the key 'fixes' posed for the 'graduate problem'. A stronger emphasis on 'practical skills' in initial teacher education and less emphasis on 'theory' were positioned as a remedy for both 'university' and 'graduate' problems. The federal government was the (variously implied and explicit) 'change agent' in these texts, the arbiter of greater accountability and more stringent requirements for both universities and graduate teachers.

In both timeframes, the tension between the number of teaching graduates and the standard of teaching graduates is reflected in the media texts, but this tension is refracted very differently. In the 1998–99 texts, impending teacher shortage in some states and territories heralded a concern that the required number of teaching graduates would put downward pressure on entry scores and perhaps diminish the quality of teachers (thus requiring a drive to enhance the status of the profession and attract the 'best and brightest'). Graduate teacher attrition and lack of sustained employment opportunities for graduate teachers in the short term were positioned as the root problems, connected to the low status and morale of the profession. In the 2014–15 media texts, the 'glut' of initial teacher education students and teaching graduates was seen to be a by-product of the universities' business model, driven by a clamour for student fees, which was seen to have unnecessarily broadened the pool and consequently relaxed entry standards. Interestingly, across the two timeframes, the 'problem' of declining standards and teacher quality was seen as a consequence of the exact opposite causes, shortage and 'glut'.

The interplay between policy, media and public opinion is notoriously complex, and the concomitant effects of this interplay on the teaching profession in the contemporary age are largely unexplored. Entman's (2003) theory of 'cascading activation' suggests that agents operating at different 'levels' (e.g. members of the government, policy and other elites, members of the media, the media frames themselves, and members of the public) form 'networks of association', 'among ideas, among people, and among the communicating symbols (words and images)' (Entman 2003, p. 419), whereby ideas are activated and spread from one 'level' to another. 'Framing effects' (Druckman 2001) occur when the frames used by members of the media for example (which may in turn be shaped by those used by policy elites and/or members of the government) impact the formation of public opinion: when 'emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions' (Druckman 2001, p. 1042). Given the continued growth of attention to education on the part of the print media over the past two decades, the framing effects of this attention on perceptions of teachers and their work both within and beyond the profession would be fertile ground for further research.

The shift identified in the problem frame in this study, from teacher status and morale as the problem, to which graduate teachers eager to join a 'vital profession' are offered as a partial solution, to graduate teachers as the problem, to which more pervasive accountability mechanisms are positioned as a solution, is a potentially critical one. Certainly, evidence from related areas (e.g. Baroutsis 2016) suggests that the consequences of such a shift are likely to manifest in the enforcement of further, unhelpful accountabilities for the teaching profession, diverting energy and emphasis away from what matters. The long-term impacts of these accountabilities in terms of teacher attrition and burnout are beginning to be well documented on both personal (Stroud 2016) and systemic levels (e.g. Dworkin and Tobe 2014; Nathaniel et al. 2016). Furthermore, the media's consistent reinforcement of the notion that both initial teacher education programs and their students are substandard seems unlikely to attract the 'best and brightest' to teaching *en masse*.

Whether such framing directly or explicitly influences public opinion about graduate teachers or early career and prospective teachers' perceptions of their own profession, the shape of public discourse around teachers, graduate and otherwise, schools, and education more broadly, surely matters. Callaghan noted over half a century ago that 'I am convinced that very much of what has happened in American education since 1900 can be explained on the basis of the extreme vulnerability of our schoolmen [sic] to public criticism and pressure' (1962, p. viii), pointing to the historical significance of media discourses around teachers in times long prior to the mass media expansion of the 'information age'. Furthermore, the 'systematic and reasoned' research that indicates that indirect mass communication affects work in other fields (Druckman 2001, p. 1061) suggests that the media framing of early career teachers holds the potential to shape not only community attitudes, but also the attraction and attrition of early career teachers themselves.

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Chapter 5
Early Career Teachers and Their Need for Support: Thinking Again

Geert Kelchtermans

Abstract Over the past three decades, teacher induction or the socialisation of new teachers into the profession has received ample attention from researchers and policy makers. Despite well-intended interventions to support early career teachers with the challenges of the induction phase, many of these supportive practices have been caught up in deficit thinking and a remedial perspective, which has a number of negative and even counterproductive side effects. After a critical analysis of this dominant discourse and practices, three alternative representations of early career teachers and the complexities of their induction are presented: the early career teacher as a sense-making agent, as a networker and as an asset to the school. Together these representations constitute an agenda for research, policy and practice that can move beyond the remedial perspective. They can open up avenues for more rich and sustainable support that truly promotes early career teachers' professional learning but at the same time can contribute to innovation and school development.

5.1   Introduction

Beginning teachers, new teachers, newly qualified teachers, and early career teachers – the plethora of names used in the educational literature indicates that teachers in the early phases of their career do not have any reason to complain about a lack of interest from researchers and policy makers. On the contrary, teacher induction – the socialisation of new members of the teaching profession in their job – has been the focus of a large number of studies over the past 30 years. The academic interest in unpacking and understanding these processes has resonated with policy makers' concerns to ensure a sufficiently large and qualified teaching force. For all these reasons, the international trend to create specific support arrangements to facilitate teachers' entrance into the job comes as no surprise and obtains an almost self-evident legitimacy.

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In the first part of this chapter, I give a brief overview of the research on teacher induction. While acknowledging the achievements and merits of this work, I will continue in the second part by problematising the implicit deficit perspective that underlies much of the research and support initiatives. Early career teachers are positioned as lacking essential professional competencies to deal with the challenges of the job successfully. This is the paradox of support facilities for early career teachers: the well-intended help to remediate the shortcomings eventually contributes to the persistence of the problems it tries to solve. In order to get beyond this deficit perspective and its negative side effects, I will argue for three alternative representations of early career teachers that have been forgotten or at least downplayed in the discourse and practice on teacher induction: the early career teacher as a professional agent, as a networker and as an asset for the school. Acknowledging and including these representations can, in my view, not only help to overcome the paradox but also contribute to school improvement and teacher development. Furthermore, they can help to rethink and redesign the facilitating efforts and support programs, thus increasing the chance of successful teacher induction and the reduction of turnover.

5.2   Teacher Induction in Educational Research and Policy

Over the past three decades, the first phase of teaching careers has been a central issue in educational research as well as policy (see for overviews Veenman 1984; Kagan 1992; Gold 1996; Zeichner and Gore 1990). It has been acknowledged that teachers entering their career experience particular difficulties and challenges, which create particular needs for support (e.g. Intrator 2006). In this rich research legacy, one can distinguish four different thematic lines.

The first – and oldest – thematic line concerns individual teachers' difficulties in overcoming the so-called practice shock. The transition from the relative comfort of being a student teacher to the complexities as well as the full responsibilities of an entire classroom is for many early career teachers a confronting, challenging and sometimes deeply disturbing experience. A number of studies have tried to identify these specific problems and the missing competencies that would enable early career teachers to cope with the technical challenges of curriculum and pedagogy. Classroom management problems have been found to feature prominently at the top of their list of concerns (see, e.g. Veenman 1984; Dicke et al. 2015).

While the first theme focused on individual teachers and their problems (mostly at the classroom level), a second thematic research line broadened the attention to the socialisation process into the school as an organisation, against the backdrop of wider institutional and societal developments (e.g. issues of social justice, socioeconomic diversity of the student population and teaching in urban schools: see, e.g. Curry et al. 2008; Fleming 2014; Gaikhorst et al. 2017; Tricarico et al. 2014). Much of this research concentrated on the social nature of the teaching job and thus the need for early career teachers to develop professional relationships with diverse

other individuals and groups (colleagues, principals, parents) in the school, with different interests and expectations (school culture, micropolitics) (e.g. Achinstein 2006; Aspfors and Bondas 2013; Caspersen and Raan 2014; Curry et al. 2008; Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a, b; Kelchtermans and Vanassche 2017). Not surprisingly, the analysis of organisational socialisation is related to early career teachers' professional learning, and in particular to the development of their professional identity (see, e.g. De Neve et al. 2015; Flores and Day 2006; Olsen 2008; Pillen et al. 2013; Rippon and Martin 2006). Early career teachers develop their sense of themselves as a teacher in and through these social working conditions. Apart from instrumental aspects of mastering the required knowledge and skills, this socialisation also implies an awareness of one's moral and ethical commitments in the job, as well as the need to micropolitically negotiate them with the key actors in the school (see, e.g. Lacey 1977; Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a; Kelchtermans and Vanassche 2017). Developing a sense of self as a teacher therefore also implies that striving for recognition by significant others as a 'proper' teacher constitutes one of the most central concerns for teachers in the induction phase.

A third thematic research line is the issue of teacher attrition and teacher retention. Although the actual figures and estimates differ between countries, there is an international concern about the significant number of teachers who do not enter the job or leave teaching within the first 5 years. The issue of teacher turnover (and the risk of teacher shortage) is not restricted to the induction phase, but it nevertheless has become a prominent part of the research agenda on early career teachers (e.g. Craig 2017; Ingersoll and Strong 2011; Struyven and Vanthournout 2014; Watt and Richardson 2008). Several authors have tried to identify how the turnover rates during the first years of a teacher's career could be reduced, for example, through appropriate support (Burke et al. 2015; Cochran-Smith et al. 2012; Leah Lavigne 2014) or by understanding the retention issue in terms of the interplay of organisational working conditions and identity development (e.g. Clandinin et al. 2015; Delvaux et al. 2013; Kelchtermans 2017; Schaeffer 2013; Watt and Richardson 2008).

The fourth research line gives centre stage to the question of the appropriate help and support for early career teachers. In its attempt to provide solutions to the different problems of teacher induction, this theme is related to all three former ones. Yet, because these studies are most often explicitly justified by an interest in teacher development as well as the effective pedagogies to support it, they constitute a category in themselves, with 'mentoring' as the overarching label (for an overview of the research, see Long et al. 2012; Orland-Barak 2016). Most support initiatives for early career teachers encompass some sort of mentoring, in which a senior, more experienced teacher (the mentor), engages with novice colleagues (the mentees) by providing different forms of assistance, including information, coaching, technical training and moral and emotional support. This understanding of mentoring is the dominant and most common one in the literature (Orland-Barak 2016), although the actual practices of mentoring have become more diverse recently (including forms of peer group mentoring and other collective approaches: see, e.g. Korhonen et al. 2017).

Finally, a methodological observation concludes this brief overview of the research themes. Across the different thematic research lines, most studies have

focused on understanding the experiences of early career teachers and/or the effectiveness of the support provided (e.g. Ingersoll and Strong 2011; Langdon et al. 2014). Methodologically, this implied the use of retrospective research designs, in which teachers were invited to recall their experiences during their first years in teaching, making sense of them and the way the experiences have influenced their professional development. Much less research attention was given to studies using a follow-up design and focusing on the actual process of induction or the professional development of early career teachers as it unfolds over time (for examples of exceptions to this, see Cochran-Smith et al. 2012; Maulana et al. 2015; Vanderlinde and Kelchtermans 2013; Watt and Richardson 2008). The study by Cochran-Smith et al. (2012) relates decisions on staying or leaving the job with the quality of actual classroom practices, identifying five different configurations: (a) strong teaching and continuing to teach in the same school; (b) strong teaching, but moving along; (c) middling teaching, then moving; (d) problematic or weak teaching, but moving schools or positions to stay in teaching (hanging on); and (e) problematic or weak teaching and getting out of teaching. These configurations indicate the interplay of different elements, as well as the idea that teacher turnover does not necessarily have to be a loss for the quality of education (Kelchtermans 2017).

5.3 Problematising Deficit Thinking

It goes without saying that widespread research attention as well as policy measures to support early career teachers have made important contributions to understanding and valuing the complexities of the induction phase, the broad range of interacting determinants and how they affect the experience of early career teachers' socialisation in the job, as well as their decisions to stay in the job or leave it. At the same time, however, the acknowledgement of the particular problems and need of support of early career teachers has had a number of unintended side effects that are problematic and in the long run even counterproductive. Most of the discourse on teacher induction and the different support programs or mentoring practices is fundamentally rooted in a form of 'deficit thinking' (see, e.g. Correa et al. 2015). This way of thinking takes as its starting point that early career teachers lack particular competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) to successfully deal with the challenges of the job. In doing so, early career teachers are being positioned as 'formally qualified, but not yet fully capable', and this implies that they fall short in appropriate expertise. This framing of early career teachers in terms of individual shortcomings (deficits) automatically results in a remedial perspective. In this logic, the ultimate purpose and justification of support for early career teachers is the remediation of their deficits. The different forms of mentoring are meant to repair, fix or compensate for the deficits. Irrespective of the good intentions and genuine care in most of the studies and policy initiatives to help early career teachers, it remains true that the early career teacher is positioned as an incomplete and not fully competent individual entering the school as a new member of the organisation (see also Ulvik and Langørgen 2012).

The problem with the remedial perspective is not that it is completely meaningless or irrelevant. It is obvious that in many cases providing additional knowledge or context information, training in particular skills or offering sustained feedback on their practice can help early career teachers to better cope with the challenges they encounter in a particular school. The problem, however, is that the deficit thinking and the remedial perspective focus on an individual's weaknesses and shortcomings, rather than their strengths and potential. And furthermore it primarily positions the early career teacher as passive and dependent on the judgement and the help of others, who are considered 'fully' professional and competent. However, the question that is not asked is what are the conditions and criteria by which the 'others' can consider themselves better or more professional than the early career teacher? How can they justify or legitimate their superiority? It also remains unclear how, when and why early career teachers move from the deficient into the competent mode, from being unfinished and unready into ready for the responsibilities of teaching. Nor is it clear how or by whom this transition is to be judged.

At the same time, the deficit perspective uncritically takes for granted the positive contribution of the mentor and is unable to see that the very nature of the mentoring relationship is quite often part of the problem rather than its solution. Both research and experience show that the taken-for-granted benefits of individual mentoring are much less self-evident than assumed (see, e.g. Langdon et al. 2014). Pillen et al. (2013), for example, found that a very directive mentoring style, leaving little room for the early career teacher's professional autonomy, contributed more to the difficulties than to a solution. Or just imagine the over-generous mentor, sharing materials, advising, providing feedback, coaching, but leaving hardly any space for the early career teachers' own beliefs, motivations, ideals or desired self-understanding. Or picture the mentor, consciously or unconsciously, becoming part of the evaluation structure of the early career teacher, with the latter – as a strategic consequence – keeping a distance and remaining suspicious and unengaged. This almost completely jeopardises the professional development potential of the mentoring relationship.

Apart from its internal inconsistencies, the remedial perspective also imposes a very particular and in many respects narrow and reductionist frame within which thinking and talking about teacher induction can be meaningful. In my view, this reductionist view not only does injustice to the early career teachers and the complexity of the induction phase but is eventually even counterproductive to the aim of supplying a sufficient force of qualified, motivated and professionally engaged teachers. To overcome the limits of this deficit perspective, the very idea of early career teachers and teacher induction needs to be re-thought, reconceptualised and revised. In the rest of the chapter, I will try to present three alternative representations to frame early career teachers and their induction. These representations can not only overcome the limitations of the remedial perspective, but actually open up new avenues to conceive of teacher induction in a richer, broader way: the early career teacher as an actor or agent, as a networker and as an asset. Together these three modes represent an agenda for the future development of research, policy and (support) practice for early career teachers that treats them as professionals and may

contribute to their retention in the job. Building on my own research as well as on an exploration of the international research literature, I will try to get beyond the deficit perspective in the next three sections.

5.4   The Early Career Teacher as an Agent

A first alternative representation of early career teachers stresses their *agency*: the human capacity to interpret and judge the particular situations they find themselves in and to act upon this sense-making. Their socialisation into the profession is not simply learning how to fit the mould and passively adapt to the demands of the organisation. It needs to be understood:

> as an interpretative and interactive process between the new teacher and the context. In this mutual interaction, socialisation means that the beginning teacher is influenced by the context, but at the same time in his/her turn affects the structures in which s/he is socialized. (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002b, p. 106)

It is important to stress the central role of sense-making and interpretation in (new) teachers' agency. Based on my narrative-biographical work, I have argued that, throughout their lives and experiences as pupils, students and student teachers, early career teachers have developed a '*personal interpretative framework*', a set of cognitions and beliefs that operates as a lens through which they observe, give meaning to and react to experiences, situations and conditions in the teaching job (Kelchtermans 1993, 2009). This framework includes a particular understanding of themselves as teachers, their motivations, their normative beliefs about what they ought to be doing and achieving as teachers as well as the issues that make them feel proud and satisfied (enhancing their self-esteem). Furthermore, it entails their technical know-how (knowledge and skills) on how to achieve this. It is important to acknowledge that this framework determines how early career teachers perceive and give meaning to their experiences in the job. They read the situations they experience through that lens, interpret them and give them meaning: agreeing or disagreeing, accepting or resisting, wondering or questioning what they are experiencing. In other words, early career teachers' agency not only refers to their capacity to successfully perform particular professional tasks and actions, but equally to the value-laden judgements and sense-making processes informing their practice, as well as their (un)willingness to act in particular ways or to acknowledge where they feel less capable to achieve what they strive for or what they are expected to do. This can be related to what Lortie (1975) has coined 'apprenticeship of observation': having had to deal with numerous teachers and other students, in a long series of different classrooms and schools (including teacher education), early career teachers have developed an understanding of what a classroom or a school is or can be like, what it means to be a teacher and what kind of teacher they want to be themselves.

As a consequence, however, the processes of sense-making and agency are never merely technical or instrumental (mastering the knowledge and skills that are

needed for effective teaching), but inevitably reflect *normative views* on what constitutes good teaching or a good teacher. For that reason, Rippon and Martin (2006) have argued that induction procedures should be differentiated to meet the differences in school cultures: it is a very different experience to find one's place and sense of identity in a very individualistic school culture versus a collaborative and collegial one. This further implies that finding one's place in a school requires negotiating and navigating the normative views in a school, while at the same time balancing one's loyalty to one's own beliefs. In other words, teacher induction also has a *(micro)political character*, as it requires 'strategies by which individuals and groups in organisational contexts seek to use their resources of power and influence to further their interests' (Hoyle 1982, p. 88). An important part of early career teachers' agency is directed towards establishing or protecting what they consider necessary or desirable working conditions. In my own research on the micropolitics of teacher induction, I observed that being able to live up to one's deeply held beliefs about good teaching (self-interest) and getting the social recognition of being a proper teacher from colleagues and leadership constitute crucial professional interests for early career teachers (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a, b; see also Kelchtermans 2017; Kelchtermans and Vanassche 2017), which will strongly shape their actions (see also Curry et al. 2008). This line of argument on the agency of early career teachers finds further support in recent work on teacher resilience, which is not so much understood as an individual characteristic, but rather as 'the dynamic and complex interplay between individual, relational and contextual conditions that either enable or constrain teachers' power and agency' (Johnson et al. 2016, p. 7; see also Le Cornu 2013).

Acknowledging early career teachers' agency – and in particular its normative and political character – has important consequences for mentoring or other support facilities. As research on successful mentoring has shown (see, e.g. Jokikokko et al. 2017; Uitto et al. 2015), it is essential to conceive of the mentoring process in terms of a dialogue and exchange between different but complementary sets of expertise, rather than making the early career teacher fit the mould. The latter often implies that early career teachers have to let go of their deeply held beliefs about good education and the teacher they want to be, which will easily meet resistance and reluctance (see, e.g. Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002a, b; Oplatka and Eizenberg 2007; Uitto et al. 2015). Yet, at the same time, mentors will often find themselves under pressure from the school to make the early career teachers comply with the desired practices. Achinstein (2006) demonstrates how mentors need to develop micropolitical literacy to read and navigate the interests and requirements of the school properly, but also effectively advocate for their mentees. The latter becomes particularly challenging in restrictive policy contexts of high-stakes testing and a strong accountability pressure (e.g. scripted curricula) (Achinstein and Ogawa 2006).

To sum up, by stressing and acknowledging early career teachers' agency, it becomes necessary to understand their socialisation into the job as a complex and contextualised process of *interpretative negotiation* between active, knowledgeable and sense-making agents and the working conditions they find themselves in (social, material, political and normative). The degree of fit between both is an essential ele-

ment in the eventual decision to stay in the job or leave (see, e.g. Kelchtermans 2017; Tricarico et al. 2014). This decision in itself is also the outcome of early career teachers' agency.

5.5   The Early Career Teacher as a Networker

The conclusion that the early career teacher is an interpretative negotiator and a sense-making agent leads almost automatically to this second alternative representation: the sense-making actor is socially embedded. So, however important it is to acknowledge and understand the individual early career teacher's agency, with their individual biography and interpretative framework, their socialisation in the job always happens in a context (a particular school and educational system) and that context is primarily social. Even before they arrive in their classroom with their students, early career teachers have been interacting with the principal, and often also with members of the school board as well as colleagues. And sooner rather than later, they will meet the parents of their students. In other words, early career teachers' agency is by definition and in an almost existential way situated in complex social relationships: *the individual actor is actually an inter-actor*. Early career teachers find themselves forced to take a stance, find a place and negotiate a position in relation to the students, principal, colleagues, parents, school board, local community and – in terms of support – the mentor teachers (Kelchtermans 2017). These relationships are intrinsic to and even constitutive of the profession: there is no meaningful reality as a teacher without 'others' in the school. For example, and as already indicated, the professional relationships in a school are essential for an early career teacher's social recognition as a teacher. They constitute resources for support (material, social, emotional) and the development of self-efficacy. At the same time, however, authors like Aspfors and Bondas (2013) or Burke et al. (2015) rightly remind us that the fundamental social and relational nature of the teaching job also constitutes an important potential source of stress or negative feelings (self-doubt, disappointment, loneliness or isolation). Early career teachers will therefore be selective in their interactions when seeking support, have preferences for some colleagues over others and develop closer relationships with some while keeping others at a distance. This is yet another illustration of the interpretative negotiations that are a central element of early career teachers' agency. Fox and Wilson (2009, 2015) illustrate how early career teachers engage in creating, maintaining and activating networks with others inside as well as outside the school to deal with the challenges of the induction phase, to become socially recognised as colleagues and to develop a sense of belonging.

In line with but expanding this work, it is also interesting to take a more structural approach and look at these relationships as dynamic patterns or structures, in which early career teachers find themselves or which they proactively establish. Early career teachers engage in the development of so-called social capital, the 'ability to secure benefits through membership in networks and other social struc-

tures' (Portes 1998, p. 8). This is the central idea in social capital theory (Coleman 1988; Portes 1998), which 'posits that social structure, or the web of relationships among individuals, offers opportunities and constraints for the exchange of resources' (Moolenaar 2012, p. 10). Social capital theory has provided the theoretical basis for the growing research on social networks. These studies, according to Moolenaar, draw on three key assumptions: (a) in the relationships among individuals, important resources (information, knowledge) are exchanged; (b) individuals are not independent, but interdependent, as they are fundamentally embedded in social structures; and (c) the social networks in which people operate 'may provide opportunities for, but also constrain, the actions of individuals and organisations' (Moolenaar 2012, p. 11).

In other words, social capital theory and the different forms of social network analysis building on it provide evidence that we should think of an early career teacher as part of one or more social networks rather than as an individual social actor. Or, put differently, the individual person is conceived of as inherently situated in and part of a pattern or web of relationships which exist beyond the actual interactions and as such constitutes an essential structural element of the relevant context. Although the network (or one's membership) needs to be created, maintained and activated (Fox and Wilson 2009) through interactions, it also has some form of enduring existence as a structure. Taking this stance implies that the early career teacher is not primarily seen as an isolated individual, with particular characteristics or competencies, but rather as 'networked': structurally embedded in a web of relationships, on which they can draw for resources and support. This conceptual representation finds empirical support in a growing number of studies on collaborative school cultures and professional learning communities and their impact on teacher induction (Correa et al. 2015; De Neve et al. 2015). An illustration can be found in the work of Baker-Doyle (2012), who studied first-year teachers' support networks and identified two different but complementary categories of networks that exist and have an impact on teacher induction: intentional professional networks (IPN) and diverse professional allies (DPA). The first refers to networks of individuals with whom early career teachers seek to engage and cooperate in order to solve particular job-related problems (e.g. mentors, colleagues or people in leadership positions). The latter encompasses a more varied collection of individuals who prove to be relevant and valuable sources of support but are often situated outside the realm of professional expertise (students' parents, volunteers). She concludes:

> DPAs were invested in the professional growth of the teachers and helped teachers to challenge the traditional norms of the school or teaching and become more personally engaged with development of the curriculum. Whereas, IPN contacts were often close, and philosophically similar to the teachers, DPAs were not as close, and some differed in their philosophies with the teacher (essentially representing characteristics of open networks). (Baker-Doyle 2012, p. 79)

These studies clearly indicate that looking at early career teachers as incarnating or enacting one or more networks also can help understand why mentoring or other support arrangements do not always have the envisaged outcomes. Several studies confirm that, in order to be effective, the entire school should be involved in the

inclusion and support of early career teachers (internal network) (Cherian and Daniel 2008; Menon 2012; Oplatka and Eizenberg 2007; Pillen et al. 2013). At the same time, these studies demonstrate the need not only to take into consideration the networks in and immediately linked to the school but to acknowledge that other and more distant networks can and do play a part in teacher induction. Papatraianou and Le Cornu (2014) stress the importance of informal learning in teacher induction and conclude, in line with Baker-Doyle, that very different social networks can be relevant sources of support and that the distinction between 'professional' and 'personal' networks is much more difficult to maintain than one might expect. Uitto et al. (2015), for example, unpacked in detail how early career teachers' development of a professional identity – and in particular its ethical and emotional dimensions – was strongly influenced by peer group meetings outside their school. If one thinks about the proliferation of the new social media and online networks, it becomes obvious that the actual networks early career teachers are part of and can draw on for support expand widely beyond the borders of the school as an organisation (e.g. Facebook groups of classmates from their initial teacher education). More than ever, it will be necessary to acknowledge that with the arrival of an early career teacher in a school, it is not just an individual that enters the school, but a collection of networks. These developments not only require that we reconsider our representation in talking and thinking of the early career teacher but also force a thorough and critical analysis of mentoring and other support structures.

5.6   The Early Career Teacher as an Asset

For too long, the concern with helping individual early career teachers cope with the challenges of the induction process has blinded researchers and policy makers to the obvious fact that new teachers can make valuable contributions to the school and as such turn out to be 'an asset to the school and community, to be valued and nurtured as part of workforce renewal and the future of the profession, rather than as a drain on resources' (Johnson et al. 2016, p. 75). In any case, early career teachers bring contemporary knowledge of theory and practice resulting from their recent sustained engagement with them during their teacher education.

A first way in which the early career teacher can be an asset for the school is what I would call the 'Alice-in-Wonderland' effect. Similar to student teachers entering schools for their practical training or internship, early career teachers bring a fresh pair of eyes. They observe, inform, wonder, and question what has been taken for granted for so long by their more senior colleagues and can ask simple but revealing and thought-provoking questions: 'why are you doing this?', 'in a former school where I did an interim job, they had a very different way of dealing with this that might be interesting?', 'if you're not happy with these situations or practices, why not consider trying to change them?', 'does it really have to be like this? What if … ?'. To benefit from their 'wondering gaze', principals and colleagues only need to be open, listening and willing to think and make explicit what they consider obvious and self-evident for new perspectives to open up.

Secondly and contrary to the assumption of deficit thinking, early career teachers themselves think and feel they can contribute to the school's benefit. They most often have established a sense of confidence, self-esteem and purpose that motivates them to start their career. Schaefer (2013), for example, uses narrative inquiry to unpack teacher attrition in terms of identity making and shifting, arguing that:

> In recognizing 'teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons' …, their stories of their own experiences become important to understanding the bumping of plot lines. It is within the weaving, paralleling, and bumping of these school and personal plot lines that messiness becomes apparent. (p. 271)

Ulvik and Langørgen (2012) asked Norwegian early career teachers themselves and concluded that:

> there are three particular areas in which beginning teachers feel they contribute to a greater extent than more experienced teachers: (1) having new ideas and being enthusiastic; (2) digital competence; and (3) understanding young people, because they have more common frames of understanding. (p. 49)

Correa et al. (2015) and Woodgate-Jones (2012) have also documented the innovative potential early career teachers can bring to schools.

Fleming (2014) reports on an interesting and successful off-site professional development program for early career teachers in urban schools that explicitly built on the different strengths in skill and expertise that were already present in the group of participating early career teachers. Observing successful practices from their peer early career teachers was more motivating for the participants, as well as making the advice given more accessible. For the early career teachers who presented their practices, this public acknowledgement boosted their self-confidence and 'helped to counter other messages about incompetence that they were getting or were perhaps imposing on themselves' (Fleming 2014, p. 174). Complementary to the learning from their mentors (more experienced colleagues), the early career teachers in this study clearly indicated that this public sharing with and obtaining recognition from peers enhanced their self-efficacy and retention in the job. Fleming's study further illustrates the network idea discussed above as well as the fact that relevant networks are also found outside the school the early career teacher is working in.

Thirdly, the presence of early career teachers can constitute an important source of professional learning for the senior staff in the schools and in particular for their mentors. In my own work, I have argued that in the mentoring process both the mentor and mentee find themselves 'in front of the mirror' (Deketelaere et al. 2004), referring to the intensified and public nature of the reflection that is involved in the mentoring interactions. In order to answer questions, provide feedback or give advice, mentors find themselves challenged to be precise in their wording, careful and therefore thoughtful. In other words, mentoring proves to be a powerful learning opportunity for the mentor as well, as they inevitably are stimulated and triggered to engage in what I have called both *broad and deep reflection* (Kelchtermans 2009; Kelchtermans and Hamilton 2004). In order to contribute to teacher development, reflection should not be confined to instrumental 'how to' questions. Striving to improve the effectiveness or technical mastery of one's pedagogical practices is of course a legitimate aim of professional development, yet on the condition that the

content of one's reflective attention is broadened to include the ethical dilemmas or moral choices, the emotions as well as the political issues of power and influence that are at play in particular situations. At the same time, the reflection should also be deeper, moving beyond the level of action to critically address the underlying knowledge, beliefs and goals (personal interpretative framework) on which one's choices for action are grounded (Kelchtermans 2009). Engaging in a mentoring relationship triggers this broad and deep reflection and thus creates a rich opportunity for professional learning for the mentor, often including self-critically re-examining taken-for-granted ideas or aspects of the workplace.

Finally, there are several studies documenting how early career teachers – and in particular the ones who decide to stay in the job – are often both keen and successful in taking on teacher leadership roles, even during the first few years of their careers. As teacher leaders, they contribute to school development, support innovative practices and improve the quality of the education. The studies by Tricarico et al. (2014) and Cheng and Szeto (2016) illustrated that this is possible, although they both also indicate that the principals – as the formal leaders of the school – play a critical role in making this happen (see also Cherian and Daniel 2008; Menon 2012).

5.7 Setting the Agenda for Future Work: Going Beyond Deficit Thinking

Critical analysis of the deficit thinking and remedial perspective in much of the ongoing mentoring or support arrangements for early career teachers almost automatically leads to the conclusion that some things need to change. Without denying the genuine concern to support early career teachers in their struggle with the challenges of the induction phase, the three alternative representations of early career teachers point towards different, promising avenues to overcome the negative side effects of the dominant discourses on early career teachers. The message does not have to be that induction support or mentoring programs should be abandoned, but rather that they would benefit from radical, self-critical analysis of the validity of their implicit assumptions. Embracing the alternative representations of early career teachers implies seeing the broad potential for professional learning and school development that arrives with those new colleagues. Acknowledging their expertise and treating them as sense-making agents who represent rich networks and bring valuable ideas and practices to the school does more justice to early career teachers than the remedial perspective. At the same time, it no longer positions them as in need of remediation, but rather stresses their positive potential, creating opportunities for early career teachers to have positive experiences that contribute to their self-confidence and social recognition, to find out for themselves where their weaknesses are and seek the appropriate help to deal with them. There is ample research evidence that allowing early career teachers to experience professional success and social recognition as valuable colleagues boosts their self-esteem and motivation,

positions them as 'developing professionals' and is likely to help them open up for the professional learning and skill development they need. Parallel to this, it would be wise to critically examine the unintended side effects of mentoring practices, including the possibly paralysing impact of dominant mentors (uncritically imposing themselves and their practice as the only right answer to the job challenges). And more fundamentally, it makes sense to acknowledge that with temporary contracts, early career teachers are and remain structurally and institutionally in a very vulnerable position that makes it hard to really open up to the full potential of the professional learning provided and as such may be the most important determinant of the ineffectiveness of much mentoring and support. Not to mention, they may be the reason why the wrong people decide to 'leave the profession for the wrong reasons' (Kelchtermans 2017).

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Part II
Reconsidering Policies and Practices: A Way Forward

Chapter 6
How School Leaders Attract, Recruit, Develop and Retain the Early Career Teachers They Want

Positives and Paradoxes

Bruce Johnson, Anna Sullivan, Michele Simons, and Judy Peters

Abstract Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers to the profession is of international concern as it has far-reaching economic and social implications for all nations. In Australia, discussion of teacher workforce development has focused predominantly on attracting and recruiting quality teachers, with less attention given to the broader retention process. In this chapter, we discuss how school leaders influence new teachers and foster their professional commitment. Furthermore, we identify the micropolitical activities that school leaders consciously use to promote the engagement and retention of the early career teachers they want to keep. We also present data and analyses which reveal the dilemmas and paradoxes that school leaders encounter when they attempt to reconcile the competing demands of different stakeholders in the staffing process. We juxtapose the mostly benevolent actions of leaders with their often-unintended consequences to establish the need for ongoing critical reflection about the impact of taken-for-granted human resources processes on early career teachers.

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6.1   Introduction

Effective planning and management of the teacher workforce is an ongoing concern for governments and education systems. In Australia, these concerns are a product of a number of factors including the size and complexity of the workforce. Recent estimates suggest that the teaching workforce consists of approximately 440,300 persons ('known employed teachers' and 'other' registered individuals) and is characterised by significant diversity in terms of demographics, qualifications and employment types (Willett et al. 2014). Developing policies to guide the supply and demand for such a large workforce is difficult for a range of reasons (Commonwealth of Australia 2012; Simons et al. 2012). These include the challenge of accurately estimating population growth in order to identify areas where teachers are needed, responding to short-term gaps in supply of both a specific nature (e.g. high school teachers in science, maths and technology) and general nature (the challenge of attracting and retaining teachers to work in regional and remote areas of Australia). There are also gaps in our knowledge of the experiences of early career teachers which impact on issues such as retention (Weldon 2015).

Most schooling systems across Australia have adopted a labour market approach that focuses on the 'front-end' components of the attraction-recruitment-retention triad (e.g. scholarships, financial incentives, offers of permanent employment). This is despite some evidence which suggests that these 'solutions' may be misdirected. For example, DeAngelis and Presley (2011) found that variations in school-level attrition are substantially greater *within* school type than across school type. This suggests that practices, processes and structures at the school level may play a role in retaining teachers alongside factors such as the location and socio-economic status of the school. It also follows from this that school leaders have a significant role to play in shaping the practices, processes and structures that affect the retention of early career teachers (Johnson et al. 2016).

Contemporary studies of educational leadership recognise the complex array of work that comprises leadership roles and some of the contradictions that are evident in the many forms of leadership that are advocated in contemporary school settings (Bass and Avolio 1993). In particular, the apolitical nature of these conceptualisations of leadership poses problems because they fail to recognise the inherently political nature of schools, where power, conflict and compromise and (at its worse) inequity and exploitation colour the working lives of teachers. As Flessa (2009) notes: 'The study of politics within the school – micropolitics – is sometimes understood as the study of how things *really* work, not how an organisational chart or principal's plan would like them to work' (p. 331, original emphasis).

This chapter takes up the challenge to explore how the process of retention 'really works' in a selected number of school contexts. The overall aim of the research was to investigate school leaders' use of sophisticated micropolitical strategies that promote the retention of early career teachers. In doing so we are interested in shedding light on the strategising and actions of school leaders as they consider the best ways to assist graduate teachers to make the transition into the

teaching profession. To that end, this chapter commences by first exploring the process of retention and how a micropolitical lens can offer new insights into the retention process. Second, we present evidence from a study of early career teachers in four schools to illuminate the retention process as it was enacted in these sites. In the final section of the chapter, we present new ways to understand leader-initiated strategies to nurture early career teachers and promote their transition into the profession. Woven throughout the chapter are new insights into the paradoxes inherent in managing a retention process where principals (as employers) and early career teachers often have competing interests.

The process of *attraction* is usually directed at a wide group of people with diverse characteristics, motivations and aptitudes. It involves building effective relationships with people and inviting some to consider making a commitment to work with a particular organisation. This relationship has both transactional and sociocultural dimensions, which flow through to the retention process and impact on the nature of the 'psychological contract' that is perceived to exist between an employee and employer (Rousseau 1995). The *recruitment* stage aims to identify the best qualified candidates for a vacancy. It continues the process of building relationships while also engaging prospective candidates in selection strategies that have high predictive validity, while also attending to the social dimensions of the process. *Developing* people encompasses a wide range of professional learning opportunities (formal, non-formal, work-based), commencing with induction and continuing across the life cycle of employment. This process has strong connections with processes used in *retaining staff*, which include non-training solutions to workforce development such as promotion, job re-organisation, restructuring, performance pay and succession planning.

In the context of the teaching profession, the issue of recruiting appropriately skilled teachers to match vacancies has been complicated by a constellation of factors and the relatively high turnover rates (i.e. attrition) for the profession (Mason and Poyatos Matas 2015; AITSL 2017). In response to these factors, the focus of current recruitment initiatives has changed from non-specific general approaches to targeted strategies that aim to attract the best quality teachers, especially in specific areas of need. Strategies include the use of employment-based solutions in conjunction with provisional or conditional accreditation processes, which facilitates recruitment to a specified paid position before a candidate has completed their formal course of study to become a teacher. The use of unpaid internships as part of initial teacher education programs is also an increasingly popular way for schools to 'extend' the recruitment process. These provide school leaders with opportunities to assess candidates for roles prior to any formal or public recruitment process and graduating teachers with extended time in the classroom with the close supervision of a more experienced colleague. Additionally, in Australia the growing number of temporary or relief teachers who work for short periods of time, often concurrently across several school sites, offers a ready 'pool' from which candidates for longer-term contract or permanent roles can be sourced (Simons et al. 2012). In this context of overlapping strategies, the concept of retention is better understood as a process

which is *inclusive* of attraction, recruitment, development and deployment of skilled teachers.

Retention understood in this manner does not reduce the importance of recruitment processes; however, it does require some consideration to be given to the chosen processes and the underlying assumptions about work and how potential candidates might perceive the school and the profession more broadly. For example, a recruitment process based around an assessment of 'fit', much like a jigsaw puzzle (Quader and Jin 2011, p. 9), rests on largely individualistic assumptions which assume that jobs (and people) remain the same over time. More social methods of selection, on the other hand, are more concerned with 'relationships, attitudes, interactions, identities and self-perceptions' (Quader and Jin 2011, p. 10). The selection process is understood to have the potential to impact on candidates' career attitudes and self-esteem and their perceptions of fairness, transparency, accuracy and adequacy of processes (Storey 1995, p. 221). This wider notion of retention which embraces these social and cultural dimensions is also inclusive of the notion of career development, which is concerned with providing opportunities for people to progress and develop as they build experience as a teacher. However, as a study of the effectiveness of South Australian teacher attraction and retention programs has revealed, little is known about how school-level factors, including the action of school leaders, act to shape this elaborated conceptualisation of the retention process that is experienced by early career teachers in a context where the linear, tripartite attraction-recruitment-retention process is increasingly being disrupted (Simons et al. 2012).

To paraphrase Blase and Björk (2010), cracking open the 'black box' of teacher retention is likely to reveal significant differences between the intent of the systems' workforce attraction and recruitment policies and the realities of school-based support and development practices that may or may not lead to newly appointed teachers staying in the profession. Hence, our interest is on how school leaders support and work with new teachers who have been attracted and recruited by the current 'front-end' quality selection processes, scholarships and incentive schemes. The research is timely given the immediate and pressing need for more research into the role that leaders play in supporting newly appointed teachers. As the OECD reported at the International Summit on the Teaching Profession (Schleicher 2012), school leaders have a major and increasing role in establishing the conditions that enhance the retention of quality teachers.

There are several perspectives on the micropolitics of schools in the professional literature, yet most focus on how individuals and groups influence others to further their objectives. Importantly, some studies have focused on the micropolitics of cooperation (i.e. collaborative, collegial, consensual and democratic interactions), as well as the more frequently studied conflictual forms of interaction in school settings (Blase 1991). As Johnson (2004) points out, the use of distributed forms of school leadership can be seen to be a micropolitical strategy that school leaders use to select key staff to join committees and teams and to set the tone of their operation. According to Hoyle (1982), micropolitics 'is characterised more by coalitions than

by departments, by strategies rather that enacted rules, by influence rather than by power, and by knowledge rather than by status' (p. 88).

By adopting a micropolitical perspective in this study of leaders' work with early career teachers, we were able to investigate the ways leaders address critical questions about whose goals and interests are served by the decisions they make.

In this chapter, we address the following questions:

1. What micropolitical and leadership strategies do school leaders employ to attract, recruit, develop and retain early career teachers?
2. What unintended and paradoxical consequences do their actions sometimes produce, especially in relation to early career teachers' wellbeing and career aspirations?

6.2 Approach

To explore these questions, we draw on data that was collected as part of an Australian Research Council Linkage project.[1] In the first part of the study, interviews were conducted with 16 early career teachers in South Australia who had graduated from a merit-based scholarship program in secondary teacher education, and from an Honours program in primary teacher education. Interview questions focused on the early career teachers' experiences of being attracted, recruited and appointed to their first schools.

In the second part of the study, four schools in South Australia were selected in which the school leaders were deemed to be particularly successful in attracting, recruiting and retaining early career teachers. Two schools were selected based on the data collected in the first part of the study, and two further schools were selected based on advice from the Principals Australia Institute, an industry partner in the study. The four schools were:

- School A: a Catholic primary school (Years 1–7) in the northern suburbs of Adelaide.
- School B: a Catholic school (Years 1–12) in the Adelaide Hills.
- School C: a senior secondary public school (Years 10–12) in the southern suburbs of Adelaide.
- School D: a secondary public school (Years 8–12) in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide.

Interviews of approximately 1 h were conducted with members of the leadership teams in each school (10 leaders in all) to elicit their perceptions of the strategies they use to attract, recruit, develop and retain quality early career teachers.

Interviews from both stages of the study were transcribed and analysed using codes based on topics (e.g. recruitment strategies), ideas or concepts (e.g. moral purpose), terms or phrases (e.g. induction) and keywords (e.g. 'fit' or 'fit in'). The coded data were synthesised to create a *Framework of Strategies School Leaders Use to Attract, Recruit and Retain Early Career Teachers* (see Appendix). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to elaborate on all of the practices identified in the framework. Rather, we discuss a distilled and more parsimonious 'model' of the attraction-recruitment-development-retention process based on the most conspicuous 'leadership practices' reported by early career teachers and school leaders.

The 'quality' teacher attraction-recruitment-development-retention progression is a complex and sometimes mystical process involving both macro- and micropolitical activity. Rather than becoming mired in this complexity, we have actively sought to condense the process to its most essential elements. We have detected a loose sequence and linearity in school leaders' thinking and decision making about how they get and keep the teachers they want. This is represented in the following model of the attraction-recruitment-development-retention process. However, as is the case with most 'models', reducing the highly complex dynamics of organisational processes to a simpler series of discrete 'factors' has its consequences. In this case, it means overemphasising the linearity of the retention process at the expense of a more nuanced, recursive process that recognises its transactional and sociocultural dimensions (Fig. 6.1).

In the following sections of the chapter, we explore each component of the model, beginning with a discussion of school leaders' justifications for targeting early career teachers as preferred recruits. In doing so, we present data and analyses
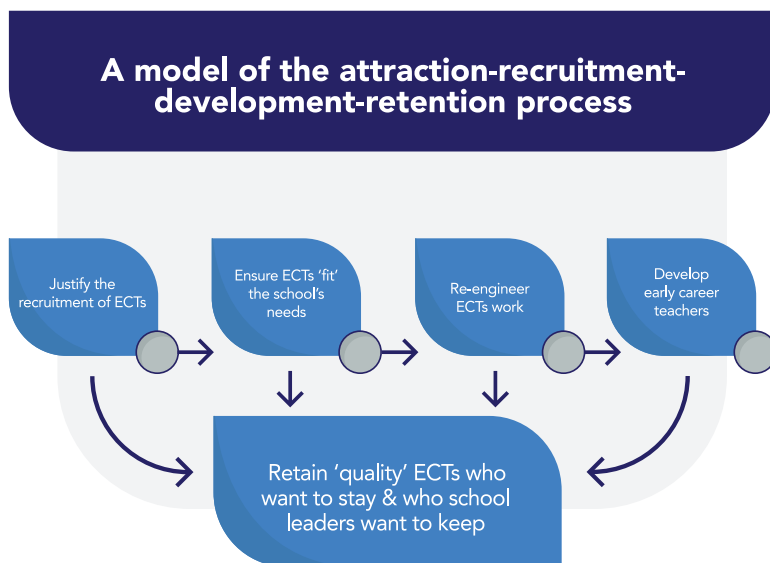
Fig. 6.1 A model of the attraction-recruitment-development-retention process

which reveal the dilemmas and paradoxes that school leaders encounter when they attempt to reconcile the competing demands of different stakeholders in the staffing process. We juxtapose the mostly benevolent actions of leaders with their often-unintended consequences to establish the need for ongoing critical reflection about the impact of taken-for-granted human resources processes on early career teachers.

6.3   Justifying the Recruitment of Early Career Teachers

School leaders recruited early career teachers to enact the principal's vision for the school and the profession. They justified this recruitment because they believed that early career teachers could contribute to the achievement of the goals of the school. There were three main ways that leaders did this work. School leaders made strategic choices to achieve a preferred staff profile, used their power and authority to achieve their goals, and promoted an agenda of continual development in teaching and learning.

School leaders articulated several reasons why they deliberately attracted and recruited early career teachers. In a teacher labour market in oversupply (except in a few specialist areas at secondary level), these leaders frequently targeted graduate teachers over more experienced teachers because they believed that they had unique qualities that could benefit their schools in changing times. The leaders at a large secondary public school in Adelaide valued the 'fantastic energy', 'new ways of thinking' and 'technological expertise' that newly appointed teachers bring to their jobs. They revealed that:

> this year we've got about between 20 and 30 early career teachers – that's in a staff of 120. We're very excited about these early career teachers and newly appointed teachers because they bring fantastic energy that helps re-ignite the passion of teachers who have been here a while. They're able to get from the newbies a lot of the new ways of thinking and some more technological expertise. (Leader, School D)

Another reason for valuing the contributions made by early career teachers was to be 'ahead of the game' in adapting curriculum and pedagogy to the needs of twenty-first-century students. These leaders saw graduate teachers as important implementers of their change agenda:

> We're talking about a significant paradigm shift that has to happen in secondary schools and if you haven't got people who understand what needs to happen for twenty-first-century learners then you haven't got the raw material that enables you to be able to deliver what you need to deliver … We're in a situation now where the profession, pedagogy and kids are changing so rapidly that we have to be ahead of the game. It's a significant change for everyone. … So we have to be prepared to put in the hard work to find the right people who fit this situation. (Leader, School D)

They were also clear about the qualities that one of these 'right people' should have. He or she should have:

a good to fair depth of knowledge of their subject, is very willing to learn, and to share, collaborate, and network, be open minded, show an adaptability and flexibility within a constantly evolving environment, acknowledge when they may need support and help, and be honest in relationships with their peers, as much as with the students. (Leader, School D)

Leaders saw the advantages of employing novice teachers who were 'coachable' and 'open' to developing the kinds of knowledge and skills that they thought were needed in contemporary schools. As the principal of a large Catholic primary school said:

we tend to employ graduates or people with not much experience. The reason is, I guess, that we're looking for that kind of freshness and energy for teaching and also we like to develop them in our own way – that is the truth of it. So, we're looking for people who are learners and open … and have a growth mindset. (Leader, School A)

While school leaders were clear about the benefits of employing 'new' teachers, they were also acutely aware of the need to achieve a 'balanced' staffing profile that included older and more experienced teachers. As one leader admitted:

if you could legislate it in some way, the ideal school would be one that has an age profile and experience profile that can put in place a coaching system that supports young people and enables those that have had that experience to share it in a systematic way… We think it is really important to have that balance between your experienced and early career teachers. (Leader, School D)

Other school leaders were more pragmatic about the advantages of having a mix of experienced staff who are tenured and newly appointed staff who are on fixed-term contracts. The uncertainties around student enrolment numbers, student subject selection preferences and staff leave (both planned and unplanned) mean that having some staffing flexibility is a priority for school leaders. While early career teachers frequently report their dissatisfaction with their short-term and insecure employment status (Johnson et al. 2016), school leaders often use their power to manipulate their school's staffing profile to ensure its 'flexibility': 'Being on contract is something to be aware of. But the school needs to keep a certain number of staff on contract because our staffing numbers are unpredictable' (Leader, School C).

Decisions about future staffing needs are made well ahead of time as school leaders strategically foresee their schools' anticipated staffing requirements. As one leader explains, the recruitment process can take place 6–8 months ahead of the actual appointment of staff:

By about July, all the timetabling choices are in. I will then start to know my staffing profile [for the following year] so I will invite everyone on a contract to come in and have a conversation with me about the lay of the land. (Leader, School B)

What follows is a carefully orchestrated process of negotiating and balancing the needs of the school and those of teachers who are 'the right fit for the right job and the right person' (Leader, School B).

In summary, most school leaders were quite clear about the advantages of recruiting early career teachers despite their lack of experience. They wanted graduate teachers in their staffing profile because of their perceived strengths as enthusiastic, energetic and innovative professionals who could address the changing needs of

twenty-first-century learners. School leaders sought new teachers who were growth oriented, 'coachable' and 'open' to opportunities to contribute to the development and improvement of their schools in ways that were consistent with the leaders' aims and goals for their schools. They also recruited them to ensure that their staffing profile was 'balanced' and 'flexible' as they sought to manage their staff in changing and uncertain times. Finally, they skilfully orchestrated the theoretical and practical arguments that supported the recruitment of early career teachers, thus providing a convincing guiding rationale for their appointment.

While the various arguments put forward by school leaders to target early career teachers as a recruiting priority appear to be convincing and credible, they mask the self-serving interests of some leaders. Several of the leaders we interviewed were quite determined to pursue their schools' agendas, sometimes at the expense of early career teachers' professional aspirations and opportunities to transition into the profession. For example, the principal of a large city primary school advertised all vacancies, even those filled by early career teachers on short-term contracts. He was well aware of the oversupply of teachers in metropolitan Adelaide and, as a consequence, knew that he had a large pool of potential early career teachers to select from when renewing his staffing profile. As he reflected:

> our process is that we re-advertise all positions at the end of the year for contract positions. The incumbent is free to apply for that position along with all comers, so that's how we do it. It's pretty much an open field at the end. They can reapply [for their positions] and if they're successful against that field, then they get re-appointed. (Leader, School A)

The application of so-called 'merit' selection processes shows the pervasive influence of competitive market forces in shaping the teaching profile of this school. It also demonstrates the precarious status of early career teachers who are required to 'win' their positions repeatedly in an ultra-competitive labour market, despite demonstrating their teaching competence for extended periods of time (Johnson et al. 2016). In several other schools, leaders quite explicitly positioned early career teachers as 'disposable' or 'excess to needs' should changes occur in their schools' circumstances. While some early career teachers are sought after, supported and developed in very positive ways, others have very different experiences.

The often-insensitive treatment of early career teachers has the potential to flow through to the retention process and impact on the nature of the 'psychological contract' negotiated between teachers and their schools (Rousseau 1995). Most of the teachers involved in this study reported very positively on their relationship with their school and its leaders. This suggests that they had settled, early in their appointments (3–4 months after recruitment), on a series of 'mutual expectations' (Sherman and Morley 2015, p. 161) about what the school agreed to provide them with (e.g. employment and professional development) in return for their contribution to the school. Past research, however, has revealed that 'psychological contract' violations are relatively common, particularly when there is a perceived oversupply of labour (Turnley and Feldman 2000). In the case of teachers, violations are often triggered by school leaders' application of crude human resource management processes that discount early career teachers' loyalty and contribution to the school (Johnson et al. 2016).

The paradox is that positive recruitment policies and practices that increase early career teachers' expectations of pursuing a satisfying and fulfilling career are compromised when key aspects of the 'psychological contract' between teachers and their schools are breached. As Turnley and Feldman (2000) reveal:

> The outcomes likely to arise from the perception of psychological contract violations include reduced job satisfaction, reduced organisational trust, increased turnover, decreased feelings of obligation to one's employer, reduced willingness to participate in organisational citizenship behaviours, and decreased work performance. (p. 26)

When this oscillating cycle of raised then dashed expectations is repeated year after year as early career teachers churn through fixed-term contract employment, many become disillusioned and cynical about a system that offers low job security, requires loyalty and commitment but offers little in return and commonly endorses violations of the implicit 'psychological contract' at the heart of the employment relationship. Exploiting early career teachers' vulnerability in this way and routinely positioning them as disposable commodities in an unfair and uncaring human resource management system are likely to have longer-term consequences for schools – and the teaching profession itself (Sambrook 2008).

6.4   Using Workforce Recruitment Strategies to Ensure 'Fit for Purpose'

The second theme to emerge from our analysis of school leaders' and early career teachers' experiences relates to the use of 'workforce recruitment strategies'. This refers to the ways leaders plan and implement actions to find and appoint new staff. Analysis of the data revealed that the most pressing concern of school leaders was to identify early career teachers who 'fit' the school's needs.

To employ quality early career teachers who 'fit' their staffing profile needs, school leaders ensured that they understood the market forces and policy drivers that frame early career teacher recruitment options. The leaders we interviewed were very knowledgeable about the teacher labour market dynamics that were operating in South Australia at the time. They clearly understood that their teacher recruitment initiatives needed to reflect the realities of 'the market'. They knew that they had to be 'players' in the market by proactively implementing strategies that maximised their chances of attracting and recruiting the teachers they wanted. They did this in a number of ways.

The most common strategy involved entering the competition to attract and recruit graduate teachers quite early, in some cases before prospective teachers had completed their undergraduate teacher education. The use of 'try before you buy' initiatives was common as school leaders closely monitored the performance of student teachers undertaking their final practicum placements. In the case of schools in country areas, this was particularly telling as student teachers' willingness to

complete a final practicum away from the city was seen as a positive indicator of their willingness to accept a country teaching position. As one leader revealed:

> people who came to the country [to complete their teaching practicum] were obviously those who were willing to put themselves out a bit because they're leaving their part-time job, paying rent up here while not living at home, and often leaving a partner to be up here. (Leader, School B)

School leaders also used casual and short-term contract teaching to identify potential recruits who 'fitted' their needs:

> Okay, so they will register to do relief teaching and we have them in, we look at them and we observe them, and we check with the kids to make sure that they're going to be a good cultural fit for our environment. Then, if a position comes up, that's the pool we look to. (Leader, School C)

All school leaders were aware of their legislative and policy responsibilities in relation to teacher recruitment. However, these school leaders found opportunities to use changes to these policies to create a staffing profile that suited their agendas. For example, principals explained how they capitalised on their understanding of the placement process, and formed a good relationship with a staffing officer, to employ the teachers they wanted:

> We want you [preferred teacher] for next year. I have a really good relationship – everybody does – with their staffing officer. I would know who's still in the pool. … I won't put the position up, because a permanent teacher will be placed. I guarantee you [preferred teacher] that we will be able to get you. (Leader, School B)

> Principals don't want to take the risk of having someone placed so what they do is they either describe the position in such a way that nobody will be placed into it or they wait and advertise it as a contract when all those people have been placed. (Leader, School C)

To attract a strong pool of quality applicants, school leaders did a variety of things to position their school as a desirable workplace. They actively promoted the school's image and reputation as a 'first choice' employer.

Knowledge of the workforce market, how to capitalise on recruitment policies, and how to position the school as a desirable place to work all contributed to school leaders' capacity to recruit teachers who 'fitted' their school's needs. Employing early career teachers who 'fit' was a clear priority for the school leaders in this study, and they went to great lengths to check this 'fit'. For example, 'I think it is about the right fit for the right job and the right person' (Leader, School B).

Each school adopted a variety of recruitment practices to check the suitability of candidates. They used traditional practices such as interviews, student panel interviews and referee checks to screen for 'fit'. But they often took a lot longer to determine the suitability of candidates and considered other factors beyond technical job requirements. Many of the participants mentioned that they were also keen to 'make sure that I did fit in' (ECT, School B). The literature supports this two-way recruitment process in which schools and teachers assess each other's suitability (Liu and Johnson 2006).

While school leaders' focus on attracting and selecting teachers who 'fit' the needs of their school is based on sound human resources management principles about maximising the 'person–position fit' (Cheng 2014, p. 127), their mostly well-intentioned actions can have unintended and questionable consequences. One paradoxical aspect of leaders' preoccupation with selecting 'fit-for-purpose' teachers is that it encourages strategic 'game playing' by prospective job applicants to demonstrate that they 'fit' the explicit and implicit requirements of the school. While this is a common and unquestioned practice in other fields of work (see Victorian Government 2018), such self-positioning promotes contrived behaviour amongst prospective teachers whose integrity and honesty can be seriously compromised. It is ironic that schools which value particular qualities in early career teachers – like honesty, commitment and passion – use selection processes which encourage applicants to conform to fairly conservative and conventional norms and expectations about what a 'good/effective/quality' teacher should be.

At a deeper level, applying 'fit-for-purpose' selection criteria can lead to systemic bias in the recruiting process as applicants from non-mainstream or minority groups inevitably fail to meet the criteria due to their 'differentness'. There is overwhelming evidence that implicit or unconscious bias operates during the selection process in many occupational fields. Past research suggests that employment or hiring decisions are influenced by stereotypical and discriminatory beliefs about applicants based on their:

- *Race*. Research in the United States has established that teachers from racial minority backgrounds are less likely to be hired than white teachers (Bosma 1972; Carr and Klassen 1997; D'Amico et al. 2017). In Australia, teachers from Indigenous backgrounds are under-represented in the profession – 1.3 per cent of the teaching workforce in Australia identifies as Indigenous, while 2.8 per cent of the population is Indigenous (Government of Australia 2014, p. 23) – suggesting that race-based factors influence both the supply and demand for Indigenous teachers.
- *Gender*. Females experience higher levels of discrimination in the general workforce. Yet ironically, the 'feminisation' of the teaching profession in Australia (McGrath and Van Bergen 2017) has prompted calls to positively discriminate in favour of male primary teachers and, by implication, against female primary teachers (Smith 2004).
- *Sexual orientation*. Gay and lesbian teachers report discrimination in the selection process and harassment and ridicule in the workplace (Ferfolja and Stavrou 2017).
- *Immigrant status*. Foreign-trained teachers encounter major obstacles in applying for teaching positions because their qualifications and experience are not recognised or valued (Schmidt 2010; Schmidt and Block 2017).
- *Physical disability and mental illness*. Anecdotal evidence from one large Australian teacher education provider (University of South Australia) suggests that the stigma and discrimination experienced by workers with disabilities in

other professions (e.g. Henderson and Thornicroft 2009) routinely applies to its graduates when they are seeking teaching positions.

These examples of systemic bias and discrimination in the teacher selection process in Australia and other developed countries expose the failings of an uncritical human resources management regime that relies on the flawed meritocratic assumptions of 'fit-for-purpose' approaches to teacher recruitment. School leaders who value diversity and are committed to fair and equitable staffing processes should be alert to their hidden, taken-for-granted preconceptions about particular candidates that infiltrate the selection decision-making process and result in their unfair exclusion from our schools.

6.5 Re-engineering Early Career Teachers' Work

School leaders used leadership strategies to retain early career teachers which related to the nature of the work required of newly appointed teachers and the conditions under which that work was undertaken. The school leaders we interviewed discussed three ways they re-engineered newly appointed teachers' work: they defined and managed their work by guiding who and how they work; they reduced teachers' isolation by de-privatising their practice by opening classrooms to visitors and facilitating regular, reciprocal peer observation of teaching; and they shaped the professional learning of early career teachers.

School leaders intentionally re-engineered the work of early career teachers by closely defining and managing what they do and how they do it to help them be successful. This involved carefully allocating new teachers to teams to promote broader collaboration, structuring the timetable and workspaces to support other collaborations, and reducing their workload. These arrangements varied across the schools, reflecting the differing contextual demands on early career teachers. For example, School C strategically grouped students, rearranged the timetable and formed teaching teams so that the work demands on early career teachers were reduced but also highly supported. The principal explained: 'So, the teaching team is a very powerful thing because of the way we structure the school with multi-age groups and interdisciplinary curriculum. I can give my teachers one hundred minutes of teaching planning [time] a week' (Leader, School C).

The early career teacher in School C valued the way in which his work was structured to support his transition into the profession:

So I got the job and then I started – basically it was really quick – I started teaching electronic communications. … They gave me 0.8 [FTE load]. They were very kind – they gave me the same two classes teaching the same thing which really helps enormously. … You get to do the content twice, so you can spend more time on your lesson plans and you get to run them with two different groups of students, which is pretty good. (ECT, School C)

Engineering formal and informal collaborative working arrangements for early career teachers also enabled and supported their development. Team teaching, for

example, enabled new teachers to be observed and receive feedback, to observe other teachers and reflect on their practice.

> One of the many things that the school leadership do to support teachers is to create those sorts of opportunities for team teaching and collaborative planning. And so it sort of just happens because they create that space. [They do this] by rostering – with the way they roster classes they make sure that, for example, the people in the same team are teaching at the same time and in adjacent learning commons. So, they have that opportunity to get their lessons in sync and team teach. And we have weekly meetings where a large chunk of it we get together and plan. (ECT, School C)

Additionally, school leaders involved in this study deliberately de-privatised the work of early career teachers using a variety of strategies. For example, they recognised the close link between the way space is allocated and used and the nature and extent of collegial support that can be provided to early career teachers. Some created physical spaces that promoted and enabled teachers to collaborate more often and more comprehensively. One leader described how the walls between pairs of classrooms had been removed to create double classrooms which 'forces people into some sort of collaborative relationship. It shows them that it's not their classroom, it's our classroom, it's the children's classroom' (Leader, School A).

One relatively new senior secondary school (School C) had been purposely built to facilitate collaborative teaching in large open teaching spaces in which several teachers and classes operated at the same time. The early career teacher at this school described the advantages of these arrangements:

> I think it's probably a model for what schools should probably be like. … You can get students to the front of the couch and around it – all close when you're talking to them and then they can go back to the tables for group work. The big open learning commons support team teaching with students who may not be getting the best out of one teacher going to a different teacher if they're working on the same thing. (ECT, School C)

Despite the differences in physical configurations, leaders in these schools were aware that the use of physical space has the potential to enhance or impede collaborative teaching practices. They were also aware of the electronic spaces that promoted collaboration. In these schools, planning was done collaboratively, and documents were made available to all staff electronically. This access to shared resources, together with the interaction with colleagues to plan in teams, provided a powerful form of support for the early career teachers in this study. They explained that being able to plan with other team members meant that they could contribute in areas of strength, while others took on the 'heavy lifting' (ECT, School C) in areas where they had less expertise.

However, leaders realised that supporting teachers to collaborate was not in itself sufficient to ensure improved practice. They actively shaped the professional learning of early career teachers using a variety of strategies. Importantly, they positioned all teaching staff as learners to create a culture that promoted professional learning. One leader spoke of the importance of early career teachers 'seeing themselves as a learner more than a teacher' and explained further:

> I think if they're able to do that I think that means they're going to have more empathy for the children in their class. And their experience of being in that teacher's class, and what learning might feel like in that class and how they like to learn. And I think that's also going to mean when they come into a school environment they're going to be more open to what's happening. (Leader, School A)

School leaders also employed targeted and self-initiated learning opportunities that were well resourced:

> What we've got this year in place is a very intense professional learning for anyone who's three years or less in terms of their teaching career. So it's not just our first year out people. It's second and third year, and we've also got a couple of them who are in their fourth year who've also snuck into the program too. (Leader, School D)

Shaping professional learning involved a continual focus on what constituted best practice and how this could be achieved. One early career teacher explained that the focus in his school was on teaching in the twenty-first century, so professional development was guided by the question 'What does twenty-first-century learning look like?', leading to the 'different approaches that you can start to incorporate in your practice as well' (ECT, School D).

A further benefit of reducing isolation to open teaching practices to professional scrutiny was that it provided opportunities for school leaders to formally and informally assess the quality of teachers' work. Herein lies the essential contradiction between practices that de-privatise teaching and promote greater teacher collaboration, and their appropriation by school leaders who use them to increase teacher surveillance for teacher appraisal and performance management purposes. While the intended outcomes of these efforts to re-engineer teachers' work were the promotion of teacher collegiality, sense of belonging and shared responsibility – leading to higher levels of commitment and improved early career teacher retention – past research into teacher collaboration suggests that 'teacher collaboration [may be] good for some [but] not so good for others' (Johnson 2003, p. 337) and may have the unintended consequence of undermining efforts to retain early career teachers. Johnson (2003) reports that teacher collaboration may lead to a perceived loss of autonomy and increased interpersonal conflict and staff factionalism, which may affect the nature and strength of the 'psychological contract' negotiated between early career teachers and their employers.

6.6 Developing Early Career Teachers

The final theme to emerge from our analysis relates to school leaders' commitment to developing early career teachers so that they can contribute to the achievement of the school's goals. School leaders did this in three main ways: they emphasised the importance of responding to aspects of the school context; they formally and informally assessed the quality of early career teachers' performance; and they communicated the quality of their performance.

All of the school leaders focused on ways that they could support early career teachers to 'fit' their school's culture. This involved explicitly helping them understand the context of the school and introducing them to the 'ways things are done here'. For example:

> [We hold] weekly meetings for our early career teachers … – like the old induction meetings – and but they're not just about what button to press on the computer. They're about our school culture. They're about how we manage things around here. So we share the cultural piece. (Leader, School C)

School leaders expected early career teachers to develop in ways that ensured that they fitted the school's culture. As another leader explained:

> But again, I think that's more about your school culture. I think work on your school culture because that's your key driver – it is for all of us in our workplaces and leadership is really important. Have high expectations but help everyone get there. So I won't lower my expectations for you as a first year out or an early career teacher because that's not actually helping you at all but I will help you get there. (Leader, School B)

However, the school leaders were prepared to induct the new teachers into the profession and the school context by employing multiple strategies of support. To assist this induction process, school leaders formally and informally evaluated the quality of early career teachers' performance to check how this development was going. A leader at School D explained in detail the complexity of this leadership role and how the development of early career teachers is linked to retention:

> I think it's really about making sure that everybody who is an early career position is exposed to the best that we can offer to them: whether it's with a buddy; whether it's the [performance and development] process; whether it's the professional learning; whether it's the selection of classes. And then really working on how we reinforce it – how we give good feedback to people, because we do a lot of oral and also written feedback. So, they will get very professional feedback at the end of the first semester about what we're noticing in terms of their strengths and their areas of development. Then at the end of the year … every person in the school meets with their line manager. They show their evidence of the progress they've made from where they were at the start of the year and then their line manager or performance manager finishes off the written feedback for them and sets the goals in place for the following year. So it's a continuous process that they're involved in. And we will say to somebody we think it is a really good fit for this place, 'We would really like you to put your hand up for it [a more substantial position]. There is no guarantee, but this is what you need to do.' (Leader, School D)

This leader also showed how practices used to assess early career teachers' performance were also used to support teacher development. This work of leaders was complex. For example, formal and informal observations of teachers' work were key strategies used to support early career teacher development in all the schools. These strategies were not only used to develop teachers but also to assess how successful and committed the teachers were.

As a support strategy, most of the early career teachers seemed to appreciate the feedback that was provided:

> I get a lot of feedback not really on my teaching but the way I am with the children and my approach and my attitude … [the principal] praises me. She'll give me written feedback. (ECT, Linda)

> [The principal] comes in and out of the classroom. On occasions [leaders] come in and do an observation of how we're going. (ECT, Louisa)

> Leaders visit and tell me I'm doing well. (ECT, School D)

Following appraisal of performance, school leaders then communicated judgements about teacher quality in a variety of ways. For example, if leaders deemed a teacher was someone they wanted to keep, they offered employment. The teachers who were offered employment found this affirming:

> They [leaders] liked me enough to offer me a permanent position. (ECT, Marianne)

> I was invited to do TRT [Temporary Relief Teaching] … they trialled me out and then I met the deputy … I was offered a contract … and TRT. (ECT, Tanya)

> you're not getting out of teaching – that's ridiculous. I've got a position here … I want you, I need you and I want you in place because she knew something might go down. I want you in place so that if I get moved on you're already in the system and we want you here. So for me I just felt so supported. (ECT, Kayla)

However, there was often a slippage between what might begin as an educational observation strategy and an appraisal of teaching that required 'performance management'. One school leader described how they liked to use informal observation of teachers to gain knowledge about their work:

> We have a pretty good idea of what's going on in the school. We don't just sit in our offices all day and type away on our computers. We get out and about and just try to be in classrooms as much as possible. You can get a pretty good sense at any time about what's going on by going into a class or just walking past. There are things we look for. For example, if every time you walk past a particular class they're just sitting on the floor and the teachers out the front, you start to get concerned and then you might go in and sit down and see what is happening. … If it's an explicit lesson where it goes on and on and on, … we would address that with them. (Leader, School A)

There was a fine line for one teacher who appreciated the observational support but also found the scrutiny too much at times. He commented:

> We have weekly performance management meetings. … We're managing that with our line managers. So, I do feel like it's quite – quite a lot of micro managing. Trying to go on from leadership. Also with that as part of a literacy coach – coaching program our deputy principal Alison is our literacy coach and is doing weekly observations with debrief meetings. So I do feel that we're quite scrutinised as staff. (ECT, Andrew)

The offers of contracts and threats of not being employed also took their toll on some teachers. They created a climate of uncertainty. One early career teacher described how insecure working conditions are used by leaders to check out and select the teachers they want. When teachers are not wanted or retained, they are disposed of:

> I was originally given a one-term contract … which at the end of that term, I was extended for the rest of the year. And then at the end of last year I was offered a full-year contract for this year. … They were pretty open with in saying that – it was kind of like a trial basis, one month – a one-term contract to see how I fit, how happy I am.

> I do kind of get the impression that I'm not guaranteed a position here next year. I know that there's been some pressure about there being too many teachers here and that student numbers are quite low at the moment. So there's some pressure from HR. Permanent positions haven't really been made available here. … Leadership worked pretty hard to pick and choose who they want working here. And I do think that if they don't want someone working here, then they can put a lot of pressure on them and they let them go. … There's this feeling around the school that quite often people get targeted, pressured until they go if they're not wanted at the school any more. I've seen a fair few staff leave since I started here. The last two years I think there's been four staff leave. (ECT, Andrew)

Beyond these obvious cases where developmental support was withheld or withdrawn from teachers whom schools did not want to retain, there were some paradoxical consequences for those who did receive targeted professional development. For example, most schools were quite clear about the range and types of professional development activities and processes they wanted for their early career teachers. While tailored professional development is more systematic, coordinated and strategic than the laissez-faire approaches reported by Sullivan and Morrison (2014), it tends to promote:

- A narrowing of professional development options that are available to early career teachers, with a subsequent loss of autonomy to pursue individually identified areas of need.
- The needs of the school over those of individual early career teachers.
- Teacher conformity as early career teachers are expected to 'fall into line' with predetermined, often top-down mandates for professional learning.
- Parochialism as local school developmental needs supersede those relevant to the broader teaching profession.

6.7   Conclusion

In this chapter, we have demonstrated that school leaders initiate the attraction and recruitment process by recognising the often-unique qualities of early career teachers to justify their interest in recruiting them over other possible candidates. They then assess the knowledge, skills and dispositions of potential recruits and whether they 'fit' the needs of their school. Having found early career teachers who 'match' and 'fit in', school leaders invest in two retention strategies. They modify early career teachers' work arrangements to reduce their isolation, promote their involvement in collaborative teaching arrangements and reduce their workload by

providing extra release time and shared curriculum resources. Finally, they invest heavily in developing early career teachers' professional competencies and commitment by encouraging their involvement in formal professional learning activities, publicly recognising and rewarding their contributions and providing opportunities for future leadership.

Our analysis confirmed the importance of school-level, rather than systems-level, retention processes as we identified a sophisticated range of micropolitical strategies that school leaders use to ensure that they 'manage' their staffing profile effectively and strategically. Using a micropolitical perspective was helpful in identifying how leaders use their power and influence to pursue their staffing priorities. While locating micropolitical manoeuvring within a broader suite of leadership practices, our focus on local, practical and powerful stratagems allowed us to probe an often-overlooked part of school leaders' work related to staffing their schools.

In any analysis of teacher retention, issues of teacher agency and choice need to be recognised as an important part of the process. In discussions with early career teachers involved in this study, it was clear that they actively engaged with schools to determine what was required of them to be successful in their new roles. Most were satisfied with the reciprocal relationship they had with their school. This adds credibility to the notion that an implicit 'psychological contract' – which rewards loyalty and commitment with ongoing employment – lies at the heart of the teacher retention process.

While most of the chapter deals with positive leadership practices, we have also revealed the 'dark side' of these practices by pointing out the paradoxically negative impact they can have on some early career teachers and, more broadly, the teaching profession. In exposing these unintended consequences, we have argued for a more critical appraisal of the tenets of traditional approaches to human resource development (HRD). We maintain that critical questions need to be posed to explore the 'inherent tension between reconciling the needs of individuals and those of employing organisations' (Sambrook 2008, p. 67). These questions include:

> what function HRD has within the political systems of organising, how and why HRD provides mechanisms for the control and manipulation of organisational members and what role fear (or other such powerful emotion) plays in defining how HRD is and is not done. (Vince 2005, p. 27)

We have pursued these questions because we wish to broaden the debate about teacher retention to include considerations of fairness, equity and civility that are frequently missing from utilitarian, performance-driven HRD discourses. In recognising the weaknesses and limitations of HRD orthodoxy, we point to the need for school leaders to be more self-reflexive and aware of the social and emotional consequences of their actions.

Finally, we ponder what leadership knowledge, skills and dispositions will be needed if the teacher labour market shifts from being in slight oversupply (as was the case in this study) to a situation in which demand outstrips supply (as is the case in many jurisdictions worldwide). Will the suite of leadership activities discussed here be sufficient to serve the needs of schools competing for staff in an era of

teacher shortages? Will school leaders need a better understanding of what constitutes a strong and binding 'psychological contract' between teachers and their employers? Will early career teachers be more discerning and selective in their employment choices by favouring schools which value their expertise, care about their wellbeing and nurture their professional development? These and other questions will need to be addressed by the next generation of school leaders faced with the challenge of attracting and keeping teachers in different circumstances from those reported in the current study.

Appendix

A framework of school leadership practices that promote the retention of early career teachers

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Chapter 7
Connecting Theory and Practice

Collaborative Figured Worlds

Jamie Sisson

Abstract Around the globe there are concerns about the quality and retention of early career teachers. Teacher education programs play a significant part in these discussions because of their role in preparing future teachers. Particularly in teacher education these concerns have focused on how teachers are being prepared to connect theory, research and practice and the impact of deficit views of teacher candidates (pre-service teachers) and early career teachers (teachers within their first few years of teaching) on their later retention. Teacher education programs have been described as suffering from a disconnect between theory, practice and research. This chapter addresses these issues by exploring the dominant discourses, the shared languages that are used that promote particular values, that inform teacher education. In doing so it problematises the experiences of teacher candidates and argues for a new collaborative model for teacher candidates, mentor teachers and university lecturers as an ethical alternative to current approaches. Connecting theory, research and practice supports teacher candidates' transition into the field and early career teachers' retention within the field. This chapter proposes a collaborative model that challenges the deficit views of pre-service teachers by positioning teacher candidates, mentor teachers and university lecturers as co-learners and co-educators through a university and field site collaborative project.

7.1 Dominant Discourses and Relations of Power Within the Figured Worlds of Education

Recent concerns about early career teacher quality and retention have sparked research focused on teacher candidates' transition into the field and early career teachers' retention within the field. Such literature suggests policy and practice within the field promote deficit views of early career teachers and that this has an

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impact on the retention of teachers (Day and Sachs 2004; Hardy 2010; Sullivan and Morrison 2014; Vierstraete 2005). Others illuminate the disconnect between university teacher education programs and field placement sites and the impact this has on teacher quality (Cabaroglu 2014; Darling-Hammond 2000; Jumani 2013; Korthagen 2010; Vander Ven 2000; Zeichner 2010). This literature raises questions about the dominant discourses being used within the field of education to inform these practices. In particular, how are dominant discourses being used to inform teacher candidates' and early career teachers' identities, knowledge and practice and how might alternative discourses be used to improve teacher quality and retention?

Dominant discourses are shared languages that promote particular values, knowledge and ways of being through established rules and responsibilities. In the field of education, examining the influence of dominant discourses on teacher identity is important because they are rarely called into question (Mills 1997; Weedon 1997) and thus become widely taken for granted as 'truth' or 'naturalised' (Holland et al. 1998). This perpetuates a power dynamic which privileges and marginalises particular ways of knowing and being over others without critical appraisal of the needs and values of individuals within the group (Holland et al. 1998). The power of dominant discourses can be so great that it can be difficult for counter-discourses to rise, particularly when they question the inherent goodness of the dominant discourse (Sisson and Iverson 2014). This makes it difficult to reconceptualise and enact new ways of being and working together.

Teacher candidates and early career teachers exist within and move between the contexts of university teacher education programs and field sites. Cultural models theory (Holland et al. 1998) is valuable when exploring teachers' identities as informed by these different contexts, or 'figured worlds'. Figured worlds are social spaces where different values of worth and meaning are ascribed to particular identity markers and artefacts through dominant discourses (Holland et al. 1998). According to cultural models theory, understanding the figured worlds of teacher candidates and early career teachers is important when exploring their identities as educators and thus their practice because their sense of self and ways of being are developed through their participation and positioning within these social groups. The figured worlds of university teacher education and field sites (schools, preschools and childcare centres) are significant to the professional development of teacher candidates and early career teachers, yet teachers report that the messages they receive from these two figured worlds do not always align (Sisson 2011). As this places teacher candidates and early career teachers in a vulnerable position between the two figured worlds, it is important to critically examine the dominant discourses informing these spaces, as well as to explore alternative discourses to promote the development and retention of quality teachers.

Within this chapter I draw upon cultural models theory to challenge dominant discourses within the field of education by problematising the binary constructs of theory–practice and expert–novice that promote power relationships between and within these figured worlds. In contributing to a call for reconceptualised figured worlds in education, I will present the university and field site collaborative model as an ethical example.

7.2 The Influence of the Dominant Discourses of Rationality and Managerialism

Two dominant discourses that inform policy and practice in the figured world of education are the rationality discourse and managerial discourse. The rationality discourse is grounded in modernist beliefs that the nature of knowledge is predictable and that the world is ordered. It thus values scientific knowledge as providing a true account of ourselves and the world (Dahlberg et al. 2007). The rationality discourse privileges scientific and research-based knowledge over practical knowledge. As university education researchers generate knowledge through research, they are often positioned differently from educators in field placement sites who generate knowledge through practical experiences. This power imbalance has contributed to a disconnect between theory and practice.

Also drawing on modernist beliefs of the world is the managerial discourse. The managerial discourse stems from the Industrial Revolution. Steeped in the ideology of the business world, the managerial discourse promotes competition, consumerism, efficiency and accountability. Within the figured worlds of education, this relates to the efficient production of educational outcomes governed by a hierarchical structure that positions teachers as technicians who implement policy developed by others (Dahlberg et al. 2007). Teacher candidates and early career teachers are positioned at the bottom of this hierarchical structure and are often viewed as deficit.

The following literature review problematises the dominant position of rational and managerial discourses in education by shedding light on the issues they raise in connecting theory, research and practice and deficit views of teacher candidates and early career teachers.

7.3 Disconnect Between Theory, Research and Practice

The significance of teacher candidates understanding the connection between theory and practice for their successful transition into the field has been widely discussed in the literature (Cabaroglu 2014; Darling-Hammond 2000; Jumani 2013; Korthagen 2010; Vander Ven 2000; Zeichner 2010). This connection has been identified as a key priority area by policy makers and accreditation authorities in countries like Australia, the United States and Ireland (An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta The Teaching Council 2011; CAEP 2013; TEMAG 2014). Yet, teachers report that their teacher education programs did not foster an understanding of the connection between theory, research and practice. Researchers have found that teachers felt the university side of their teacher education focused strongly on theory but did not make connections with the practice they experienced in the field (Allen and Wright 2014; Cabaroglu 2014; Sisson 2011). Others report that the level of training offered at some field sites was disappointingly disconnected from university-based aspects

of their training (Smith and McLay 2007). This disconnect raises concerns about the quality of teacher education programs to prepare early career teachers for the field and about the resulting low early career teacher retention. Allen (2013) suggests:

> the artificial division of pre-service and in-service education short-circuits the system so that even the best preparation programs may exit graduates too soon and do too little to ensure teachers remain in the profession long enough to develop the knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to affect student learning. (p. 76)

This disconnect between the figured worlds of universities and field sites is significant as it affects the quality and retention of early career teachers. The literature highlights this concern and reflects particular strategies that have been used to bridge a connection between theory and practice. The 'more practice' model and the "application" model are two predominant strategies. Zeichner (2010), however, calls for more approaches to use boundary crossing as an alternative.

7.3.1 More Practice Model

Criticisms that university-based teacher education programs are too theoretical have led to changes in teacher education programs across the world, increasing the amount of time teacher candidates spend in field placement sites (Lunenberg and Korthagen 2009). The underlying assumption is that the knowledge produced by university teacher education programs and the field are different. If there is a gap in knowledge in one area, then it is believed that component should be increased.

While many teacher education programs now include multiple field placements, the limit of this approach is that this time is often not carefully planned or coordinated with the university side of teacher education (Zeichner 2010). Darling-Hammond (2010) describes the relationship between universities and field placement sites as 'fairly haphazard', stating that placement sites are often 'loosely selected' and teacher candidates and their mentors are given 'little guidance about what happens in them and [are provided with] little connection to university work' (p. 40). The 'more practice' solution to the lack of connection between theory and practice has circumvented the issue by providing a simplistic response to a complex issue. Simply adding more practical experiences does not necessarily lead to an understanding of the connection to theory or research. In this model the hierarchical structure remains and serves as a divide between theoretical and research-based knowledge and practical knowledge.

Adding to the complexity of this issue is the increasing demand for more placement sites created by the more practice model. This further perpetuates issues of quality by increasing the pressure for universities to engage in a selection process based on availability rather than quality of practice. Le Cornu and Ewing (2008) warn an increase in practical experience in field placement sites without attention to quality is not sufficient to prepare future teachers. The quality of field sites used during field placements is uneven and can perpetuate a division between theory and

practice (Allsopp et al. 2006; Korthagen et al. 2006; Zeichner 1980). Teacher candidates who are not given opportunities to see and experience different theories in practice are vulnerable to taking up practices without critically appraising them. This creates a cycle that further divides theory, research and practice as they become mentor teachers, a cycle that has a negative impact on early career teacher retention.

7.3.2   Application Model

The application model also draws on dominant discourses to promote hierarchical relationships between universities and field sites. In an application model, teacher candidates are to observe and/or apply a theory or method they have learned at the university in their field placement site. In drawing from the rationality discourse, the application model values theory and research over practical knowledge. In assuming that the world and therefore classrooms are predictable, it is expected that teacher candidates will have access to observing particular theories at any given time. Zeichner (2010) refers to this as an 'outside-inside model' that places university academics as experts over practising teachers. Researchers suggest that the application model fails to connect theory to practice because it does not recognise the expertise that teachers bring to their decisions about practice. Learners are diverse and the numerous practical decisions that teachers make on a daily basis make it difficult to ensure any particular theory can be applied or observed in the classroom (Hoban 2005; Zeichner 2010). Lunenberg and Korthagen (2009) write:

> Teachers with a lot of experience in teaching do not automatically act wisely, their behaviour may have been shaped by earlier successes and thus by 'what works to keep the class going' instead of deep insights into what is really helpful to effective student learning. (p. 229)

Just as observing a particular theory in practice has proven difficult to coordinate, having theoretical discussions with teachers about observed practices is also difficult to coordinate. Teachers are often not free to talk to teacher candidates after a lesson or learning experience. The demanding multifaceted role of mentor teachers often means that teacher candidates experience few opportunities to engage with them in critical dialogue to understand their thinking processes, and this limits opportunities to connect theory and research to practice (Hammerness et al. 2005; Zeichner 2010).

7.3.3   Boundary Crossing

Zeichner (2010) suggests that, in order to bridge the gap between theory, research and practice in teacher education, we need to participate in more boundary crossing to create natural third spaces. The creation of third spaces is important as they

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… third spaces bring practitioner and academic knowledge together in less hierarchical ways to create new learning opportunities for prospective teachers. (Zeichner 2010, p. 92)

Examples in the literature include a program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where they bring practising teachers into the university teacher education program as teachers-in-residence (Post et al. 2006). Others have written about bringing examples of teachers' practices into university course work (Pointer-Mace 2009) and holding university courses at field sites (Campbell 2008).

While these examples of boundary crossing have been recognised as exemplary models in teacher education, Zeichner (2010) suggests the lack of recognition for those who develop and maintain these practices threatens their sustainability and thus the chance for such practices to be seen on a broader scale. Shining light on such exemplars of practice is an important step forward and is the purpose of this chapter. It not only makes this work visible but it also helps to challenge taken-for-granted practices by providing a platform for considering new possibilities in teacher education.

7.4   Deficit Views and Vulnerable Positions in Competing Figured Worlds

Another issue that has emerged through the dominant discourses of rationality and managerialism is the vulnerable position teacher candidates and early career teachers are placed in when they are viewed through a deficit lens. The intertwining of the rationality discourse and managerial discourse promotes scientific knowledge as being highly regarded in the profession. This association between scientific knowledge and professional status has been dominant since the late nineteenth century (Schön 1983). This has led to the field of education turning to science to inform practices that are 'efficiently' reproduced and standardised across situations in the attempt to be viewed as a profession (Eisner 2002). The focus on efficiency and mass production of educational outcomes is dependent on hierarchical structures (Dahlberg et al. 2007). These hierarchical structures place teachers in the role of technicians who are treated as empty vessels that are to be trained.

In university teacher education, teacher candidates are positioned as novices who learn from expert academics and mentor teachers. As they become early career teachers, they may move to a higher position but remain positioned as novices in relation to more experienced colleagues and mentor teachers. Sullivan and Morrison (2014) suggest that the 'underlying assumption is that early career teachers lack something and need to be "fixed" in the quest to develop quality teachers and improve standards' (p. 604). This deficit view of early career teachers is perpetuated by policy and practice such as induction programs (Day and Sachs 2004; Hardy 2010; Vierstraete 2005).

A deficit view of teachers is problematic because humans are diverse and thus teaching is more than a technical role. It requires professionals who can draw on multiple perspectives to make complex decisions that meet the needs of diverse learners in diverse settings. Dewey (1938/1998) believed that the role of the educator was to be responsible, to 'be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experiences by environing conditions, but that they also recognise in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth' (p. 35).

Eisner (2002) similarly describes the importance of teachers in making wise judgements and highlights that teaching is an important art form. Eisner (2002) suggests that, like art, teaching requires 'A form of human action in which many of the ends achieved are emergent – that is to say, found in the course of interaction with students rather than preconceived and efficiently attained' (p. 155).

The reality for many teacher candidates and early career teachers is that the hierarchical structure informed by rationality and managerial discourses does not provide a space for the acknowledgement of the knowledge or insights they may bring as a valuable contribution to knowledge construction. This hierarchical power structure within these two figured worlds places them in a vulnerable position. Johnson et al. (2016) argue that early career teachers are particularly vulnerable to pressures as they are scrutinised for their practice. Teacher candidates and early career teachers may find it difficult to challenge questionable practices used by those that are viewed as more experienced, making them vulnerable to taking on practices that have not been critically evaluated (Giannakaki et al. 2011). Within the figured worlds of education, teacher candidates and early career teachers must win the approval of their more experienced colleagues, a challenging endeavour particularly when tensions exist between the two figured worlds.

The positioning of universities as being theory and research based and field sites as being practice based is problematic. Teachers' professional identities are shaped as they move within and between the two. Dominant discourses have contributed to universities and field sites existing as two separate figured worlds, each focusing on preparing future teachers but doing so in parallel silos with little to no collaboration. Tensions arise when teacher candidates must engage in multiple figured worlds where expectations, values and beliefs are in conflict (Kroeger et al. 2009). Teacher candidates transiting into the field must reconcile competing messages they receive from the two figured worlds. This task is compounded by the hierarchical power relationship between the two worlds.

The issues associated with hierarchical structures in education have led to a call for more democratic and collaborative approaches for teacher candidates and early career teachers. Johnson et al. (2016) argue for a 'democratic participatory approach to policy and practice' (p. 9) to create environments where early career teachers' perspectives are welcomed into critical dialogue and where all teachers can flourish as ongoing learners and can develop the skills, knowledge, confidence and resilience needed to continue in the field. Dewey (1916/2005) describes democratic approaches as 'primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience' (p. 95). In democratic figured worlds, individuals act with responsibility not only for their own

actions but also to understand the consequences of their actions on others. Henderson and Gornik (2007) stress the importance of critical reflection in making sophisticated decisions in education that transform figured worlds into democratic spaces.

If we are serious about improving teacher quality and retention, we must consider a cultural shift in the field, one which brings universities and field sites together in democratic figured worlds where collaboration and multiple forms of knowledge are respected and all participants are viewed as contributors to the learning environment. In changing the deficit view of early career teachers, we must consider a cultural shift in not only the way we view teacher candidates and early career teachers but also in the way we view all learners.

7.5 The University and Field Site Collaborative Model

This example of reconceptualising practice in teacher education derives from a preschool practicum-based course in the early childhood strand of the Masters of Teaching program at a university in Australia. Within this 18-month program, teacher candidates engage in one practicum placement in each of three different contexts: child care, preschool and primary school. The struggle to prepare teacher candidates to teach in a preschool setting in an 18-month program with one preschool practicum placement is consistent with the common critique that teacher education programs have inadequate time to engage with important topics and areas of expertise (Darling-Hammond 2000). Feedback I have received from teacher candidates about the disconnect between what they were learning in our university-based course and what they experienced in their field placement sites was also aligned with concerns cited in the literature (Cabaroglu 2014; Darling-Hammond 2000; Jumani 2013; Korthagen 2010; Vander Ven 2000; Zeichner 2010).

7.5.1 Project Participants

The project participants included 40 Masters of Teaching candidates studying within the Preschool Practicum Course, two preschool educators from the early learning centre at the partnering school, one early childhood lecturer and one early childhood lecturer/researcher from the partnering university. The program is an 18-month masters' program catering for individuals who are interested in becoming teachers and have received an undergraduate degree in an area other than education. Many of the teacher candidates taking this course did not have any previous experience in a preschool setting, and more than 50 per cent of them were international students and were unfamiliar with the Australian educational system.

As the lecturer/researcher for this case study, I focused on exploring participants' experiences in the university and field site collaborative pilot project. I distributed

questionnaires to teacher candidates via an online link to SurveyMonkey. The questionnaire explored the following subsidiary questions:

- How do teacher candidates describe their learning from the pilot collaboration?
- What strategies used during the collaboration do teacher candidates identify as being most useful in connecting theory and practice?
- What aspects of the collaboration do teacher candidates identify as needing further development to support learning and professional development?

Ethics approval for this research project was granted by the university and approved by the head of the host field site. Participation in this study was voluntary. Teacher candidates were invited to participate in the study after the conclusion of the pilot collaboration. Upon invitation participants were provided with a participant information sheet describing the purpose of the study, study procedures and ethical considerations. Individuals who wished to complete the questionnaire were notified that they could withdraw from the study before submitting the questionnaire without penalty. Twenty-two teacher candidates responded to the call for participants. To protect the identity of the participants, their responses have been kept anonymous.

7.5.2   Data Analysis

Multiple data sources were used to triangulate (Maxwell 2005) the findings, including written questionnaire responses from 22 teacher candidates, follow-up meetings with two host teachers and course artefacts (readings, lectures, guiding questions, workshop activities, guiding observation questions and my reflection journal). Analysis consisted of carefully reading participants' responses to questions, looking for common and unique themes as they emerged. Themes were coded using categorical aggregation (Stake 1995) to organise common themes that emerged across the participants. The findings presented in this chapter focus particularly on preservice teachers' experiences and their understandings about their learning within this collaborative model.

7.6   Reconceptualising a New Figured World for Teacher Candidates and Early Career Teachers

Sharing the stories of reconceptualised figured worlds that have been imagined and realised is important in making new figured worlds possible for others. By reconceptualising a new figured world in teacher education, we provide a space to reauthor our own identities in ways that can shape the multiple figured worlds we flow within and between (Holland et al. 1998). Dominant discourses that are taken for granted as natural can make change a difficult endeavour but not impossible. In

drawing upon cultural models theory, I present a new collaborative 'figured world' for teacher candidates, mentors and university educators as an *ethical alternative to current approaches* to connecting theory and practice. In describing key aspects of the reconceptualisation of the figured world of teacher education in a preschool professional experience course, I will first describe the alternative discourses that informed this new figured world. Next, I describe the reauthoring of collaborative identities, the significance of creating a shared third space and the collaborative relationships that resulted. I will then present findings from the pilot project highlighting the experiences of the teacher candidates participating in this project.

7.6.1 Emotionality Discourses

In creating new figured worlds, it is important that new discourses not only call into question the dominance of existing discourses but that they connect with the values and goals of those who will inhabit them. In reconceptualising a new figured world for teacher education, I draw on an emotionality discourse.

An emotionality discourse in education is situated on the premise that professional knowledge and decision making require emotional qualities. Many decisions made in education require more than a standard scientific response because the children, students and families that teachers work with are diverse. From this perspective relationships are paramount in informing professional decision making and thus professional identities. Collaborative relationships are preferred over individual autonomy (Osgood 2004) and provide an opportunity to share multiple perspectives that are then used to inform decisions. In this way, the emotional discourse intertwines with the democratic discourse as engaging democratically requires an ethics of care for each other (Henderson and Kesson 2004).

7.6.2 Reauthoring Identities

Within figured worlds we are constantly being 'addressed' in ways that position us as players within these social spaces. Bakhtin suggests that how individuals 'answer' can be a powerful form of agency in making an identity claim that either rejects or accepts the dominant discourse (Holland et al. 1998). According to Bakhtin, through agency and through acts of improvisation, individuals orchestrate numerous competing discourses (Holland et al. 1998; Holquist 2001). Reauthoring oneself through these improvisations is, in part, staking a claim on a particular future by influencing change within the figured world (Holland and Lave 2001).

In drawing on the emotionality and democratic discourses, I engaged in dialogue with my colleagues in the field before the project began to reimagine the figured world of teacher education in my course as one where academics, practising teach-

ers and teacher candidates engage in a collaborative learning relationship. As the role of practising teachers was previously limited to mentoring teacher candidates during their field placements, it was important to reconceptualise new roles that fostered a collaborative relationship in connecting theory and practice. Through dialogue with all involved, we established the following roles and responsibilities (Table 7.1).

Establishing agreed roles and responsibilities was important in establishing a democratic learning environment where all participants care for and are responsible for not only their own learning but also the learning of others in the group. As such, the roles of all participants were negotiated.

Table 7.1 Responsibilities of project participants

Project participants	Responsibilities
Teacher candidates	Engage with online Moodle site containing lectures, readings, videos of practice and discussions
	Attend and participate in six workshops
	Engage in practicum placement requirements
	Share and discuss insights gained from practicum placement and/or other past experiences
	Engage in critical discussions and critical reflection with project participants
	Complete required assignments
ELC host teachers	Discuss ELC practice related to focus topics with project participants
	Lead a guided interactive tour of the ELC for each focus topic
	Engage in critical discussions and critical reflection with project participants after each visit
University lecturer/researcher in collaboration with the university tutor	Engage in online Moodle site containing lectures, readings and discussions
	Facilitate six workshops through a team teaching approach
	Provide feedback to pre-service teachers on their planning during the practicum lead-in days and on their final e-portfolio
	Facilitate/engage in critical discussions and critical reflection with project participants
	Provide feedback and reflection points to ELC educators and school leadership
University lecturer/researcher	Organise workshops, practicum calendar and focus topics for workshops and lead-in days of practicum placement
	Engage in initial communication with practicum sites
	Compose and organise online material for the course Moodle site
	Collect data, analyse and report findings of research

7.6.3   Creating a Shared Third Space

In disrupting the dichotomous relationship between university-based teacher educa-
tion and field placement sites, it was important to create a third space (Zeichner 2010)
that was in part new yet also familiar to each of us and could support a collaborative
relationship for knowledge sharing and construction. We decided an appropriate way
to do so was to hold three of the six university workshops on the field site campus.
This provided the familiarity of the site for the practising teachers with the familiarity
of the workshop structure for the academics. Bringing these two worlds together as a
new figured world provided an opportunity to learn with and from each other. During
our 3-hour workshops on the field site campus, we engaged in activities that provided
opportunities for engagement as co-teachers and co-learners. Table 7.2 provides an
overview of typical activities during our collaboration.

Table 7.2 demonstrates that the roles of each participant were collaborative, pro-
viding opportunities for each participant to take on a leadership or teaching role

Table 7.2 Overview of typical activities during collaboration

Activity	University lecturers	Host teachers	Teacher candidates
Engage in critical dialogue about topic of focus	Introduce topic of focus by providing multiple perspectives from research and literature. Tutors then facilitate dialogue by engaging with host teachers and teacher candidates by asking thought-provoking questions and reflection	Engage in dialogue by reflecting on the topic of focus and asking thought-provoking questions	Engage in dialogue by reflecting on the topic of focus and asking thought-provoking questions
Shared observations	Engage in shared observation, record and reflect using the observation recording tool	Provide a brief description of what they will be observing and how it relates to the topic of focus before leading small group tours to observe practice	Engage in shared observation, record and reflect using the observation recording tool
Critical dialogue about observed practices during shared observation	Pose clarifying and critical questions about observed practices and engage in respectful dialogue connecting theory to practice	Reflect on clarifying and critical questions and engage in respectful dialogue	Pose clarifying and critical questions about observed practices and engage in respectful dialogue connecting theory to practice
Critical dialogue about experienced practices during field placements	Pose clarifying and critical questions about shared practices and engaging in respectful dialogue connecting theory to practice	Pose clarifying and critical questions about shared practices and engage in respectful dialogue connecting theory to practice	Reflect upon and share their experiences from their field placements for provocation

while also taking on learning roles. For example, during shared observations one of the host teachers took the lead in providing an overview of their site and drawing connections to the topic of focus. As the group engaged in critical dialogue about the observation, we created opportunities for learning for all involved where multiple perspectives came together. Just as the lecturers and teacher candidates were learning about the thinking behind the observed practice, the host teachers were learning about multiple perspectives on their practice and reflecting on them to inform their future practice. As all aspects of this learning are important, we strove to make them visible through the act of critical dialogue.

7.6.4 Collaborative Relationships

Reconceptualising a new collaborative figured world for teacher education also served to disrupt the positioning of teacher candidates as deficit. Positionality is inextricably linked to power, status and rank. The act of positioning refers back to the cultural lay of the land, to figured worlds. Positions are marked by enduring divisions such as gender, race and class and determine expectations of privilege (Holland et al. 1998). Positionality may be a more prominent feature in some figured worlds than others (Holland et al. 1998).

In the new collaborative figured world, teacher candidates took the lead in engaging in dialogue with university lecturers and host teachers about their experienced practices in their field placements. This provided university lecturers and host teachers with the opportunity to learn about different practices but also provided the entire group with an opportunity to draw connections to theory and research. Here teacher candidates were not viewed as empty vessels but were viewed as contributors to the learning of the group. In this way, we shared in the roles of co-educator and co-learner; this was an appropriate approach particularly as this relationship dynamic was also reflected in the course content and in the relationships between children and adults in the collaborative sites. Teacher candidates thus not only read about and observed this approach to educational relationships but they also experienced it from different perspectives. By providing opportunities for teacher candidates to experience and engage in these approaches in both the role of a teacher and a student, they developed an understanding of the impact of this approach from different perspectives. They could then draw upon these perspectives in their own practice.

7.7 Perspectives of Teacher Candidates

Understanding the perspectives of teacher candidates in this new collaborative figured world was particularly important because they are often placed in a vulnerable position. Recognising the possible tension for teacher candidates when they are

asked to share their views about university lecturers and mentor teachers who are making important judgements about their grades in a course, it was important to provide a safe space for them to share their perspectives. Therefore, teacher candidates' perspectives were sought after the completion of the course so that they felt safe to speak honestly. Understanding teacher candidates' authentic experiences was critical in making sure this collaborative figured world met their needs as developing teachers. The findings suggest the collaborative structure of the new figured world informs an understanding of the connection between theory and practice and supports the building of professional confidence of teacher candidates.

7.7.1   Connecting Theory, Research and Practice

The university and field site collaborative project had a positive impact on teacher candidates' understanding of the connection between theory and practice. Teacher candidates reported that the new collaborative figured world was significant in scaffolding their learning about this connection:

> It gives me [a] chance to see real-life examples and practices in [a] preschool setting which further helps me to get a better understanding of the theories.

> [ELC staff] focused a lot on the emergent curriculum which gave me a deeper understanding in relation to my learning.

Drawing connections between theory and practice was particularly significant for teacher candidates who were in field placement sites that were not identified as 'high-quality'. For instance, a participant said:

> To be able to see how emergent curriculum is done in a high-quality way was the most important aspect for me in the collaboration.

Participants were also specific about the significance of combining shared observations at the ELC with the opportunity to engage in critical group dialogue with peers, host teachers and university lecturers in scaffolding their learning:

> Visited the classes and observed the classroom setting…help us to understand the concept and the theory. It is especially important for [us] international students.

> The observations and discussions [gave] me valuable learning resources and have changed my view of teachers' work. I sincerely [learnt that] teachers' work is ongoing and requires responsibilities. It is highly disciplined and flexible.

Other teacher candidates articulated how the collaboration scaffolded their understanding about specific theories, concepts and practices. For example, teacher candidates wrote about how the collaboration helped support an understanding of the

importance of learning environments and teachers' reflective practice. One participant wrote:

> It is great to listen to the staff… about their pedagogical practices and working processes towards improving the school curriculum, which caters for the children's learning needs. It provides me with well-organised learning spaces in which I learnt to identify the purposes of arranging certain objects in the physical environments through observations and discussions about the tours around those learning areas.

In another example, a teacher candidate reflected upon how the collaboration scaffolded an understanding of not only the role of the environment but also an understanding of a social constructivist curriculum model (emergent curriculum) and the role of the educator:

> I have to admit that visiting the [ELC] was one of the most valuable learning experiences for me in this course. Before I started this course, I [had] little information about what emergent curriculum [was] like in practice and my role as teacher in this practice. Seeing what the teachers do at [ELC] taught me a lot in terms of environment set up, interaction with students, routines and material use. [They] provided me with a great example of a learning environment that encourages discovery and creativity. [The collaboration has] also shown me what it means to go [the] extra length to teach and educate children so they can become a powerful learner.

The participants appreciated the opportunity to observe and then discuss with an educator the theory behind the pedagogy, as one teacher candidate discussed:

> When we visited the ELC, there were some pictures about churches hanging up in one classroom, and the educator talked about the ideas and the process of this program. She developed this program from children's interests and collected children's ideas from observations, and she also noticed the importance of ZPD [zone of proximal development] for each child. I was impressed by this and saw the process how she used educational theories to make sense of her teaching strategy.

During this particular example, many students were troubled by our observation of the learning experience focused on churches. After returning to our workshop room, teacher candidates engaged in a critical dialogue with the host teachers and university staff. Teacher candidates asked critical questions about the study of churches given the school was not a religious school. The host teachers described how the line of inquiry emerged from the children's interest in photographs brought in by one child of their holiday in Europe. The children noticed that there were many churches in the photographs and thus asked, what is a church? Through critical dialogue we reflected upon why some of us were uncomfortable with such topics while others were not. In engaging in critical dialogue about the inquiry topic and the pedagogical reasoning of the host teacher, we were able to challenge preconceived notions and co-construct knowledge within the context that informed how the host teacher worked with children to further develop the project.

The collaborative relationships developed by the university and host field site were important to our engagement in critical dialogue. These opportunities for critical dialogue between teacher candidates, university staff and host teachers were significant in drawing connections between theory, practice and research. As teacher candidates communicated, these experiences were important to their development as teachers.

7.7.2   Building Professional Confidence

In the past, teacher candidates have struggled with the preschool practicum associated with the course as many of them have no previous experience in a preschool classroom. As this is the only course offering a preschool practicum, it is important that this experience is rich and meaningful. The stakes can also be high for teacher candidates striving to secure a future position in a preschool classroom as employers often review the preschool practicum final report as part of the hiring process. This study found that the university and field site collaboration project was significant in contributing to teacher candidates' sense of being prepared for preschool classrooms.

> This was definitely an amazing opportunity and I feel as though I learnt a lot from the visits. The [host teachers] were passionate and happy to share information and also gave us a few handouts about how they write learning stories, plan, etc. The tours throughout the classrooms to look at their work was inspiring and definitely made me feel more prepared for going into my placement.

> [The collaboration project] is a brand-new approach. The learning mode switches from class work to field visit. It shows me the real work. [It provided a clearer understanding] about teachers' work in the field. It also made me better prepared before going on the placement.

Others indicated that the collaboration met their personal learning style:

> The visit to [ELC] environment helped me a lot. Because I am a visual person, I need to have a look at what an emergent curriculum looks like to really understand it. After seeing what happened there in the early years learning centre, I had an overall idea of what I need to do for my placement.

Participants also discussed how the collaboration assisted them in having the confidence to share their knowledge with their mentor teachers.

> Before this course, I had no idea a [preschool] class could be that flexible. It brought me a brand-new concept of being an early childhood teacher. The emergent inquiry plan is another important thing I learned. I also shared this with my placement place.

Engaging in critical dialogue with the ELC host teachers and university lecturers was important in assisting pre-service teachers to develop the confidence to assert their voices and contribute to socially constructed knowledge in a professional setting. In the above example, the teacher candidate shared what she learned through

our collaboration with her field placement site and assisted them to make changes to their planning practices. Further evidence of teacher candidates' developing confidence was noted during the final workshop where pre-service teachers presented their pedagogical documentation as many shared stories of how they contributed to the professional learning at their practicum sites.

The university and field site collaborative project was designed to disrupt the deficit view of teacher candidates as this can influence teacher quality and retention. The teacher candidates' perspectives demonstrate that the collaboration not only provided them with confidence but also assisted them to develop democratic relationships with their mentor teachers where they also contributed to professional learning.

7.8   Reflections on Reconceptualising the Figured World of Teacher Education

Informed by the dominant rationality and managerial discourses, the current popular models of teacher education contribute to a disconnect between theory, practice and research and to deficit views of teacher candidates and early career teachers. As demonstrated by the university and field site collaborative pilot project, the reconceptualisation of figured worlds requires an awakening to the influence of dominant discourses and the space for new discourses to arise. Critical reflection on the influence of the rationality and managerial discourses on experiences in teacher education was powerful and provided the impetus for reconceptualisation. In drawing on cultural models theory, I was interested in creating a new figured world where teacher candidates, teachers and lecturers learn through a collaborative process to connect theory, research and practice. Providing alternative discourses that resonated with the beliefs, values and purposes of the group was essential. Doing so provided the much-needed framework for the reconceptualisation to translate into reality.

Drawing on emotionality and democratic discourses was key to the realisation of our new collaborative figured world. They informed how we democratically reauthored our identities, created a shared third space and developed collaborative relationships. As concerns about student achievement and teacher quality continue to rise around the world, it is important for the field to reconceptualise not only how we support the development and retention of quality teachers but our identities within this dynamic field. The findings from this project demonstrate that this new figured world can serve as an ethical alternative to those that currently exist in teacher education. They demonstrate the positive impact of connecting theory, research and practice as well as developing professional confidence for teacher candidates. This research, however, was limited to one course at one university. Broader change is needed within entire systems to promote and sustain positive outcomes for the field. Further research is also important to move this initiative forward, particularly research focused on system-wide changes to figured worlds and longitudinal studies that explore the impact on early career teacher retention.

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Chapter 8
Recruiting, Retaining and Supporting Early Career Teachers for Rural Schools

Simone White

Abstract The staff of Australia's rural schools include many early career teachers who are keen to begin their careers in geographically diverse communities. Despite often high levels of motivation to take up a rural position and many well-funded government incentives to do so, recruiting and retaining teachers remains a challenge across Australia. Against this backdrop this chapter explores the key question: How can we better prepare and support the next generation of teachers for our rural schools? The chapter firstly explores the perennial issues of rural staffing and then critically examines a range of incentives for both pre-service and in-service teachers to attract them to rural schools and communities. One of the reasons incentives appear to be failing could be that they do very little to transform the preparation and education of pre-service teachers to better work *in* and *for* rural schools and their communities. To date, teacher education providers and schools have put little effort into changing their preparation and induction models. The chapter concludes with possibilities for a 'system' change to address the rural staffing crisis and raises the need for a new transformative approach to link more meaningfully initial teacher education, professional experience *in and with* communities and in-service professional learning (including teachers and teacher educators).

8.1 Introduction

Australian rural education studies continue to show that the further away from a capital city a school is located, the more likely it is to be 'harder to staff' (Kenny et al. 2016). Australia's rural schools are also more likely to be staffed by early career teachers who, despite a range of financial incentives designed to recruit them, do not appear to stay long (Roberts 2004; Mayer et al. 2014); report they have had little preparation for their rural context (White and Reid 2008; White and Kline

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2012); are more likely to teach outside their field (Hobbs 2013); and suffer greater rates of burnout (Sharplin et al. 2011). All of these things can have a devastating effect on their personal lives, as well as on the students they teach (O'Brien et al. 2008; Reid et al. 2010). Against this backdrop, this chapter explores the key question: How can we better prepare and support the next generation of teachers for our rural schools?

The chapter begins by revisiting some of the broader perennial issues of staffing rural schools and critically examines the current university and jurisdictional incentives on offer to address them. Discussion then turns to the complexity of defining 'rurality' and the staffing churn itself as possible reasons for the perpetuation of the problems. In short, I argue that the current 'status quo' unwittingly reinforces, rather than resolves, the current rural staffing issues. The constant positioning of rural schools as deficit, as opposed to different, in policy reforms appears to work against the success of future reforms. The chapter then turns to the growing socio-spatial (Soja 1980) education literature and to a 'rural social space' (Reid et al. 2010) model to better understand rural staffing needs, offering new possibilities for the preparation of novice teachers.

A particular focus is given to the importance of initial teacher education widening the perspective of being 'classroom-ready' (see Craven et al. 2014) to encompass the notion of becoming 'community-ready' (White 2010). I have coined this term to better frame the preparation of teachers to understand and value the specific place in which they work and to value their students' 'funds of knowledge' (Gonzalez et al. 2005). In this way 'community' is posed as a conceptual framework for teacher educators (those who teach the teachers) to use. I argue that teacher educators are key to solving rural staffing issues, and initial teacher education providers need to urgently address the notion of place in their curriculum and professional experience renewal.

The chapter concludes with possibilities for a 'system' change to address the rural staffing crisis and provides new transformative ways to link more meaningfully initial teacher education, professional experience *in and with* community and in-service professional learning (including teachers and teacher educators).

8.2   The Perennial Issues of Staffing Rural Schools

One cause of perceived educational disadvantage is geographic location and, in the Australian context, this often equates to those locations inland and further from the 'metropolis', or defined geographically by terms such as regional, rural or remote. Currently, these terms encompass a significant land mass across the continent which is home to approximately one-third of the Australian population. Contrary to popular myths of decline, this population is either stable or growing (albeit not in all regions). According to Hugo et al. (2013) the period from 2006 to 2011 saw the largest population growth in Australian history and, while 'megacities' such as Sydney and Melbourne are continuing to grow rapidly, the mining boom,

in-migration and immigration have also caused the number people moving into 'regional' Australia to increase. According to the Regional University Network website (2017), this trend will only increase with the Australian Bureau of Statistics projecting that the population outside capital cities will grow by 26% between 2007 and 2026. With this projected increase in students and their families in rural and regional areas, the question now to be asked is: How will Australia best staff our rural schools and counter the notion of educational disadvantage?

Historically, it is new graduates who have staffed rural and remote schools (Sharplin 2002) and this continues to be the case, as Capeness (2015) notes:

> The 2013 Staff in Australia's Schools survey reports that early career teachers (ECTs) make up 22% of the primary teacher workforce, but nearly half of these (45%) work in remote schools. ECTs make up 18% of the secondary teacher workforce and nearly a third of these (30%) are based in remote locations (McKenzie et al. 2014). (p. 95)

Like many early career teachers, rural novice teachers begin with 'idealistic' visions, positive motivations to teach (Watt and Richardson 2008) and a desire to be good teachers. A recent 'spotlight' report by the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) (2016) into the attrition and retention of beginning teachers revealed a lack of statistical evidence of the attrition rates of beginning teachers, stating: 'Current estimates of attrition of early career teachers in Australia vary widely' (p. 3). On the other hand, qualitative studies (albeit small scale and more locally based) reveal that teacher attrition in Australia's rural schools is high (Trinidad et al. 2012). Such studies illuminate factors such as geographic isolation from family and friends, inadequate access to services and recreational facilities, inadequate preparation for multistage classrooms, inadequate pre-service preparation for place and community, inadequate housing, professional isolation and extreme weather conditions to account for much of the turnover of the often young and inexperienced teachers that find their way into rural schools (see, e.g. Page (2006), White and Reid (2008), Sullivan and Johnson (2012) and Kline and Walker-Gibbs (2015)).

Some studies indeed reveal 'horror' stories from novice teachers (see, e.g. Sharplin (2002) and Sharplin et al. (2011)) who take up a rural position only to leave within the first couple of days or months of teaching *or*, as equally important, from their students and their families on the impact of constant attrition (see, e.g. Mills and Gale (2003)). As Roberts and Green (2013) note about their historical study, 'Since the advent of schooling in Australia, rural areas have generally achieved educational outcomes below their metropolitan counterparts' (p. 765).

This rural staffing 'churn' or rapid turnover is not only limited to early career teachers but can also refer to new principals, which exacerbates the teacher attrition. The lack of a stable, supportive leadership environment can negatively impact on the induction and mentoring that beginning teachers require. Capeness (2015) explains:

> Further complications can occur through the high turnover of early career principals in rural schools on their own career trajectories. This can impact on provisionally registered teachers in these schools not having the support of stable school leadership to move to full registration in similar ways and timeframes to their colleagues based in larger, urban contexts. (p. 96)

The response 'See you when you don't come back', which a young Aboriginal rural girl called out to a group of pre-service teachers (as reported in Simpson 2007), reflects the *lived* experience, even if quantitative data at this stage might not yet reveal the specific numbers of teachers leaving and their statistical impact. From all accounts, the issues described above continue unabated.

In the next section, I provide a critical analysis that explores the various government incentives for early career teachers to go to rural schools to address the 'churn'. Three target audiences are discussed: the first incentives focus on attracting graduate teachers, the second on pre-service teachers and the third are fast-track incentive models. I argue that the incentives *themselves* (not the people who are attracted to them) may be at best unwittingly contributing to the very issues they seek to resolve because the incentives largely sit outside of teacher preparation and thus fail to transform teacher education at the university or school level. This is itself an area for further research and investigation, as the NSW Department of Education in *Rural and remote education: A blueprint for action* (2014) notes: 'While there is limited evidence on the effectiveness of incentive schemes, encouraging and retaining the right teachers in rural schools would clearly benefit rural students' (p. 4).

8.3 An Examination of Incentives to Address the Rural Staffing Churn: Perpetuating the Status Quo?

The reason new graduate teachers tend to 'go bush or outback' (in colloquial Australian terms) is typically to seek full-time employment in the beginning phases of their teaching career, with some taking up government financial incentives (as provided by universities or the states and territories) to do so, but without necessarily receiving the appropriate induction and mentoring support required (Halsey 2006; Roberts 2004; Mayer et al. 2014). The truth of the myth that 'It is easier to get a permanent job in a rural location' is also coming into question with recent studies indicating ongoing employment conditions for beginning teachers generally, and in rural areas in particular, are not as favourable as predicted. Many early career teachers remain for long periods on short-term contracts or are placed in uncertain sessional or temporary positions. This lack of certainty in relation to their employment conditions leads to lower perceptions of their own preparation and effectiveness (Mayer et al. 2014, 2017).

8.3.1 In-Service Incentives

For some graduates, their motivations for seeking a rural placement are not only the hope for a permanent position but also the 'reward' of attracting 'points' (in some states of Australia) for 'country service', which can be accumulated to secure a position in a school of their choosing, usually in a city or coastal setting

(Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist 2004; Reid et al. 2010). This strategy has historical roots: Boylan and King (1991) describe three-year scholarships for 'bonded' teachers who take up a rural position. The New South Wales Department of Education website teach. NSW continues this strategy, stating:

> Temporary teaching continuously in a rural or remote NSW public school for two years can also lead to appointment to a permanent position under section 7.2 of the Rural and Remote Education: A blueprint for action (2013) to attract and retain teachers in six-point and eight-point incentive schools.

While the incentive was established to adequately staff rural schools, this practice can have a profound negative effect on rural students who might believe that their teachers do not care about them. While I am not seeking to criticise those beginning teachers keen to experience a rural school or further their career, for rural students knowing beginning teachers are there only in preparation to leave could exacerbate their 'educational disadvantage'. Reid et al. (2010) explain:

> There is a generalised expectation among many rural children and their families that teachers lack interest in their education. This viewpoint has developed from the typically rapid turnover of staff in many rural schools. When students believe that their teachers have never been interested in teaching in their town, they are likely to become disheartened, discouraged and uninterested in learning from them. (p. 266)

Another recruitment incentive targeting early career teachers offered by NSW is a trial staffing period. The incentive is described in *Rural and remote education: A blueprint for action*: 'Newly appointed teachers and school leaders in rural and remote schools may be offered a 10-week trial before their permanent appointment is confirmed' (NSW Department of Education 2014, p. 13). While this incentive could be perceived as a positive way to enable a graduate teacher to 'trial a rural school and see' whether they like the place and community, it risks staffing instability for the students, further highlighting what Reid et al. (2010) explain above as an unintended consequence of such practices. The 10-week trial period could also place novice teachers who are keen to get the job in a compromising position of performativity while they wait for their readiness to teach to be assessed by the principal. This places the teachers in the difficult position of being more concerned about employment than the students they teach. The practice could also dissuade graduates from trialling new, innovative approaches learnt at university for fear that they may not best fit within the established practices of the school. Such trial practices do not translate into a stable learning environment for students, who should be the main priority.

8.3.2 Pre-Service Incentives

To further address the rural staffing shortage, some government incentives have also been initiated at the pre-service level, either as a longer-term, targeted recruitment strategy or as a subsidised 'rural' practicum as part of a university qualification. Longer-term incentive recruitment models include, as an example, the Victorian

model where there are financial incentives of up to $11,000 available to final-year pre-service teachers and new teacher graduates through the Teaching Scholarship Scheme to take up employment in 'priority teaching vacancies', in what are sometimes referred to as 'harder-to-staff' schools, when they finish their degree.

In New South Wales the 'teach.Rural' website provides information about generous scholarships for pre-service teachers who commit to teaching in a rural location while completing their study. Financial incentives ($6000 per year) are provided, with a guaranteed permanent position and $5000 appointment allowance in a rural placement at the end of their degree. To avoid paying back the scholarship, pre-service teachers must stay for a minimum of 3 years.

Interestingly, the scholarship recipients that the website promotes are from a small rural town themselves and both are graduates of the University of Newcastle (a regional university). Arguably, the funds could thus be viewed as providing 'country' students with the resources to study away from home and return to a rural location on completion of their degree. Given the increased difficulties many rural students experience in accessing higher education (Alston and Kent 2003), scholarships for this purpose alone are highly commendable. However, the scholarships are aimed at *staffing* rural schools not supporting rural students to study, as the website notes: 'Demand for teachers in many rural and remote locations throughout NSW is high. To improve your employment prospects and fast-track your career as a teacher in NSW public schools, consider teaching in rural or remote locations.'

The rationale behind marketing two rural students (Kimberley and Sam) appears to be that rural beginning teachers will stay rural. This thinking however is somewhat flawed (as will be further discussed later in the chapter) as it assumes *all* rural locations are the same. The teach.Rural website provides a long list of schools that are deemed 'rural' from the New England region in the north of NSW, to the west and then to the Riverina in the south. The diversity of towns included under the banner of 'rural' where the students could be placed illustrates the vast differences in 'rurality'.

The incentive program does not appear to influence or require *any* differences in the teacher education preparation for these students, merely the commitment by the student to stay at the completion of a degree. The questions become, is it only the financial reward and the familiarity of a rural place that will prepare and retain beginning rural teachers? Does teacher education have no role to play in preparing teachers for the diverse range of locations they might experience? What role can teacher education play in the preparation of a teacher for their whole career?

In many other states, incentives are also focused on supporting subsidised 'practicum' or professional experiences. In Tasmania, for example, the Professional Experience in Isolated and Rural Schools (PEIRS) program encourages pre-service teachers to undertake teaching experience in participating rural and isolated schools by providing support for accommodation and travel. In Western Australia, the Rural Teaching Practicum Program offers pre-service teachers a practicum (normally over a block of time) in a rural/remote school. Practicum students can apply for a travel allowance and living subsidy to assist with travel and living expenses while working in a rural or remote location. Queensland maintains the 'Beyond the Range' pro-

gram, supplying grants of up to $2000 to enable pre-service teachers to broaden their skills, professional teaching experience and employment opportunities in eligible rural or remote Queensland locations. While these schemes are generous, the costs of relocating to complete a rural practicum are much higher (Halsey 2006).

The majority of these incentives, while making the resources available for pre-service teachers to experience a rural community, do not require any changes in the ways in which pre-service teachers are prepared in their curriculum studies for rural communities. While perhaps they are a step in the right direction, these types of incentives do not require universities to do any more than assist in either marketing the opportunity of a subsidised rural practicum or organising the practicum. In a study of teacher educators (White and Kline 2012) knowledge of such incentives was very limited, let alone any involvement in support for such placements. To take a cynical view, these subsidised practicum experiences relieve universities of any responsibility to prepare their students for a rural career by transferring the onus to the student. Research shows that, while a rural placement can provide a positive experience, it is also costly to the student and can reinforce negative stereotypes of rural communities and students (Sharplin 2002; Halsey 2006).

8.3.3   'Fast-Track' Incentives

A different form of incentive for staffing rural schools has entered the Australian context in more recent years in the form of encouraging alternative pathways into teaching, sometimes referred to as a 'fast track'. Teach for Australia (TFA) is such an example modelled on the 'Teach for All' franchise that includes England's Teach First and the US Teach for America models. In these two countries, the schools deemed harder to staff include low socio-economic and high cultural and linguistic diversity schools often located in high-density urban populations. As an example, Teach for America graduates have staffed many Louisiana schools since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. The Teach for America Greater New Orleans–Louisiana Delta website documents their growth:

> Teach For America – Greater New Orleans began with just 45 corps members in 1990, and now has a corps of over 300 serving the parishes of Orleans, Jefferson, and St. Bernard. Additionally, there are over 1,000 alumni living in the region. Today, TFA corps members and alumni comprise a full 20 percent of the New Orleans teaching force, and over 50 alumni serve as leaders at the school or school systems level. (Teach for America 2017)

This particular model takes an interesting twist on the issue of staffing 'harder-to-staff' schools by not only making it compulsory for those newest to the profession to start their training to teach in a disadvantaged or harder-to-staff school but also placing the responsibility to work against such disadvantage on inexperienced shoulders. A third and even potentially risky requirement is that the trainee, or 'associate' as they are known, is given full pay and responsibility (the same as a fully qualified teacher) for teaching students, but has not yet completed a teaching

degree when they commence their teaching position. In Australia, the TFA model promotes new recruits who are positioned as key to addressing not only the rural teaching shortage but also 'rural disadvantage'. This incentive program therefore positions beginning 'trainee' teachers as key to unlocking entrenched and widening social inequality. As Skourdoumbis (2012), an Australian academic, notes:

> There is nothing inherently new in policymakers seeking to address teacher-supply issues in Australia. The utilization though, of a supply of novice and beginner teachers specifically in order to grapple and deal with educational disadvantage in Australian secondary schools, is relatively new. (p. 306)

Unlike the teach.Rural scholarship students, to address such social inequality, TFA associates are only required to stay at the school for two years. The TFA website touts that the skills and knowledge to be gained include 'problem solving', 'leadership' and 'people management'. These terms are not often named as core to preservice teachers' learning. They are usually deemed skills 'for life' and viewed as transferable to other more lucrative professions or positions usually outside of teaching in a school, although often in an education-related field. In essence, this language and enticement works in much the same way as 'country points' except, instead of a 'better' school, the pathway is paved to a 'better paying job'. The incentive appears to frame the 'reward' as the entry into a higher paid profession than teaching, using the classroom experience to provide a broad knowledge base and to leverage the experience of teaching in a harder-to-staff school to in turn be placed in a position of leadership to influence education policy. The incentive appears to be an employment route into industry, business and philanthropy (which in turn often fund the same types of incentive programs).

The contribution of the various country or indeed global TFA schemes to solving social inequality is difficult to measure. American leading scholar Linda Darling Hammond has however published findings on an American comparative study between TFA associate and beginning teachers:

> In a series of regression analyses looking at 4th and 5th grade student achievement gains on six different reading and mathematics tests over a six-year period, we find that certified teachers consistently produce stronger student achievement gains than do uncertified teachers. These findings hold for TFA recruits as well as others. Controlling for teacher experience, degrees, and student characteristics, uncertified TFA recruits are less effective than certified teachers, and perform about as well as other uncertified teachers. TFA recruits who become certified after 2 or 3 years do about as well as other certified teachers in supporting student achievement gains; however, nearly all of them leave within three years. Teachers' effectiveness appears strongly related to the preparation they have received for teaching. (Darling-Hammond et al. 2005, p. 2)

Again, I do not wish to criticise those who choose this particular incentive as, like all beginning teachers, they are well intentioned. It is difficult however to rationalise an incentive model that is based in essence on the least prepared 'trainee' teachers (who are not yet qualified) being deliberately positioned to teach those who are deemed most disadvantaged. To turn social inequality around in an isolated and limited timeframe, in schools where large numbers of novice teachers and principals are already more likely to be commencing, should not be a job for our most inexperienced teachers.

As well intended as such incentives might be, further investigation is required into their cost, impact and fit for purpose. At present these incentives have highlighted individual stories of success but at best they do not truly appear to be addressing the rural teaching shortage. At worst they might be unwittingly fuelling the continuing disadvantage suffered by rural students. In the next section of the chapter, I will explore the reasons for this and alternatives to such incentives with a focus on transformation of the system.

8.4   Examining the Notions of 'Rurality' and Place: Unlocking the Challenges Using a Socio-spatial Framework

Many of the incentives discussed above name and categorise certain schools as 'priority', or use terms (sometimes interchangeably) such as rural, regional or remote to mean 'hard to staff'. Unfortunately in the discourses of staffing rural schools, these terms are often synonymous with 'deficit' and disadvantage. An example is the marketing of one incentive as 'making a difference'. The 'naming' of schools in this way, as Reid et al. (2010) argue, can contribute even further to social inequality:

> In the social world of education and schooling, rural schools and communities are clearly both 'insulted' and 'officially named' by the metropolitan mainstream as deficient, backward and socially undesirable. As teachers name the places where they are reluctant to work, but where it is 'easy' to get a job, these places are effectively denigrated as undesirable, and officially classified as 'hard to staff' by the state apparatus. This is an example of what Bourdieu sees as symbolic violence that 'insults' professionals in rural locations, and effectively (re)produces the idea that those who work in city schools and professions are somehow 'better' than those who 'can't'. (p. 265)

Indeed, in writing this chapter I am aware of my own use of the terminology of rural staffing as 'an issue' and 'problem' as in itself potentially contributing to what I hope to challenge. Defining and naming places as regional, rural and remote is clearly fraught. What do these terms really mean in terms of staffing needs? One way of categorising place as 'rural' or 'remote' as used by social services and governments is in terms of the road distance travelled from services, and this is the standard method to define terms such as 'remoteness' for statistical purposes in Australia, according to the Australian Institute of Family Studies (2011) website. While I understand that 'accessibility' might be an important element, defining places as either 'city' or 'country', or rural, regional or remote, can be overly simplistic and unhelpful in staffing terms. This is often due to the very nature of different people's perceptions and subjectivities (real and imaginary) of what counts as 'rural' (see Sharplin 2002). In short, what is viewed as rural by one person might be viewed as outer-urban or even remote by another, and culturally such terms are viewed very differently within and across each state and territory.

Western Australians, for example, often mock the notion of rural staffing issues in Victoria, and yet, as the department incentives highlight, they clearly experience such shortages. Interestingly, many Victorians do not perceive that any part of their state could be deemed 'remote', thinking such a term refers to the 'red dirt central part' of Australia. In reality, the accessibility index rates South-East Gippsland in Victoria as 'highly remote'. Tasmania, on the other hand, while viewed as a small, compact state by the majority of the mainland population, suffers high levels of inaccessibility and remoteness although places might appear geographically close to a major town, thereby skewing the remoteness factor. For Tasmanian 'rural' students who seek to complete their Year 11 and 12 studies by travelling to 'a larger town', accessibility becomes less about distance and more about transport and housing, with a lack of public transport and options for students to study away from home discouraging them from completing their post-compulsory schooling.

8.4.1 Socio-spatial Terms to Understand Better Rural Staffing Needs

As the global population grows and shifts occur, new 'socio-spatial' terms are emerging to help us better understand the nuances of notions of 'place and space'. While such understanding began with 'urban' literature there is now a growing focus on rural places. Understanding the significance of such terms in relation to 'rurality' and viewing rural places as different *not* deficit is increasing. As Pratt (1989) explained:

> Just as there are 'urban areas', 'residential areas', 'suburban areas' and a host of other types of area, so too can we define 'rural areas' according to their socio-spatial characteristics. This way of defining the rural concentrates upon that which is observable and measurable and, hence, leads to descriptive definitions. Such empiricism accepts that the rural exists and concerns itself with the correct selection of parameters with which to define it. (cited in Halfacree 1993, p. 23)

Hugo et al. (2013) in their policy brief titled *Internal migration and regional Australia* introduce more descriptive terms to better understand 'regional and rural' places. They introduce the term 'peri-metropolitan' (p. 2) to mean places which are near the margins or in commuting distance of the capital cities. Interestingly, with increases in roads and transport in New South Wales, the town of Bathurst (named as a rural place for teach.Rural scholarships) is arguably becoming peri-metropolitan with people commuting from Bathurst to Sydney (now a 2-hour train trip or drive).

Further clarifications are also occurring, with greater specificity given to naming places such as 'older mining towns' and 'new mining towns'. In keeping with a greater understanding of 'place' beyond dualistic 'country–city' geographical terms, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017) website has recently moved away from defining a place as either metropolitan or non-metropolitan to a more nuanced 'socio-economic' measure, thus paving the way for a more stable policy platform on

which decisions can be based. This greater understanding of the differences of place can offer much to the preparation of beginning teachers for rural communities, explored further in the next section.

8.5 A Spatial Turn for the Preparation of Beginning (Rural) Teachers

As Somerville and Rennie (2012) note, despite the spatial turn that has influenced social policy, research and scholarship, the new conceptual framework for understanding 'place' has been relatively absent in research in education. Clouding the issues, too often in the education literature rural areas have been homogenised (Roberts and Green 2013). This is evident in the example of the teach.Rural list of a broad range of very diverse places all named under the same umbrella of 'rural' hard-to-staff schools. It is also evident in research in rural education and in the ways in which courses and programs are delivered for pre-service teachers. Clearly, remote, rural and regional communities all have different contexts and potentially different factors impacting on their students; therefore studies that have examined 'rural Australia' as 'one' often have oversimplified the concept of rural and not necessarily taken into account the uniqueness of each place.

This lack of socio-spatial awareness in relation to education has been steadily changing, with the past decade witnessing a greater Australian research focus on the nuances of place in relation to understanding education and teacher education (see for example Brennan 2005; Halsey 2006; White and Reid 2008; Reid et al. 2010; Somerville and Rennie 2012; Cuervo 2012; Roberts and Green 2013; Green 2015; Kline and Walker-Gibbs 2015). These studies have sought to examine rural education issues alongside the significance of understanding differences in place and space for beginning teachers and experienced teachers alike. The insights from the research have implications for the preparation of beginning teachers, which I will explore further here.

To date, despite this growing understanding of the disparities that have long existed coupled with the clarity around understanding diversity and differences within 'rural places', education policy, staffing incentives *and* teacher education preparation collectively have tended to treat rural and urban schools as essentially the same. This is evident in the one-size-fits-all teacher preparation. The significance of *place* in relation to rurality, as evident in the incentives described earlier, does not seem to be on the agenda of the initial teacher education reform landscape, except to see it as 'deficit' and in need of fixing through metropolitan-based strategies. As a result:

> Rural communities have seen an urban agenda rolled out across the countryside, with issues of equity and access, rather than *appropriateness*, dominating the discourse. It is as if rural society is to be judged in terms of a deficit discourse (dominated by the desire to make them like us) rather than a diversity discourse (recognition and value of difference). (Atkin 2003, p. 515, emphasis added)

As Roberts and Green (2013) further explain in terms of education policy:

> It is this dualism of being different yet the same, that reveals how space and place are ill-considered notions in Australian education policy and how a subsequent 'geographical blindness' (Green and Letts 2007) has resulted in social justice approaches that are unable to consider the particularities of (rural) places. (p. 765)

More work is required to enable student teachers and teacher educators to understand the particularities of rural places.

8.5.1 Beyond a One-Size-Fits-All Approach to the Preparation of Rural Teachers: A Rural Social Space

Rural education studies (as noted earlier, see Brennan 2005; Halsey 2006; White and Reid 2008; Reid et al. 2010; Somerville and Rennie 2012; Cuervo 2012; Roberts and Green 2013; Green 2015; Kline and Walker-Gibbs 2015) have revealed that the issue lies in not only the 'one-size-fits-all' approach to rural education, curriculum, staffing and teacher preparation, but also in the 'deficit' view that perpetuates such inequity. As an alternative, Reid et al. (2010) argue that rurality involves a complex interaction of economy, geography and demography. They offer a 'rural social space' framework to explore the uniqueness of rural places. A 'rural social space' (Reid et al. 2010) is 'the set of relationships, actions and meanings that are produced in and through the daily practice of people in a particular place and time' (p. 269).

'Rural places' differ in terms of their history, culture, geography, economy and demography, and beginning teachers need to approach the decision and preparation to teach in a rural community by looking at the benefits of the community rather than from a deficit viewpoint (Thomson 2002). They need to acknowledge and match learning experiences that significantly build on the rich and diverse lives of rural and regional students and to be prepared to teach different developmental stages and ages in any one learning experience or classroom setting. They need not only to become classroom ready but to see that students come from families and bring with them their 'virtual schoolbags' (Thomson 2002). They need to see beyond the school gate to the place in which their school is located. Teacher educators are best placed to prepare the future rural workforce to do so.

As Reid et al. (2010) remind us, 'coming to know a place means recognising and valuing the forms of social and symbolic capital that exist there, rather than elsewhere. It means using the resources of the people who know' (p. 272). In other words, new teachers need to become 'community-ready' (White 2010). Looking at the benefits of the community and differences in places, while offering an alternative to the deficit–incentive cycle model critiqued thus far, could sound rather vague and pedestrian. Both 'place' and 'community' have been referred to as at risk of becoming 'motherhood' words to cover what is in essence still a deficit frame of mind. As Somerville and Rennie (2012) note, such terms need further exploration: 'It has long been understood in a wide variety of disciplines within the social sci-

ences and humanities that "community" is an over-used, ill-defined and contested term (Ife and Tesoriero 2006; Moje 2000)' (p. 194).

The term 'community' risks portraying 'rural places' as homogenous and harmonious if not viewed critically, and a rural social space approach to examining community works against this danger. In the final section, I highlight what 'community-ready' might mean using a variety of recent studies into beginning teachers' views of their experiences in rural schools. Using the findings, I raise possibilities for changes that need to occur at a systems level – across teacher education providers, governments and schools – to enact change.

8.5.2 Ways Forward for a Transformative Approach: Exploring Place-Based Pedagogy and Community Readiness for Teacher Educators

What is meant by community ready? In the longitudinal study by Somerville and Rennie (2012, p. 197), new teachers from across Gippsland in Victoria were asked about how they learned to do their work as teachers once they began full-time employment in teaching, and how they learned about the places and communities in which they began teaching. Four themes of community emerged from of the study (community as geographic space, community as moral space, community as curriculum space and community as social space):

- *Geographic space*: Beginning teachers tend to view the school and community as one geographical place which they live and work in or near to – often describing the place physically as well as their connection to the place personally, for example, a place they are returning to.
- *Moral space*: Beginning teachers tend to view community and school separately and describe their role as a teacher in the community as someone who needs to be careful of how they behave as they are a role model. For example, drinking in the community is not viewed favourably.
- *Curriculum space*: Beginning teachers tend to see the community as a resource they can draw from and use in classroom activates, excursions and incursions.
- *Social space*: Beginning teachers view the community as a place to connect socially and describe playing sport or being involved in community-based events as important for their identity and work.

Somerville and Rennie (2012) also explored storylines of place and community which revealed two powerful storylines: one where teachers saw community as a comfortable and familiar space of belonging and the other in which they saw community as abject and other to the self. These storylines are consistent with Sharplin's (2002) study into pre-service teacher's perceptions of their rural professional experience, viewed as either 'heaven' or 'hell'. They are also consistent with interview data in case studies of beginning rural teachers in the Studying the Effectiveness of

Teacher Education (SETE) project (see Mayer et al. 2014, 2017) and further discussed by Kline and Walker-Gibbs (2015). We know that beginning teachers need their initial preparation to be structured and scaffolded developmentally to help them learn about the differences in place and reflect about their experiences in a supportive environment. It is not enough to trial a place for ten weeks at the beginning of their career.

Understanding the ways in which beginning teachers might view a 'community' is important as well as considering the divergence of the ways in which a beginning teacher might engage (or not) with the community from which students are drawn. The most promising and longstanding of the attempts to better connect schools to the outside school lives of children is the tradition of 'funds of knowledge', described as 'historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being' (Moll et al. 1992, p. 133). This research highlights the importance of preparing novice teachers for the particular 'place' in which they enter, work, learn, live and engage and highlights the complexity of 'community readiness'.

This type of preparation needs to occur within the initial teacher education and cannot be replaced by any one incentive that treats rural as deficit. Community readiness needs to be taken up holistically in all the components of teacher education – both curriculum and professional experience. Rurality is *every* teacher educators' business, not just those who are geographically located in rural locations. Teacher educators are the key to better staffing our rural schools and addressing social inequality. Given the significance placed on school and community knowledge by beginning (rural) teachers in the socio-spatial research literature, a more expansive and community-ready approach to teacher education curriculum design and the professional learning of teacher educators is needed. Understandings of 'place' (Gruenewald 2003) and spatiality sit alongside this work. As Gruenewald (2003) explains: 'A theory of place that is concerned with the quality of human–world relationships must first acknowledge that places themselves have something to say' (p. 624).

8.6   Conclusion

In conclusion, my argument is that current incentives to address perceived rural 'disadvantage' are not solving the rural staffing problem nor are they appearing to make any headway in curbing or addressing the growing gap in social inequality – in fact they may be unwittingly contributing to it. One of the reasons that the incentives appear to be failing could be that they do very little to transform the preparation and education of pre-service teachers to better work *in* and *for* rural schools and their communities. They require little effort by teacher education providers or schools to change their own preparation and induction models. They bypass teacher educators (both at the university level and at the school level) who are key to the

preparation of teachers and who require professional learning to better understand the diversity of rural places in which beginning teachers might start their careers.

Universities at the national level continue to be required for accreditation purposes to develop a one-size-fits-all teacher preparation curriculum, and yet the needs of diverse contexts are different (not deficit). As Somerville and Rennie (2012) emphasise:

> We suggest that the site of teacher education, and the first years of teacher learning at work, are critical for learning 'community' as our study suggests that these assumptions become more entrenched as new teachers are further socialised into the institution of schooling. (p. 193)

We have come full circle in response to the question: How can we better prepare and support the next generation of beginning teachers for our rural schools? The answers seem to be in the professional learning of teacher educators and a renewal of teacher preparation both at universities and schools to embed a 'rural social space' (Reid et al. 2010) approach. Current funding and resourcing for incentives could be channelled into the development of new models where pre-service teachers are well supported and scaffolded to understand the diversity of rural places and the importance of understanding the 'funds of knowledge' (Gonzalez et al. 2005) of the students they teach. Given the entrenched issues for staffing rural schools, the status quo is not working and it is time for a transformative, system approach to teacher education.

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Chapter 9
Reforming Replacement Teaching: A Game Changer for the Development of Early Career Teaching?

Barbara Preston

Abstract The international literature is clear: for early career teachers to develop and be retained as effective professionals, they should begin their careers in stable and predictable roles in schools with supportive administrative arrangements, effective induction and mentoring programs, and a professional school culture. In this chapter I draw on labour market and social network perspectives to investigate and analyse the circumstances of the work of early career teachers in contemporary Australia and elsewhere. The large majority are initially employed in insecure replacement work that is inimical to their effective development and retention. Replacement teaching tends to have poor pay and conditions and to be accorded little professional respect. It is often stressful and unsatisfying, especially for early career teachers without the experience and skills necessary for such challenging and variable work. Replacement teaching often adds little to student learning and is disruptive to the educational and administrative work of schools. In this chapter I suggest a number of interrelated strategies, centred on the professionalisation of replacement teaching, that have the fourfold objectives of ensuring that sufficient numbers of replacement teachers are available to meet requirements, that replacement teaching is of high quality, that the annual cohort of recent graduates has an administratively smooth entry into teaching or other activities, and, most importantly, that all early career teachers receive an effective induction into the teaching profession and the opportunity to set out on a successful career.

9.1 Introduction

There are two interrelated problems besetting schooling in Australia and many other countries. These are, first, the stressful and often damaging introduction to teaching and the teaching profession experienced by most early career teachers as they begin

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their careers in insecure replacement work and, second, the poor quality and disruptiveness of so much replacement work. Effective responses to these problems are imperative because we are in a period of significant generational change, as the large cohort of teachers who were recruited from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s moves into retirement. It is thus important for the future of schooling that early career teachers can become effective teachers and leaders in the profession – that the best teachers are attracted, developed and kept, and that they flourish.

Guiding the evaluations and recommendations in this chapter is the assumption that the central purpose of schooling is effective learning for all students. I will consider the inconsistency between this purpose and the insecure employment of most early career teachers. Issues taken up include the immediate consequences for students and school communities (including the early career teachers and their colleagues) and the quality of teaching over the longer term.

This chapter begins with a discussion of schools as workplaces and the labour market and social network perspectives from which the analyses in this chapter draw. This is followed by clarification of the terms related to replacement teaching used in this chapter and an investigation of the data on the types of work contracts of teachers in Australia and internationally. These data reveal the very high percentages of early career teachers in insecure replacement work. The pay, conditions, and experiences of replacement teachers are then investigated, indicating replacement teaching's relative unattractiveness in the teaching labour market. This unattractiveness may be one reason why early career teachers are concentrated in insecure replacement work, but there are other reasons as well. These are all canvassed in the subsequent section. The current circumstances of replacement teaching impose immediate and longer-term educational costs on schooling systems. These costs are set out before the chapter concludes with a consideration of a number of interrelated strategies in response, the most important of which are concerned with the professionalisation of replacement teaching. These strategies have the four objectives of ensuring that sufficient numbers of replacement teachers are available to meet requirements, that replacement teaching is of high quality, that the annual cohort of recent graduates has an administratively smooth entry into teaching or other activities, and that all early career teachers receive an effective and enriching induction into the teaching profession and work in a professionally supportive environment so that they can develop and flourish as they embark on their careers.

This chapter makes a contribution to a relatively neglected, but important, area of research and policy concerned with teaching and the teaching profession. A common theme in the literature is the lack of attention given to replacement teachers and to replacement teaching by policy makers, administrators, and the profession generally: replacement teachers 'tend to be treated as a marginal member of the education community' (Abdal-Haqq 1997, p. 2); they are 'invisible' (Webb 1999); 'out of sight, out of mind' (Galloway 1993); and 'working on the margins' (Shilling 1991). Similarly, and central to this chapter, Weems (2003) noted that 'substitute teachers, although figuring prominently in popular media, are relatively under-researched and under-theorized within professionalism literature' (p. 255).

9.2 Schools as Workplaces: Labour Markets and Relationships

The analyses in this chapter draw on two perspectives on the circumstances and implications of the work of early career and other teachers: labour markets and relationships among teachers (their social networks). Both perspectives are concerned with schools as workplaces (Johnson 1990, pp. 1–27), characterised by many interrelated physical, organisational, cultural, economic (or industrial), political, psychological, and sociological features (p. 22). These features can differ over time, between schools, and also within schools. They are determined or influenced by diverse factors, including the macro-level context of formal industrial agreements and government regulations (or lack of them); general or specific shortages or surpluses of teachers; the cultures, traditions, and practices of the teaching profession (and its representative organisations); and school authorities' administration and organisation of schools.

The first perspective on the circumstances and implications of the work of early career and other teachers is a labour market perspective, based on both neoclassical and institutional economics. Neoclassical labour market theory is concerned with the numerical supply and demand of labour, and it takes account of the effects of available work contracts, pay, security of tenure, and formal and informal conditions on individual workers' choices and opportunities. It is largely individualistic. It does allow for complications and frictions in the labour market, including the non-financial aspects of decision making (Ehrenberg and Smith 2009), but not in the same way as institutional economics. Guarino et al. (2006, p. 174) used a neoclassical labour market perspective in their review of research on teacher attraction and retention, and it is common in the literature on attrition and retention (Borman and Dowling 2008, p. 400). In this chapter a neoclassical labour market perspective is relevant to understanding important aspects of the current context, including reasons for the proportion of teaching time requiring a replacement teacher and the employment opportunities for new teachers and, if employed, their work contracts and time fractions.

In contrast to the unitary labour market involving discrete individuals assumed in neoclassical labour market theory, an institutional (or segmented) labour market perspective (Leontaridi 1998; McNabb and Ryan 1989) takes account of structures and categories (segments) of workers and positions. A particular conceptualisation of labour market segmentation relevant to the analysis and argument of this chapter is that of Köhler et al. (2006, pp. 23–26). They developed a two-dimensional matrix of labour market segmentations: internal and external on one dimension and primary and secondary on the other, which is illustrated in Table 9.1. The segment of internal primary markets is similar to Okun's (1975, pp. 366–367) *career labour markets*, in which employers provide job security and career structures (with progressively increased pay, responsibility, and status) with the objective of reducing attrition and progressively increasing employee productivity (effectiveness). School teachers permanently employed while they pursue a teaching career are in this

Table 9.1 The fourfold labour market matrix of Köhler, Goetzelt, and Schröder applied to school teachers

	Internal labour markets (organisation-led)	External labour markets (market-led)
Primary labour markets (good jobs: High income and employment security)	**Segment A**	**Segment B**
	For example: Teachers permanently employed by the school or system, receiving a salary that recognises experience, and with access to career development and promotion. They can maintain strong professional networks, involving colleagues within and external to the school (bonding and bridging social capital). Early career teachers and their mentors and supervisors have strong and positive relationships of linking social capital.	For example: Teachers self-employed or employed on casual or limited term contracts, with relatively high pay rates that increase with experience and expertise. They are respected as specialist professionals according to the work they do and their expertise. They have authority and status. They can maintain strong professional networks (bridging social capital). Qualified individuals who are confidently seeking permanent teaching positions are also operating in the external primary labour market – the 'occupational labour market'.
Secondary labour markets (bad jobs: Low income and/or employment insecurity)	**Segment C**	**Segment D**
	For example: Teachers regularly employed at the same school on casual or limited-term contracts or employed on an ongoing basis, receiving relatively low pay with little or no increments for experience or skill, and having few opportunities for career development. They have low status and little authority, and they do not have any effective social capital relationships.	For example: Teachers employed on insecure casual or limited-term contracts in different schools. They receive relatively low pay with little or no increments for experience or skill and have few opportunities for career development. They have low status and little authority. They have difficulty developing and maintaining effective professional networks, and they do not have any effective social capital relationships.

Source: Adapted with permission from Köhler et al. (2006, p. 26)

internal primary labour market. The segment of external primary markets is similar to *occupational labour markets* (Eyraud et al. 1990), in which employees have publicly recognised occupation-specific credentials and successive employers also recognise and reward expertise developed as careers progress. Qualified self-employed individuals, working as professional consultants for example, would also fall into this category. Jobs in primary labour markets, both internal and external, are classified by Köhler et al. (2006, p. 26) as 'good jobs', while jobs in secondary labour markets, both internal and external, are 'bad jobs'. The jobs in the secondary labour markets are characterised by relatively poor pay, low status, little if any career progression over time, and, especially in the external labour market, job insecurity. Much replacement teaching work in contemporary Australia (and elsewhere) is

located in the external secondary labour market, but could be located in other quadrants.

A similar matrix was developed by Kalleberg (2003), who investigated the strategies of employers to gain greater flexibility in response to social and economic changes since around the 1970s, pointing out that 'workers differ in the extent to which they are able to benefit from the growth in nonstandard work arrangements' (p. 163). His matrix (p. 164) cross-classified core and periphery labour markets (which are similar to internal and external) with the degree of 'control that workers have over their skills and autonomy over their work' (p. 163), which could apply to primary and secondary labour markets. Kalleberg noted that the use of casual and short-term contract workers may diminish cooperation and teamwork among employees (p. 171), which takes us to the second perspective drawn on for this chapter.

This second perspective focuses on the importance of relationships in teaching. It recognises the inherent collective and strategic (intentional and time-based) nature of much of teachers' work (Preston 1996) and the importance of collaboration and professional networks in effective teaching (OECD 2016). It draws from research into teacher recruitment and retention from a social network perspective, which 'focuses on the patterns of links and interactions between individuals and groups in a social network and how these … shape their experiences and choices' and is 'rooted in the concept of social capital' (Baker-Doyle 2010, p. 5). It also uses work on the distinctions between bonding, bridging, and linking social capital (Szreter and Woolcock 2004) and work on professional capital (incorporating human, social, and decisional capital) as providing the foundation for effective, high-quality teaching (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012).

Social capital is a contested concept, but for the purposes of this chapter, and following Szreter and Woolcock (2004), it is understood not as a characteristic of individuals, but as a characteristic of relationships, or of the resources (information, shared decision making) that flow through the network of relationships. Like capital generally, social capital is concerned with 'assets that can be leveraged to accomplish desired goals' (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012, p. 1).

Szreter and Woolcock (2004) differentiate between three types of social capital: bonding social capital, which 'refers to trusting and co-operative relations between members of a network who see themselves as being similar' (p. 654); bridging social capital, which 'comprises relations of respect and mutuality between people who know that they are not alike' in some sense (p. 655); and linking social capital, which involves 'norms of respect and networks of trusting relationships between people who are interacting across explicit, formal or institutional power or authority gradients in society' (p. 655). Bonding social capital can be involved in professionally effective relationships among close teacher colleagues in a school, or among a close teacher education graduating cohort. However, strong bonding social capital among a school staff could result in the alienation of casual replacement teachers. Bridging social capital can be involved in much wider and looser professional networks, helping to enhance professional identity, capability, and confidence for

teachers, whether or not they have professional relationships involving strong bonding social capital. Szreter and Woolcock (2004, p. 655) refer to linking social capital as involving positive relationships between classroom teachers and students. However, it can also involve richly supportive relationships between mentors or supervisors and early career teachers. An early career teacher may have reasonable bonding capital among fellow graduates of the same institution (though such bonding social capital is likely to diminish over time). They may also have developing bridging social capital in professional networks such as subject associations. However, without strong social capital involving a combination of linking and bonding within the school in which they are working, they are missing the central component of social capital for effective and sustainable professional practice and the development of professional capital.

The concept of professional capital was developed by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) to better understand the nature of teaching and how it can be transformed to 'improve effectiveness, which in turn will improve societies and generations to come' (p. xi). Professional capital incorporates decisional capital as well as human and social capital. Decisional capital is similar to the 'complex situational judgements' that form a central part of Preston's notion of teacher professionalism (1996, pp. 248–249). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) elaborate that decisional capital is

> the capital that professionals acquire and accumulate through structured and unstructured experience, practice and reflection – capital that enables them to make wise judgements in circumstances where there is no fixed rule or piece of incontrovertible evidence to guide them. Decisional capital is enhanced by drawing on the insights and experiences of colleagues in forming judgements over many occasions. In other words, in teaching and other professions, social capital is actually an integral part of decisional capital, as well as an addition to it. (pp. 93–94)

9.3   Replacement Teaching: Definitions and Data

Replacement teaching is a general term that applies to qualified teachers undertaking the duties of absent teachers (on leave or undertaking duties away from the classroom), covering unfilled vacancies until appropriate teachers are appointed, working in positions funded by a project or initiative of limited duration, or where forecast enrolment declines (or school reorganisations) indicate that positions will become redundant (see, e.g. Australian Education Union Victorian Branch and Victorian Government Department of Education and Training 2013, Clause 21(2)(d)).

Replacement and other temporary teaching work can be undertaken by teachers on three different types of employment contracts. First, the teachers can already be on secure, permanent, or ongoing contracts. Such teachers might be staff members in the schools, undertaking the replacement work in addition to their usual duties (classroom teachers taking 'extras', school leaders who usually have little or no teaching load, or part-time teachers increasing their hours), or they might be external to the school, possibly appointed to permanent relief positions for a number of local

schools (Galloway and Morrison 1994a, p. 1). The latter occurs to a limited extent in rural and remote South Australia (South Australian Department for Education and Child Development 2016a, p. 8). The other two types of employment contracts for replacement teachers are insecure: fixed-term contracts for any length of time, from several weeks to several years, and casual contracts for a period from several hours up to several weeks.

Relevant terms can focus on the role or the type of contract. Such terms are thus often 'somewhat ambiguous' (Lindley 1994, p. 167). Those that focus on the role include *substitute teachers* (notably in the United States and Canada), *supply teachers* (notably in the United Kingdom), *relief teachers*, and *emergency teachers*. Terms that focus on the type of contract include *temporary teachers*, which in Australia usually refers to teachers on fixed-term contracts, but can refer to casual teachers. In South Australia, such casual teachers are termed *temporary relieving teachers*, while those on fixed-term contracts are *temporary contract teachers* (South Australian Department for Education and Child Development 2016c). The term *casual relief teachers* explicitly refers to casual teachers who are undertaking replacement roles. In this chapter, the terms generally used to describe the different forms of employment contracts are permanent, fixed-term, and casual. However, definitions can vary between jurisdictions, and temporary work contracted for the same period of time (such as 3 weeks) can be casual in one jurisdiction and fixed-term in another. There are (or can be) replacement teachers who are employed on a permanent basis, and there are (or can be) teachers in insecure employment who are not carrying out replacement roles. Teachers on extended fixed-term contracts, who have the same responsibilities for classes as permanent teachers, are different in important respects from casual and short-term replacement teachers. The term *regular teachers* (Webb 1999) is sometimes used in this chapter to refer to teachers on such extended fixed-term contracts, as well as to permanent teachers, usually in the context of their replacement by casual teachers or those on short fixed-term contracts.

Analysing these forms of work and types of roles is complex due to limited data classifications, incomplete datasets, and gaps in analysis and research. There are no national or international standard and mutually exclusive data classifications for types of labour contracts such as permanent, fixed-term, and casual employment (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014, Glossary; Hunter 2015, p. 8). This makes comparisons between occupations difficult, though it is clear that Australian school teachers and others working in the education and training industry are significantly more likely to be on fixed-term contracts and more likely not to have paid leave entitlements (broadly, to be casuals) than others in professional occupations (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014, 2015).

Information on types of employee work contracts is not included in important general population data collections such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011), which otherwise has high-quality, detailed data on school teachers. Casual and very short-term contract teachers are excluded from a number of major collections of

data on school teachers. The National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC), which forms the basis of the ABS annual *Schools Australia* release (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016), excludes 'emergency and relief teaching staff who are employed on a casual basis … as they replace permanent teaching staff who are absent for short periods of time and are already counted' (explanatory note 12). This collection also does not differentiate between permanent teachers and those on fixed-term contracts and does not include data on the age of teachers. The Staff in Australia's Schools (SiAS) survey (McKenzie et al. 2014), which is discussed in detail below, excludes teachers who have not been 'employed at the school for at least one day a week in the term concerned' (p. 4) – that is, it excludes casual teachers and those on contracts of less than one term. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), which has data on the employment of teachers on permanent or fixed-term contracts, excludes 'substitute, emergency or occasional teachers' – they are 'out of scope' (OECD 2014b, p. 75).

Centralised (systemic) school authorities in Australia (public, most Catholic, and some other private school authorities) usually collect their own data on casual teachers and on teachers on fixed-term as well as permanent contracts, but this is often not readily available, nor comparable between jurisdictions. Where it is available, the data may be provided by age, but not by years of experience, and thus age has to serve as a proxy for years of experience. There is little if any relevant data on teachers in non-systemic independent schools, who make up around 17% of all Australian teachers (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016, Table 51a).

Because of the data difficulties, it is not a simple matter to determine the number and proportion of all Australian teachers and, more importantly, of all early career teachers, who are casually employed, on fixed-term contracts, or on permanent contracts. However, some available national data and selected state-level data are analysed to arrive at best estimates. In this chapter I will mainly refer to data for 2012 or 2013, because those are the most recent years for which data from major datasets are available. In addition to the Australian data, there is some reference to information about teachers on different employment contracts in countries other than Australia.

9.4   Teachers in Insecure Employment

It is commonly estimated in many countries, including Australia, that around one tenth of school classes are taught by replacement teachers – or, to express it a little differently, through their school lives, students will be taught by replacement teachers for the equivalent of more than 1 year (Alberta Teachers Association 2011, p. 4; Glatfelter 2006, p. xii; Lunay 2005, pp. 14–15; Nicholas and Wells 2016). However, it appears that in contemporary Australia a much higher proportion of all classes are taught by replacement teachers.

According to the National Teaching Workforce Dataset (NTWD) (AEEYSOC NTWD Working Group 2014), of the total 'known employed' (p. 13) Australian teachers in 2012–2013, 72% were permanent, 16% fixed-term, and 12% casual (p. 61). However, the category of 'known employed' excluded all public school casual teachers in the Northern Territory and in Victoria (where they make up around 15% of that workforce on any one day: see Weldon et al. 2016, pp. 68, 75) (AEEYSOC NTWD Working Group 2014, p. 13). Thus, we can assume that these nationwide figures overstate the percentages working permanently and on fixed-term contracts and understate the percentage working casually. A more accurate estimate would be around 70% permanent, 16% fixed-term, and 14% casual on any one day. (Note that the original NTWD data were collected on particular days, such as school authorities' census days; however, over a year, many more individual teachers would be employed as casual teachers, because most casual teachers have a workload much less than 1.0 FTE over a period, and there is constant movement of individuals in and out of the pool of available casual teachers.)

The Staff in Australia's Schools (SiAS) (McKenzie et al. 2014) survey data are broadly consistent with the estimate based on NTWD data. The SiAS survey was completed by a nationally representative sample of teachers between May and August 2013. As noted above, the SiAS sample excludes casual teachers and those on short-term contracts of less than one term. Across all ages of SiAS-sampled teachers (representing around 86% of the total workforce, based on the estimate above), 78% of primary teachers and 86% of secondary teachers reported that they were employed in ongoing positions (p. 43) when asked about their 'current employment arrangement' (p. 149). Taking account of the excluded casual and very-short-term contract teachers, around 65% of primary teachers and 75% of secondary teachers are estimated to be working permanently, which is broadly consistent with the estimate above of 70% of all teachers. The SiAS data also include the percentages of sampled teachers working on fixed-term contracts of 'less than 1 year', '1–3 years', and 'more than 3 years'. For primary and secondary teachers respectively, 10% and 7% were on contracts of less than 1 year, 11% and 7% on contracts of 1–3 years, and 1% on contracts of more than 3 years at both primary and secondary levels (ACER 2016). The difference between the total percentages of primary and secondary teachers on fixed-term contracts can be largely explained by the much higher percentage of female teachers in primary schools and the influence of maternity and family leave.

There is variation between school systems as well as between levels of schooling, which is apparent from data for Victorian, New South Wales, and South Australian public schools. On the August 2013 casual teachers' census day, 6890 casual relief teachers were employed by Victorian public school councils, around two-thirds of them at the primary level (Weldon et al. 2016, p. 75). This figure is approximately 14% of all teachers on any one day (p. 68). There is no comparable data for casual teachers in private schools (Catholic or independent) in Victoria, though schools in those sectors employ casual teachers. In addition to the casual teachers, a large proportion of teachers were on fixed-term contracts. Excluding casual teachers, of full-time-equivalent Victorian public school teachers, 22% of

primary teachers, 13% of secondary teachers, and 19% of all teachers were employed on fixed-term contracts. A larger proportion of Catholic school teachers were on fixed-term contracts: 30% of primary teachers, 12% of secondary teachers, and 21% of all teachers (Weldon et al. 2016, p. 74). There is no comparable data for the independent sector. The data for the public and Catholic sectors are broadly consistent with SiAS custom data (which also excludes casual teachers) for all Victorian public and private schools: 24% of primary teachers and 13% of secondary teachers were employed on fixed-term contracts (Australian Council for Educational Research 2016). From these various data sources I conclude that, on any one day in 2013, roughly 64% of Victorian primary teachers were permanent teachers, 22% were on fixed-term contracts, and 14% were casual teachers. For Victorian secondary teachers, roughly 75% were permanent teachers, 11% were on fixed-term contracts, and 14% were casual teachers.

In New South Wales public schools on any one day in 2013, around 65% of all teachers were permanent, 28% were on fixed-term contracts, and 7% were casual teachers – a large increase in the percentage on fixed-term contracts since 2004 (see Fig. 1) (NSW Department of Education 2017; NSW Department of Education and Communities 2013; NSW Department of Education and Training 2005).

In South Australia, there has been a high and increasing proportion of public school classroom teachers in insecure work since 2010. In 2013 (to compare with other data above), around 62% were permanent teachers, 23% were on fixed-term contracts, and 15% were casual teachers. The percentage in insecure work further increased to 2016, when around 59% were permanent teachers, 26% were on fixed-term contracts, and 15% were casual teachers. In South Australia there were also permanent relieving teachers, comprising less than 1% of the teaching workforce (South Australian Department for Education and Child Development 2013, Tables 4 & 5; 2016a, Tables 7 & 8).

Australian jurisdictions are not alone in the high rate of replacement teaching and teachers in insecure employment. This is indicated by OECD TALIS data on lower secondary teachers. This dataset is limited by its exclusion of 'substitute, emergency and occasional teachers'. The consequent percentage of Australian teachers permanently employed is 87%, and 13% are on fixed-term contracts (consistent with the SiAS data reported earlier). This is a slightly higher percentage of permanently employed teachers than the average of all 34 reported countries of 83% – notably the United States (67%) and Finland (77%). Countries with a higher percentage of teachers on permanent contracts than Australia include France (96%), England (94%), Singapore (90%), and Sweden (89%) (OECD 2014a, Table 2.8 and 2.8c).

While the TALIS dataset excludes casual substitute teachers, there is data on such teachers in the United States, where the Bureau of Labor Statistics separately classifies substitute teachers and other school teachers. Substitute teachers are defined as those who 'teach students in a public or private school when the regular

teacher is unavailable' (2016b) and make up around 15% of the school teaching workforce in the United States (2016a, Occupation Codes 25-2020, 25-2030, 25-2050, 25-3098; 2016b).

9.5   Early Career Teachers in Insecure Employment

Most jurisdictions in Australia are like New South Wales public schools, where 'the majority of teachers commence their careers in the NSW public education system as casual or temporary teachers' (NSW Department of Education 2015). However, complete and accurate data are not available, and thus I will refer to diverse sources here so that best estimates can be made.

Custom data from Graduate Careers Australia (GCA) (2014) on teacher education graduates who were working in schools around 4 months after completion (usually in the month of April) in 2013 indicate that the very large majority were in insecure employment. Only 22% were permanent and 6% were on contracts of more than 1 year, while 72% were employed on contracts of less than 1 year or as casual teachers. This latter group can be estimated as approximately 42% on contracts of less than 1 year and 30% employed as casual teachers.[1] Those in primary schools and those in public schools were less likely to be employed on permanent contracts than those in secondary schools or private schools.

Noting that the SiAS sample excludes teachers on casual or very-short-term contracts, of the teachers surveyed who were in their first year of teaching, only around 21% of primary teachers and 30% of secondary teachers were employed on an ongoing basis at the time of the SiAS survey (Australian Council for Educational Research 2016). The SiAS survey was completed over a period from around the time of the GCA survey (the end of April) until 4 months later (late August), which is important, because recent graduates tend to progressively move from casual to longer fixed-term to permanent employment through their early career years. The proportions of surveyed early career teachers who were permanently employed increased until, by 5 years of experience, around 65% of primary teachers and 82% of secondary teachers were permanently employed; and of teachers over the age of 45, at least 80% of primary and 90% of secondary teachers were permanently employed (Australian Council for Educational Research 2016).

Other than the problematic Graduate Careers Australia data, there appear to be no readily available sources of data on the proportion of early career teachers in their first year (and subsequent years) who are casually employed. However, age can

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[1] The proportion employed on a casual basis cannot be easily discerned because of the wording of the option in the GCA questionnaire as 'temporary or casual' – in several states a fixed-term contract is explicitly termed 'temporary'. Thirty-five per cent of respondents stated that they were employed on a 'temporary or casual' basis.

be an approximate proxy for years of experience. The *National Teaching Workforce Dataset: Data Analysis Report* includes graphs[2] of the single-year age profiles of Australian teachers according to the three employment types of casual, fixed-term, and permanent (ongoing) (AEEYSOC NTWD Working Group 2014, p. 109). The age profile of those in casual employment shows the highest peak (around 3.5% of all those in casual employment) at age 25, another large peak (around 3%) at age 64, and a smaller peak (around 2.2%) at age 40. The very large peak (almost 6%) at ages 25 and 26 for those on fixed-term contracts is consistent with the SiAS data.

The New South Wales Department of Education provides more complete data on casual, fixed-term, and permanent teachers in New South Wales public schools by 5-year age ranges for the years 2004–2013. The approximate percentage of teachers in each age group who are permanent, on a fixed-term contract, or casual is graphed for 2004 and 2013 in Fig. 9.1. Between 2004 and 2013 there was a decline in permanent employment for younger teachers. For those aged 20–24, the percentage permanently employed fell from 32% to 20% and, for those aged 25–29, from 59% to 40%. The percentage on fixed-term contracts increased from 48% to 59% for those aged 20–24 and from 29% to 51% for those aged 25–29. The percentage casually employed changed little and appears low relative to other jurisdictions: it increased from 20% to 29% for those aged 20–24, but decreased from 12% to 10% for those aged 25–29.

Information about the 'background of casual relief teachers' employed in Victorian public schools from 2004 to 2013 has been extracted from the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development annual casual relief teacher recruitment census (Weldon et al. 2016, p. 75). A quarter of the Victorian casual teachers in August 2013 (around 1730) were 'unemployed/seeking employment, etc.', and these can be assumed to be predominantly early career teachers. The rest of the casual teachers were retired teachers (18%), teachers who had resigned from permanent teaching or preferred casual work (20%), teachers on family or other leave without pay (10%), or 'others' (27%) (Weldon et al. 2016, p. 75). The 1730 casual teachers in Victorian public schools in 2013 who were 'seeking employment' and can be assumed to be predominantly early career teachers, compare with the total number (headcount) of 2289 graduate teachers in Victorian public schools in that year (pp. 51–52). While it is not clear how those casual teachers 'seeking employment' were distributed among early career teachers (and others), it can be assumed that they were concentrated among those more recently entering the teaching profession, and thus roughly a half or more of recent graduates employed in Victorian public schools might be assumed to have been working as casual relief teachers in August 2013.

The data in this and the preceding section, derived from diverse sources, can be distilled to arrive at very approximate Australian national percentages for 2013 of all teachers and of early career teachers in the middle of their first year, on different types of work contracts. While around 70% of all teachers were estimated to be

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[2] The data on which the graphs are based are not publicly available.
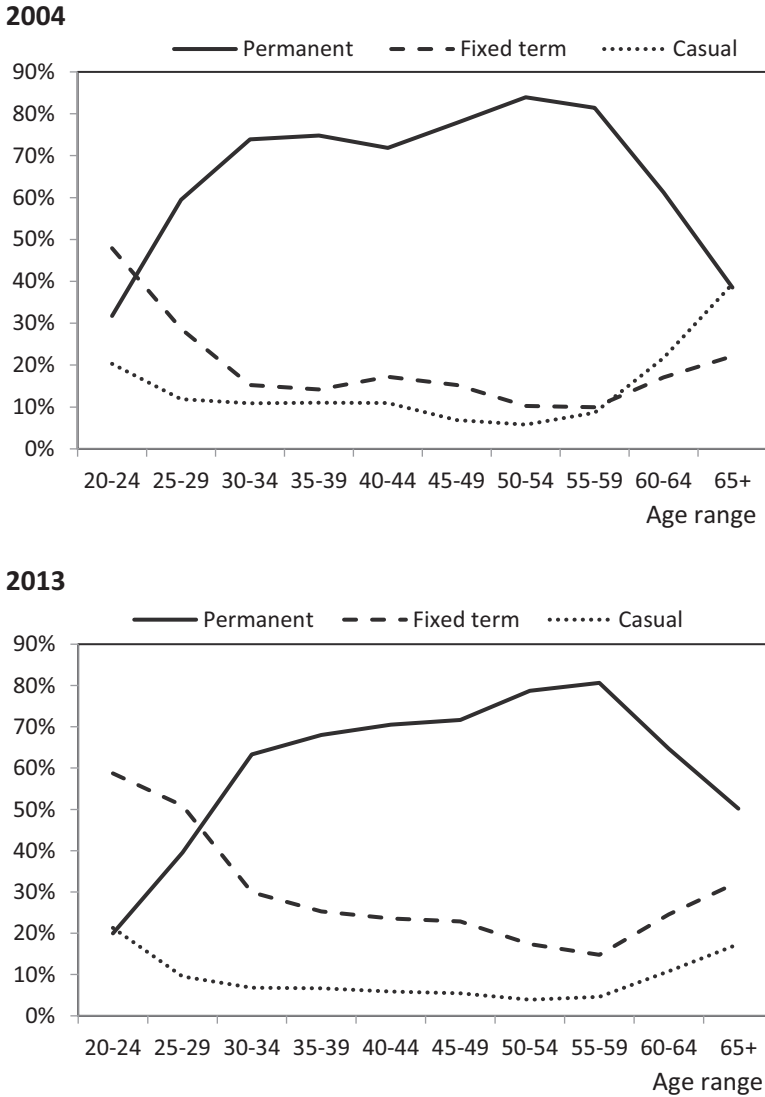
2004

2013

Fig. 9.1 Percentage of New South Wales public school teachers in each 5-year age range who are permanent, on a fixed-term contract, or casual, 2004 and 2013

Source: NSW Department of Education (2017); NSW Department of Education and Communities (2013); NSW Department of Education and Training (2005). The data sources for the three types of employment differ and so might not be fully comparable

Table 9.2 Estimated approximate percentages on different work contracts, all teachers and early career teachers in the middle of their first year, Australia, 2013

	Permanent	Fixed term of 1 year or more	Fixed term of less than 1 year	Casual
All teachers	70%	9%	7%	14%
First-year teachers	22%	18%	30%	30%

Source: AEEYSOC NTWD Working Group (2014), Graduate Careers Australia (2014), McKenzie et al. (2014)

permanent, only around 22% of teachers in their first year were estimated to be permanent. Table 9.2 provides details.

9.6   Pay, Conditions, and Experiences of Replacement Teachers

A large proportion of all replacement teachers are not permanent, but are employed on casual or fixed-term contracts. Insecurity is an inherent condition of such contracts. This may not be a matter of concern to those who prefer such work, such as post-retirement teachers who supplement a secure pension with some relief work and who are already recognised and established in their profession. However, it is a problem for many early career teachers and others unable to obtain the permanent work they prefer. Job insecurity limits their capacity to plan and progress in their careers and personal lives (Cleeland 2007, p. 184) and provides an incentive to hide problems and avoid any professional risk for fear of jeopardising future employment. Other characteristics of casual and fixed-term employment are not inherent, though they tend to be common – and unsatisfactory. In this section I will examine pay and material, social, and psychological conditions of work.

The pay levels of casual teachers differ in rates and increments between jurisdictions, but are mostly well below those of other classroom teachers over the equivalent of a full-time full year (for all Australian public school jurisdictions in late 2016, see Australian Education Union 2016a, b). The lowest rate for a 4-year trained, fully qualified casual teacher in the public sector in 2016 was in Victoria. There the maximum daily rate was $293.30 with no increments for experience, and if employed through an agency, a casual teacher might receive as little as $235 a day (Australian Education Union Victorian Branch 2016). The maximum casual rate in Victoria (full-time annualised) was less than the salary of a full-time fixed-term or permanent teacher in their first year and only around 62% of the maximum rate available for other classroom teachers (Australian Education Union 2016b). In the Queensland public sector, there was also a single rate for casual teachers irrespective of experience, but the rate was higher than in Victoria, at $373.94 (for a 5-hour day; more was paid for additional hours), and importantly, casual teachers in Queensland public schools could be employed for no more than five continuous

days (Queensland Department of Education 2017). In the New South Wales public sector, casual teachers had an incremental pay scale, commencing at $331.08 a day, annualised to around a graduate commencing salary, and progressing to a maximum of $399.31 a day after at least 2 years of full-time equivalent service and having their 'proficiency' confirmed by the Teacher Accreditation Authority. This rate, full-time annualised, was less than 80% of the 'highly accomplished' rate available to other teachers with experience and demonstrated effectiveness (Australian Education Union 2016a, b). Other jurisdictions similarly have rates that usually reach a maximum of less than 80% of the maximum rate available to permanent or fixed-term classroom teachers. South Australia is an exception. There, both casual teachers and those on fixed-term contracts receive pay that, when annualised, is at least as much as permanent classroom teachers with the same full-time equivalent years of experience (South Australian Department for Education and Child Development 2016b). Rates for casual teachers in private sector jurisdictions similarly vary between states and territories, but are usually comparable with local public sector rates.

Pay rates and increments for teachers on fixed-term contracts are generally the same as those for permanent classroom teachers, though they usually do not get any loading to account for holidays outside the periods of their contracts and may have limited access to promotion. In other countries pay rates for casual and fixed-term teachers vary, but tend to be lower than those for permanent teachers. For example, in the United States, substitute teachers (around 15% of the school teaching workforce) earn on average around half the annual (full-time equivalent) salary of regular teachers (US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016a, Occupation Codes 25-2020, 25-2030, 25-2050, 25-3098). However, their pay varies a great deal among the 50 states of the United States and between districts within states – as do their conditions, employment contracts (some substitute teachers are permanently employed), required qualifications or licences, and other characteristics (National Education Association 2017).

Access to professional development and having supportive collegial relationships that build social and professional capital are among the most important conditions of work for professionals such as school teachers and especially so for early career teachers (Baker-Doyle 2010; Liu et al. 2004). Adequate induction programs are important at the start of their careers, and formal professional development is usually a requirement for continued licensing (registration or certification) as a teacher. Australian casual teachers generally have no access to professional development during their paid time, are seldom invited to school-based professional development, and usually have to pay to attend the professional development required to maintain teacher registration and develop their capabilities and careers (Australian Education Union Victorian Branch 2016; Pearson 2012, p. vii; Webb 1999, p. 37). Those on fixed-term contracts also may not receive adequate formal induction and have limited access to professional development. Such experiences are replicated overseas. For example, in Canada the Ontario College of Teachers (2017) documented for that province the lack of access to induction and professional development and to school-level support and collaborative arrangements for

casual ('daily supply') and fixed-term contract ('long term occasional' or LTO) graduate teachers in 2016. While over 90% of graduate teachers who were on permanent contracts participated in formal induction, fewer than half of those on LTO contracts and only 3% of daily supply teachers did so (2017, p. 43). Distinct from formal induction participation, only 22% of daily supply teachers were supported by a mentor, compared with 64% of those on permanent or long-term contracts. Daily supply teachers were also much less likely to be involved in collaborative teaching with colleagues and collaborative learning in their school (28% and 25% compared with 72% and 71% for those on permanent or long-term contracts) and much less likely to be involved in subject or specialist associations or collaborative learning beyond their school.

The Victorian Auditor General investigated the material and measurable resources and support available to casual teachers (Pearson 2012). Audited schools reported that almost all casual teachers undertaking replacement work were provided with a lesson plan, around 86% with an information book, and fewer than half with an access to an annual orientation event. Importantly, fewer than 5% of schools provided casual teachers access to the system-wide email and Internet system, and none reported that they provided access to the school-level Ultranet, where teachers 'can view teaching plans online, collaborate with other teachers and share best practice'. Many casual teachers also did not receive necessary emergency and safety information or training. The Auditor General summarised the situation: '[casual teachers] are expected to maintain the same professional standards as other teachers but are not trained, supported and resourced to do so' (Pearson 2012, pp. 20–21). Even though all or most schools reported to the Auditor General that they provided lesson plans and information books, it appears that not all casual teachers received them – a 2016 survey of casual teachers in Victorian public schools (the large majority of whom had more than 10 years of teaching experience) found that more than a third were sometimes not provided with work for their classes, and similarly more than a third were sometimes not given an information book or kit. In addition, more than a quarter were sometimes not given the keys or other essential resources they needed (Australian Education Union Victorian Branch 2016). Such a lack of access to the necessary resources and information to undertake their work effectively and safely has been a common finding for casual (and very-short-term contract) teachers in other Australian states and overseas (Alberta Teachers Association 2011, pp. 8–13; Cleeland 2007, p. 192; Crittenden 1994; Glatfelter 2006; Lock and Lunay 2006; Webb 1999, p. 89).

The material conditions of insecure replacement work are interrelated with the social and psychological conditions commonly reported in Australia and elsewhere. For example, a lack of professional respect for replacement teachers, especially inexperienced teachers, leads to inadequate provision of necessary resources, and this in turn leads to anxiety and alienation. In her investigation into relief teaching in Tasmania in the mid-1990s, Webb (1999) reported a lack of respect from colleagues and students, isolation, feelings of powerlessness, and professional dislocation (pp. 30–38, 55). She noted that, 'while [relief teachers] were expected to remain professional, others treated them unprofessionally' (p. 104). Lock and Lunay (2006) found that, among relief teachers in Western Australia, feelings of powerlessness

(not having control of classes and duties), isolation (not being valued, included, or supported), and meaninglessness (believing that you are not making a difference) led to feelings of general alienation. McCormack and Thomas (2002) noted that casual replacement work for early career teachers can often be 'difficult, lonely and unrewarding'. Many other researchers have reported similar findings in Australia and other countries (Alberta Teachers Association 2011, pp. 11–13; Cleeland 2007; Galloway 1993; Galloway and Morrison 1994b; Nicholas and Wells 2016). The social and psychological conditions reported here indicate a serious lack of the sorts of relationships and experiences that would involve and develop bonding, bridging, or linking social capital for most replacement teachers in insecure work. These conditions, in combination with the generally poor industrial and material conditions reported earlier, indicate that replacement teaching is an unattractive 'bad job', which would be classified in the secondary, external labour market in Table 9.1.

9.7 Why Are Early Career Teachers Concentrated in Insecure Replacement Work?

The generally poor pay and conditions described in the previous section are one reason why early career teachers, who tend to be in the weakest position in the teaching labour market, are concentrated in insecure replacement work. There are other reasons, which will be discussed in this section. The association between early career teachers (especially teachers in their first year in the profession) and insecure replacement work has two dimensions: the proportion of all insecure replacement work undertaken by early career teachers and the proportion of all early career teachers who are employed on insecure casual or fixed-term contracts. These two dimensions are apparent in the data graphed in Fig. 9.1, which show that in 2013 the majority of early career teachers (using the proxy measure of those aged under 30) in New South Wales public schools were in insecure employment, but only a minority of all those in insecure employment were early career teachers.

The first thing to investigate is the proportion of all teachers who are in insecure replacement work. This involves a consideration of underlying requirements for replacement teaching in school organisation, of industrial agreements and professional requirements in contexts of fiscal constraint, and of school authorities' responses to varying circumstances of teacher oversupply, undersupply, or mismatch. In addition, there are other factors involved in the concentration of early career teachers in insecure replacement work, including the general unattractiveness of replacement work noted above and the age and sex profile of the teaching workforce.

There has always been some need for replacement teachers because of the common 'egg-crate' model of schooling, with individual teachers responsible for particular classes, which entails a requirement for replacement teachers when teachers are absent or positions temporarily vacant. Requirements for replacement teachers can occur for many and varying reasons such as types and durations of leave avail-

able (and taken up) and the rights to return to the same position after extended leave; classroom teachers' particular duties, requirements, or opportunities that take them away from their regular classes (including professional development and committee work); and mismatches in teacher supply and demand resulting in vacancies for particular types of teachers that are temporarily filled by teachers without those attributes. Even though replacement work is required for many reasons, it does not have to be undertaken by teachers in insecure employment. However, insecure replacement teaching is more likely when there are no permanent replacement teachers available to schools when needed and where there is limited flexibility in the deployment of permanent school-based teachers, usually resulting from the fiscal constraint felt by most large school authorities and industrial agreements that specify conditions covering many aspects of teachers' work. Relevant conditions include maximum class sizes, which, in the context of constrained staffing levels and minimum requirements for student class time, result in limits on teachers' non-teaching time and limits on replacement work by regular teachers. Such conditions can be to the benefit of student learning as well as teachers' work lives, but they increase the amount of replacement work that is done by external replacement teachers and thus have their costs, as will be discussed later.

The proportion of early career teachers in insecure positions is affected by supply of and demand for new teachers. This is illustrated for Ontario, Canada, in a report by the Ontario College of Teachers (2017) on the transition into employment of recent graduates from the late 1990s to 2016. In 1998–2002 there was a demographic and policy-driven surge in retirements while there were only around 30% more newly licensed teachers than retirements. Consequently the labour market was generally tight (shortage to balance). In 2001, 70% of first-year teachers were permanently employed, 8% were on fixed-term contracts, and 23% were casual. The labour market then changed. By 2003–2007 there were more than twice as many new teachers as retirements. Oversupply set in, continuing until 2015, with accumulating surpluses (p. 3). In 2006 the percentage of first-year teachers permanently employed had dropped to 47%, and those on fixed-term contracts had increased to 32%, while those casually employed remained about 23%. That year (2006) was the first year for which there was data on employment levels: 70% of first-year teachers considered themselves fully employed, and fewer than 5% were unemployed. Seven years later, in 2013, only 28% of first-year teachers considered themselves fully employed, and almost 40% were unemployed (p. 9). In the following year (2014), of those who were employed, fewer than 20% were permanently employed, and the majority of the rest were casually employed (p. 10). In 2016 there was a sharp fall in the number of new teachers licensed as a result of a reduction in intakes (p. 5), and the college forecast a shortfall (the number of retirements greater than the number of new teachers) for the period 2016–2019 (p. 3). The proportions of first-year teachers fully employed and working permanently were greater in 2016 than 2014, but still well below the levels more than a decade earlier (pp. 9–10). However, the college expects the accumulated surplus to dissipate, which will 'mean that many of the still underemployed surplus teachers who gained their licences in prior years [will have the opportunity] to finally secure full-time [and permanent] teaching jobs' (p. 56).

Another factor is mismatched supply and demand leading to unfilled vacancies in hard-to-staff geographic locations and schools or for particular specialisations. Hard-to-staff schools tend to be less attractive to experienced replacement teachers, who are in a stronger position than recent graduates to select where they teach, often have ongoing relationships with other schools, and may be more limited in geographic mobility. Thus those filling such vacancies on a casual or short-term basis are frequently recent graduates who continue to seek permanent positions that align with their qualifications. In such a case of mismatch in supply and demand, the proportion of teachers in insecure employment is relatively high, and a relatively high proportion of recent graduates are in insecure limited-term full-time employment.

There are two additional and interrelated factors that affect the proportion of all replacement teachers on insecure contracts who are early career teachers. These are the age and sex profiles of the teaching workforce and the relative attractiveness of insecure replacement work. Those undertaking replacement work tend to fall into several distinct categories. In addition to recent graduates and others seeking permanent positions, there are teachers who choose insecure work. These include teachers on extended unpaid leave, retired teachers, and those who prefer casual or short-term teaching because they have other part-time or irregular work to which they are committed (such as artists, musicians, farmers, those establishing small businesses, and those undertaking additional study) (e.g. see Weldon et al. 2016, p. 75). Those on extended unpaid leave are commonly on family leave, usually (but not only) women. Thus a teaching workforce profile with a relatively large proportion of females in the common child bearing and raising age range (all else being equal) would increase the proportion of all casual and short-term replacement teachers who are experienced teachers on extended leave. Similarly, an age profile with a relatively large proportion of all teachers moving through retirement age (all else being equal) would increase the proportion of all casual and short-term replacement teachers who are retired teachers. When experienced teachers (on leave or retired) are a greater proportion of all casual and short-term replacement teachers, then early career teachers are a lesser proportion (all else being equal).

The relative attractiveness of insecure replacement work compared with other forms of teachers' work is the final factor that has a bearing on the proportion of all teachers who are undertaking insecure replacement work and the proportion of those who are early career teachers. Relatively poor pay and conditions, documented in the previous section, make insecure replacement work unattractive. However, early career teachers are likely to be a much larger proportion of those undertaking such work because more experienced teachers are less available for necessary replacement work or less likely to take up particular engagements (when the benefits for them do not outweigh the costs).

9.8   The Costs of Insecure Replacement Work by Early Career Teachers

The educational, personal, and social costs of replacement work undertaken by inexperienced, early career teachers (and, often, experienced teachers) are borne by themselves, the students they teach, their colleagues in the schools where they work, the school system as a whole, and the future teaching profession. Yet policy makers at school and system levels tend to consider cost primarily in financial terms, focusing on the pay of replacement teachers (Webb 1999, p. 183). The Australian Senate Employment Education and Training References Committee (1998), as part of its inquiry into the status of the teaching profession, concluded its investigation into the casualisation of the teaching workforce as follows:

> The financial savings from widespread casualisation are minor in comparison with the financial loss through large-scale defections from the profession of trained teachers. This is quite apart from the non-financial costs of lower student outcomes from heavy reliance upon casual teachers. The Committee regards the move to casualisation as a serious threat to teachers' status and professionalism. (p. 126)

The UK House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2003) was similarly concerned with the educational costs of replacement teaching in Northern Ireland – and the failure to properly account for such costs:

> The central concern about the use of substitution cover is how such teaching will affect the quality of pupils' education. In view of this, the Committee found it surprising that the Department's School Inspectorate had not undertaken an evaluation of the management and effectiveness of substitute teaching. We consider that the lack of attention to these issues could compromise the quality of experience which pupils have in the classroom. (p. 3)

There is widespread evidence for the disruptiveness and lack of effective learning occurring in the classes of casual and short fixed-term replacement teachers (Cleeland 2007, p. 31; Pearson 2012, p. vii; Webb 1999, pp. 43–46) – and there are 'significant cultural and procedural barriers that constrain [such teachers] from contributing effectively to student outcomes and teaching quality' (Pearson 2012, p. vii).

While much of the research generalises from the circumstances of casual and fixed-term teachers of unspecified years of experience, examples are provided of experienced teachers who are effective replacement teachers. In addition, the reports of effective replacement teaching are related to circumstances and teacher attributes that tend not to be associated with early career teachers. Lengthy periods of repeated engagements at a particular school enable the development of relationships with, and respect from, students and the school community, and years of teaching experience tend to be required to develop high-level skills in 'reading' classes and individual students (Webb 1999, p. 39). This is consistent with schools' preference for 'known' casual relief teachers ahead of recent graduates, which was noted by the Victorian Auditor General (Pearson 2012, p. 10), and Crittenden's (1994) comment that casual relief teachers 'don't have as much control over the class because they don't "know" the class'. Experienced replacement teachers often have sophisticated strategies that early career teachers cannot be expected to have mastered: they have

'developed strategies to manage, such as positive and confident body language, a quick sense of humour to diffuse student challenges, and the ability to recognise potential troublemakers or withdrawn students, in order to balance group dynamics' (Webb 1999, p. 112). They have the

> ability to judge and interpret situations, the confidence to entertain students, and the versatility to accept change, [and a capacity to manage] a situation through his/her flexibility, personality and ability to fit into the culture and adapt to other people's expectations. (p. 115)

Experienced and effective replacement teachers can enjoy the variety of different classes or schools every day and enjoy the challenge of teaching out of field (McConney and Price 2009, p. 24; Nicholas and Wells 2016, p. 15).

Strong relationships between students and teachers (linking social capital) are vital for student wellbeing and academic progress (Hamre and Pianta 2006). Such relationships are not only difficult to develop over the disjointed and relatively short-term engagements common for early career replacement teachers, but they are undermined by the common lack of authority and experience of early career teachers. 'A longer-term relief teacher … who had built up a relationship with the class and gained knowledge of the school, was considered a hybrid between a relief teacher and a regular teacher' and thus was more respected and effective (Webb 1999, p. 97).

The impact of casual and short-term replacement teaching on the regular teachers' work is multifaceted, and difficulties are multiplied when replacement teachers are inexperienced or not well-known. Webb's interviewees (1999) reported that they needed to spend much more time on preparation for inexperienced or unknown replacement teachers. They reported that insufficient learning occurred while a replacement teacher was taking their class – which they needed to compensate for – and that the disruptiveness among the students continued afterwards, affecting behaviour and learning in subsequent classes, with the regular teachers left 'picking up the pieces' (p. 118). The presence of a category of teachers in schools who might be treated as an 'expendable commodity rather than a valued colleague' (Alberta Teachers Association 2011, p. 28) could be very damaging to a school's collegial professional culture.

Demand for replacement teachers tends to be greatest later in the year around the peak of the 'flu season' in August in Australia. Yet by that time many early career teachers would have obtained the permanent positions they sought. Therefore, reliance for replacement work on early career teachers who are seeking permanent employment seriously exacerbates shortages at that time (Pearson 2012, p. 6).

There are a number of ways in which being employed to undertake replacement work affects early career teachers. The social and psychological conditions that were described earlier in this chapter tend to be more detrimental for less experienced and younger replacement teachers who have yet to attain the teaching proficiency to be confident and effective teachers and who tend to be entering the life stage when financial security is particularly important. For the individual teachers and their future careers as teachers, casual and very short-term replacement work

(and the commonly associated out-of-field teaching) are inimical to an effective program of induction, such as set out in the *Australian guidelines for teacher induction into the profession* (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2016). Such a program requires stable and supportive relationships with mentors and school leaders, collaborative relationships with colleagues, opportunities for observation and reflection on teaching, a reduced teaching load, and an environment that supports their wellbeing. Successful early career development requires a willingness to be open about difficulties and inadequacies, yet insecure work is inimical to that: in addition to the lack of appropriate supportive relationships and time for consultation, there is strong pressure not to be seen as inadequate and not to decline unreasonable requests because it might undermine future employment opportunities (Alberta Teachers Association 2011, p. 13).

In many ways the development and utilisation of social and professional capital is limited and undermined by the employment of early career teachers as replacement teachers on insecure contracts, and the lack of professional respect and expectations accorded many external replacement teachers, whatever their years of experience. This affects all teachers, including those permanently employed, but especially it affects early career teachers in insecure replacement work.

The insecurity and difficulties of casual and fixed-term employment lead many early career teachers to look for jobs outside teaching (Australian Senate Employment Education and Training References Committee 1998, p. 126). For those who continue in a teaching career, insecure work can distort their teaching and undermine their wellbeing. As one early career teacher put it:

> Love teaching, love my fabulous school but a lack of job security reaches into every aspect of my life, including my confidence when teaching/planning (afraid to make mistakes; worried I am making mistakes which will affect my tenure), which accumulates and negatively effects my teaching and health. (Australian Education Union Victorian Branch 2013, p. 18)

Those early career teachers who progress through years of insecure replacement work, without the relationships of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital that lead to rich professional capital, may well end up as 'cynical, superficial survivors' (Crittenden 1994; see also Webb 1999, p. 182), to the detriment of the future teaching profession and the future quality of schooling.

9.9 Positive Strategies for Replacement Teaching and Early Career Teachers

The previous section documented the costs to student learning and teachers' work lives of insecure replacement teaching, especially when undertaken by inexperienced teachers. This section discusses strategies to avoid or overcome such costs, with the fundamental purpose of improving the learning outcomes for all students in the short and long term.

Consistent with this general aim are four interrelated objectives. The first is to ensure that there are replacement teachers available when needed. The second is to ensure that replacement teaching is effective and not disruptive. The third is to ensure the smooth and positive entry into the teaching profession of recent graduates in circumstances when it is never possible to exactly match supply and demand – a largely quantitative matter. The final, and most important, objective is to ensure that all early career teachers receive an effective and professionally enriching entry to their career – one that supports their wellbeing as well as developing their professional practice and identity (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2016).

There are four consequent strategies. The first is to reduce the amount of replacement work undertaken by teachers in insecure casual and fixed-term employment. The second strategy is central – it is to professionalise replacement work. The third is related to the second, and it is to regulate the forms of employment that can be undertaken by early career teachers. The final strategy is to better manage the entry into the teaching workforce of successive cohorts in circumstances of fluctuating teacher supply and demand.

There are many ways in which the amount of replacement work by teachers in insecure employment could be reduced – whether by reducing the total amount of replacement work required or by increasing the amount of necessary replacement work carried out by permanent teachers. The need for replacement could be reduced without compromising teachers' professional or industrial conditions or student learning by, for example, greater flexibility in teachers' work organisation and greater use of team teaching and by scheduling more planned absences (such as professional development or formal collaborative planning) during student-free days or other scheduled non-teaching time – something that already exists to some degree, covered by industrial agreements.

Teachers will continue to require replacement when they go on leave, whether for brief periods of unplanned sickness or planned professional development or for longer periods of paid or unpaid leave. There will continue to be specialist vacancies that take time to permanently fill and other requirements for replacement teachers. A greater proportion of those necessary replacement duties could be undertaken by permanent teachers – as permanent relief teachers or in association with classroom teaching or other roles. Permanent relief teaching positions already occur in rural and remote South Australia and could be appointed in other regions and jurisdictions. It has been noted in many countries that the increased use of replacement teachers has been associated with the increased provision of (and requirement for) professional development inside regular school hours (Glatfelter 2006, p. 2; Lunay 2005, p. 15). This need not entail greater use of replacement teachers on insecure contracts if professional development (and similar activities) were scheduled so that teams of permanent relief teachers could successively move from school to school in a region, replacing the regular teachers undertaking such activities. Permanent relief teachers could also quite easily undertake longer fixed-term replacement work, with pay loadings to compensate for the locational and other variabilities in the work. Overall reorganisations of teachers' work could involve higher permanent

staffing levels per school, thus allowing an increase in time allocated to replacing absent colleagues without increasing teachers' workloads. It could involve variations in class-teaching loads and class sizes, allowing more flexible time for planning, collaborative professional learning and decision making, as well as replacing absent colleagues in educationally sound ways. OECD TALIS data indicate differences in non-class time in countries where student-to-teacher ratios are similar to Australia – for example, teachers in Singapore and Korea have substantially greater non-class time than Australian teachers (OECD 2014a, Table 2.18). A variation on this could be teachers who are assigned to a school with an explicit time allocation as a replacement teacher, especially in schools that have higher requirements for replacement teachers. An increase in school-level staffing and school-based teachers' replacement work would be funded by the consequent reduction in the resources required for external replacement teachers – the intention is to reduce the proportion of all teachers who are in insecure employment, not to reduce the total number of teachers. This first strategy to reduce the proportion of all teachers who are in insecure replacement work would help to meet the first two and the fourth objectives in the following ways. Replacement teachers are more likely to be available when needed if requirements are better planned and if a lesser proportion of replacement teachers are seeking permanent positions and thus cease to be available for replacement work when they obtain such positions. Replacement teaching is likely to be of better quality if carried out by permanent teachers, especially if they are part of or have a strong relationship with the school in which they are replacement teaching. If replacement teachers in insecure employment are a smaller proportion of the total teaching workforce, then early career teachers are less likely to be in insecure replacement work (all else being equal).

The second strategy is to professionalise replacement teaching, whether undertaken by permanent relief teachers or teachers on casual or fixed-term contracts. This is intended to improve the quality of replacement teaching and to make it more attractive to experienced, effective teachers. Professionalisation involves recognising that replacement work, especially casual and short-term replacement work, is a specialisation that is different from other teaching (Webb 1999, pp. 193–194), and to be done well it requires particular knowledge, skills, and personal attributes (Crittenden 1994; Nicholas and Wells 2016, p. 15). This entails provision of, and access to, professional development that is equivalent, in cost and accessibility as well as content, to that available to (and expected of) other teachers in their specialisations. It also entails access to the same sort of regular professional support and performance reviews that other teachers receive. As part of this professionalisation, researchers and policy analysts in school authorities, universities and regulatory agencies would undertake research and policy development regarding replacement work and how it can be improved – in the same way that research is undertaken into other aspects of schooling and teachers' work. Thus, replacement work would cease to be 'invisible'. Professionalisation also entails (annualised) pay and material conditions equivalent to those of teachers with other recognised specialisations, including increments for experience and opportunities for promotion according to evidence of relevant advanced practice or higher-level duties. Highly effective replacement

teachers could be deployed to the more challenging situations and given appropriate recognition and reward for doing so. Such challenging situations include replacement work in low-SES and rural and remote schools where currently inexperienced early career teachers are disproportionately deployed, often teaching out of field (Weldon 2016, p. 10).

Professionalisation should improve the quality of replacement teaching directly and through the greater status and respect that would be granted to such teaching by system administrators and school leaders, regular teachers, and students. Professionalisation would also greatly increase the attractiveness of replacement work in the teaching labour market, and thus more experienced teachers would seek to take up replacement work. For example, so that they can undertake more casual or short-term replacement work, those on long-term leave may extend leave, and those close to retirement age may take earlier retirement than they otherwise would. Regular teachers may choose to take up the challenge and variety of replacement work – whether on a permanent or irregular basis. This shift of experienced, permanent teachers to replacement work would free up regular permanent positions for early career teachers.

There is a further step in the professionalisation of replacement teaching. The previous section showed the ways in which replacement work is usually carried out much more effectively by experienced teachers. Thus it can be argued that most short-term replacement work should be done by a teacher with at least 2 years of experience and who is at least at the career stage of a 'proficient' teacher (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2014). A requirement that all insecure replacement work (except, perhaps, longer periods of in-field fixed-term replacement) is undertaken by teachers with at least 2 years' teaching experience entails that early career teachers in their first 2 years would not be permitted to undertake such work and must be employed on an ongoing basis, either full-time or part-time. They would have appropriate conditions of probation, opportunities to change situations if there are difficulties, and all the support and the reduced load due to a graduate teacher. This might appear an unreasonable requirement, denying school authorities flexibility and recent graduates opportunities. However, there are parallels in earlier professionalisation developments. In fact it would probably be a minor administrative issue compared with the introduction of strict entry requirements in most Australian jurisdictions in the 1970s, when early career teachers were a much larger proportion of the total teaching workforce.

All of these strategies would tend to move teachers out of the 'bad jobs' in the secondary external labour market and into the 'good jobs' of either the primary external labour market or the primary internal labour market (see Table 9.1). Early career teachers would have the relationships and networks that involve and develop social and professional capital if they are in the primary internal labour market of a secure appointment in a school – something almost impossible in the secondary external labour market.

An issue remains if early career teachers in their first two years would not be available for insecure replacement work in circumstances of a variable supply of and demand for new recruits. This may not be a problem as experienced teachers,

available for varying replacement work over the course of the year as required, would provide a high level of flexibility. This would avoid the current common problem of a shortfall in replacement teachers later in the year as graduates progressively take up permanent and longer fixed-term positions. Employing graduate teachers on a part-time as well as full-time basis would add to the flexibility. In an ideal world all qualified graduates would be offered an ongoing teaching position in a school. However, if this is not possible school authorities should consider what other opportunities might be available for suitable applicants. These might include non-teaching roles in schools and elsewhere. The administrative costs of absorbing the new cohorts of graduates should be shared by the private school authorities and individual private schools that have avoided doing so in the past (Ramsey 2000, p. 182). Better balancing supply and demand by adjusting initial teacher education intakes according to forecasts is an additional strategy to facilitate the smooth absorption into the profession of recent graduates. However, forecasting is not simple, and the wide spread of probabilities needs to be taken into account.

9.10   Conclusion

There have been many sets of recommendations covering how casual and short fixed-term teaching can be improved (Abdal-Haqq 1997; McCormack and Thomas 2002; Pearson 2012, p. vii; Webb 1999, pp. 197–199) and how initial teacher education can, and should, better prepare graduates for such work (McCormack and Thomas 2002; Ramsey 2000, p. 67). These recommendations, while positive, are piecemeal and would do little to change fundamentals. In this chapter I have investigated the prevalence and nature of insecure replacement work for the Australian teaching workforce as a whole and for early career teachers in particular, especially those at the beginning of their teaching career. The conclusion from this investigation is that the ways in which replacement work is currently arranged are very costly – costly to replacement teachers themselves, to the students they teach, and to the schools in which they teach; to quality and equity in educational provision across the nation; to the development, retention, and work lives of early career teachers; and to the future of the teaching profession.

I have suggested interrelated strategies in response to this unsatisfactory situation. These strategies involve the reorganisation, professionalisation and regulation of replacement teaching, the regulation and some reorganisation of the forms and areas of work of early career teachers (especially recent graduates), the management of initial teacher education to better balance supply and demand, and the sharing of responsibilities across public and private school sectors.

These strategies require changes in formal industrial agreements, in the employment and deployment practices of school authorities, and in the priorities and culture of the profession. These are not simple matters and may not be easy for the industrial parties (the teacher unions and school authorities), universities, or other stakeholders. Phased approaches or effective alternative strategies may be

appropriate. In addition, these strategies may have some direct financial costs. However, any direct financial costs need to be considered in the context of the indirect costs of the status quo and the benefits of change for student learning and teachers' work lives. Those with responsibilities for schooling need to do more than to count the immediate and financial costs: they also need to take account of educational and social, indirect and longer-term, costs and benefits.

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Chapter 10
Quality Retention and Resilience in the Middle and Later Years of Teaching

Christopher Day

Abstract This chapter focuses on research that has investigated how mid- and later-career teachers sustain or do not sustain their commitment to teaching to the best of their ability. Closely associated with this, it examines their capacity for resilience in changing policy contexts that may challenge or threaten their otherwise relatively stable sense of professional identity, sense of agency, moral purpose and perceived teaching effectiveness. It takes as givens that schools are more likely to be successful in their instrumental and broader social and humanitarian purposes if they engage in the recruitment and *quality retention* of teachers who are committed and resilient. It draws upon evidence from a range of research internationally that (i) resilience is both a psychological and sociocultural phenomenon which is best understood as not only an innate disposition or asset but as a latent, dynamic, relational process within a social system of interrelationships; (ii) for all teachers, particularly those who always endeavour to teach to the best of their ability and well, teaching is inherently an emotionally and intellectually stressful work; (iii) therefore all teachers, especially those who strive to teach to the best of their ability and well in these circumstances, require the capacity for 'everyday resilience'; and (iv) this demands not only the capacity to 'bounce back' in extremely adverse circumstances, but the capacity to manage, rather than 'cope' with, the everyday challenges that teachers face in their work.

10.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on research that has investigated how mid- and later-career teachers sustain or do not sustain their commitment to teaching to the best of their ability. Closely associated with this, it examines teachers' capacity for resilience in changing policy contexts that may challenge or threaten their otherwise relatively

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stable sense of professional identity, sense of agency, moral purpose and perceived teaching effectiveness. It takes as givens that schools are more likely to be successful in their instrumental and broader social and humanitarian purposes if they engage in the recruitment and *quality retention* of teachers who are committed and resilient. The chapter draws upon evidence from a range of research internationally that (i) resilience is both a psychological and sociocultural phenomenon which is best understood as not only an innate disposition or asset but a latent, dynamic, relational process within a system of interrelationships; (ii) for all teachers, particularly those who always endeavour to teach to their best and to teach well, teaching is inherently emotionally and intellectually stressful work; (iii) therefore all teachers, especially those who strive to teach to their best in these circumstances, require the capacity for 'everyday resilience' (Day et al. 2007; Day and Gu 2014); and (iv) this demands not only the capacity to 'bounce back' in extremely adverse circumstances, but the capacity to manage, rather than 'cope' with, the challenges that teachers face in their work.

Being resilient is different from being able to cope emotionally with the exigencies of teaching. 'Coping' implies survival, whereas 'resilience' implies being able to manage the challenges in such a way that success is achieved, that is, the individual progresses beyond the use of coping strategies. 'Capacity' has been defined as 'a "habit of mind", a quality that allows people individually and collectively, routinely to learn from the world around them and apply this learning to new situations' (Stoll 2009, p. 125). Yet capacity is neither innate, nor always stable; and 'habits of mind' are also 'habits of heart', since teaching at its best is both an intensely intellectual and emotional endeavour. Building, nurturing and sustaining a capacity for resilience over a career in which teachers are likely to encounter and have to respond productively to different policy, school and community environments is, therefore, likely to be a dynamic, ongoing and not always unproblematic process.

Understanding resilience as a 'capacity' acknowledges that it may fluctuate according to anticipated and unanticipated personal and work contexts. Since research has found that resilience is associated with teacher and teaching effectiveness, building and sustaining teachers' capacities for resilience at every phase of their careers becomes both an individual and organisational concern. Unlike early career teachers, where in many countries high levels of attrition and turnover are significant concerns, as other chapters in this book demonstrate, the lives and work of mid- and later-career teachers have been largely neglected by researchers. Research is relatively scarce (Rolls and Plauborg 2009), perhaps because attrition rates during these years, defined as those with 8–23 and 24+ years of experience respectively, are relatively low (Day et al. 2007). Yet teachers in their mid- and later-career phases considerably outnumber those in their early career in many countries, and are more likely to hold leadership roles in addition to classroom teaching.

10.2   Retention Issues: Commitment, Quality and Resilience

In this chapter I argue that physical retention is a necessary but insufficient means of improving and sustaining the quality of teachers, teaching and learning in schools. I will examine what research reveals about the workplace factors that cause mid- and later-career teachers in particular to sustain their individual and collective willingness and capacities to teach to their best and well, rather than moving on, leaving the school or profession, or remaining as survivors whose willingness to strive to make a difference to the learning and achievement of their students is diminished.

> Students are not served well when a district retains teachers without regard to quality. Little can be achieved (and much might be lost) when a district succeeds in reducing teacher turnover if some of those teachers are incompetent, mediocre, disengaged or burnt out. Instead, student learning is the goal, and schools must seek to retain teachers who demonstrate that they are skilled and effective in the classroom, are committed to student learning, and are ready and able to contribute to the improvement of their school (Johnson et al. 2005, p. 2).

There is currently a well-documented and ongoing policy crisis in many countries in relation to teacher recruitment and retention (e.g. Hanushek et al. 2004; Ávalos and Valenzuela 2016; Peters and Pearce 2012). In a 25-country review of teacher retention, the OECD (2005, p. 199) found that poor working conditions (workload, pupil behaviour, resources, parental support) were often the reason teachers gave for leaving the profession. Rates of supply and attrition vary internationally and across particular geographies and subject areas. For example, in many 'industrialised' nations attrition is greater in socio-economically challenging rural and urban areas, whereas lack of supply, poor working conditions and health issues (e.g. HIV/AIDs) are key factors in developing countries (Rinke 2008, p. 3). Even so, those schools that are successful have a higher rate of retention in all areas, regardless of geography and socio-economic circumstance. *However, identifying the physical retention of teachers as a primary strategic purpose of governments and schools themselves is unlikely to guarantee the retention of quality.*

A plethora of research internationally confirms the increasing problems of teacher attrition among early career teachers and, more recently, low morale among those who stay in teaching (DfE 2016; Ingersoll 2001; Keogh and Roan 2016; NUT 2016; Schaefer et al. 2012; Sutcher et al. 2016). Much of this has focused on understanding why many teachers in the pre- and early phases of their careers leave the profession (Flores 2006; Johnson and Down 2013; Allen et al. 2012; Johnson et al. 2014). This research points to the punitive changes in teachers' working conditions, roles and results-driven accountabilities caused by the demands of new public management and policy-led reforms that challenge traditional notions of teacher professionalism (e.g. Troman 2000, 2008). In a recent UK survey of over 4000 teachers, for example, 79% of schools reported having difficulties recruiting staff, whilst 43% of teachers already in a post stated that they planned to leave the profession within the next 5 years (Lightfoot 2016). Reasons frequently cited by teachers for their low morale, dissatisfaction, vulnerability and desire to leave the education sector are

unmanageable workloads, feeling under increasing pressure to meet targets, stress associated with excessive bureaucracy and work and performance scrutiny, and issues related to disruptive pupil behaviour (Smethem 2007; Gunter 2007; Mansfield et al. 2016). Many teachers report that the demands of the job affect their health detrimentally and prevent them from having an acceptable work–life balance (Day and Gu 2009). These findings have been replicated in many other countries.

All the evidence confirms that teachers' work is conducted in an era in which a key indicator of teacher quality is students' measurable results, as manifested in the thrust of the policy documents of many governments and an increasing number of influential academic publications, particularly those that seek direct cause and effect relationships between *teaching quality* and student outcomes (e.g. Hattie 2009; Rivkin et al. 2005). Such relationships are over-simplistic, for they fail to take account of teachers' broader educational purposes and responsibilities and the complex processes of motivating and engaging students in learning processes that expand their personal and social learning horizons. As Scheopner (2010) notes:

> It is imperative that schools find effective ways to retain teachers, but it is neither possible nor necessarily desirable to retain all teachers … While the term retention has positive connotations, suggesting that retention is inherently 'good', it is worth noting that school administrators and policymakers are interested in the retention of quality teachers. (p. 262)

Whilst acknowledging the increasingly functionalist and performative policy contexts in which teachers work and their effects on recruitment and retention of teachers in schools, especially in their early years (OECD 2011; Shen and Palmer 2009), other empirical research has challenged research discourses that present all teachers as 'canaries in the cage', passive victims of potentially punitive policies (Kelchtermans 2009; Ball 2003). This research has focused upon understanding the factors that influence teachers to stay in teaching and remain committed. It has identified: (i) the important roles played by internal factors such as moral purpose, sense of professional identity, efficacy, commitment and capacities for resilience (e.g. Day and Gu 2009, 2014; Day and Lee 2011; Huberman 1993; Johnson et al. 2012; Kirkpatrick and Johnson 2014; Papatraianou and Le Cornu 2014); and (ii) the influence of colleagues and school leaders on building and sustaining these factors. It has found that teachers' attitudes to teaching, their desire to stay or leave, and their willingness and capacity to teach to the best of their ability and to teach well (in terms of students' engagement with learning and levels of measurable attainment) are mediated, positively and negatively, by the effects of a combination of school conditions and cultures, leaders and colleagues, relationships and behaviour of students, strength of moral purpose and personal support. The research has also found that there are many schools and teachers who demonstrate strong capacities for resilience, which enable them not only to survive but also to flourish, despite or because of policy-led reforms. Thus, it is vital not only to attend to the physical retention of teachers, regardless of experience, but also to their ongoing motivation, commitment and capacities for resilience. Building and sustaining these is closely associated with the quality of their work.

I use the terms 'to their best ability' and 'well' throughout this chapter in order to acknowledge research that shows that (i) there is no necessary direct cause and effect relationship between teaching and learning (Fenstermacher and Richardson 2005; Payne 2008); (ii) not all teachers will always strive to teach to the best of their ability (Ronfeldt et al. 2013); and (iii) even for committed and resilient teachers who always strive to teach to the best of their ability and well, their effectiveness may be constrained by circumstances, for example, personal health issues, emotional and behavioural challenges posed by some students, excessive workloads and unsupportive school leadership, colleagues and cultures (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2012; Day and Gu 2014).

Figure 10.1 identifies the key factors that the research discussed in this chapter suggests influence teachers' self and collective efficacy, motivation and commitment, sense of professionalism and professional identities. These internal assets are key contributors to their capacity for resilience. Taken together, they influence and are influenced by teachers' work and personal life experiences. The way teachers are able to manage these influences is associated with their decisions to remain as teachers who are willing and able to engage with their work and teach to their best ability and well. However, over a career the relative strength and stability of these internal assets are likely to be subject to fluctuation, influenced positively or negatively by life changes, unanticipated experiences and events, their workplace contexts and cultures and, within these, the quality of leadership and relations with colleagues and students.
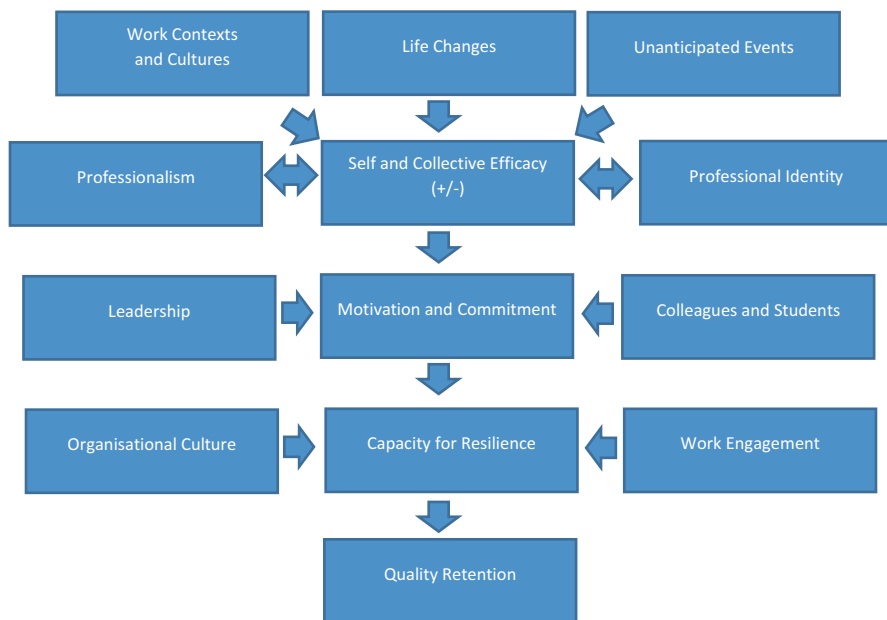
Fig. 10.1 Factors influencing teachers' quality retention

Large-scale mixed-methods research has identified the effects that leadership, school conditions and contexts can have on teacher quality (e.g. Mulford and Silins 2003; Robinson et al. 2009). It has found that differences in school culture have significant effects (Bryk and Schneider 2002) and that there are fluctuations in teachers' commitment and capacities for resilience at different times during their careers and in different school and policy contexts (Day et al. 2007, 2011). Much of this research, however, does not take account of the influences of these internal and external factors on the *quality* retention of teachers and the conditions and processes that may support or constrain quality retention. Moreover, relationships between these, especially among mid- and later-career teachers who form the majority of the teaching profession, remain largely under-researched.

10.3 Workplace Factors That Challenge or Promote the Capacity for Resilience in Mid- and Later-Career Teachers

Most research on mid- and later-career teachers, where it exists, was conducted in the 1990s and early 2000s and provides a mixed picture of their work and lives. For example, mid-career teachers were either presented as being more confident, energetic and able to manage change (Hargreaves 2005; Rolls and Plauborg 2009), or in danger of stagnating, and later-career teachers were presented as either exhausted and disillusioned or serenely approaching retirement (Huberman 1993). Yet much small-scale qualitative research on teachers' work internationally reveals a far more nuanced, less polarised picture. A large-scale mixed-methods research study on variations in teachers' work, lives and effectiveness (VITAE), with a representative sample of three hundred teachers in one hundred primary and secondary schools in seven regions of England, also provided robust qualitative and quantitative evidence of both positive and negative influences on teachers' commitment, and perceived and statistically significant associations between these and student attainment outcomes (Day et al. 2007). A later reanalysis of the data found the same statistically significant associations across all phases of teachers' careers between levels of resilience and teachers' relative effectiveness in terms of student attainment outcomes (Day and Gu 2010). The VITAE research identified three broad 'professional life phases'. Within each of these there were teachers who were experiencing upward and downward commitment and resilience trajectories. Table 10.1 summarises the key issues in the quality retention of teachers in their early, middle and later professional life phases. Whilst, according to research, these are more likely to apply to teachers in these phases, they may also influence individuals at any time of their teaching lives, depending on personal life, workplace and policy contexts.

The research identified the mid-career phase as a 'watershed' in teachers' professional lives in which either commitment, self-confidence and job fulfilment are high or frustrations with sustaining work–life management or failing to advance further in their careers mark the beginning of a journey to disillusionment.

Table 10.1 Key influences on teachers' commitment and resilience in different professional life phases

Professional life phase	Key influences
Early	Workload, reality shock, formation of teacher identity, resilience challenges, efficacy, stable/unstable growth, school conditions and socio-economic contexts
Middle	Work–life tensions, plateauing, policy change, leadership, colleagues, culture, work engagement, career stagnation, moral purpose, commitment and emotional resilience, school conditions and socio-economic contexts
Later	Resilience challenges, health/energy issues, coping with change, moral purpose, school conditions and socio-economic contexts
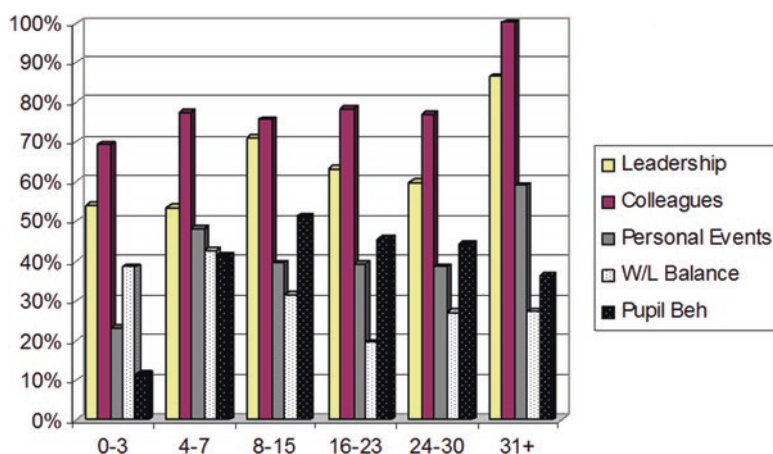
Fig. 10.2 Key positive influences on teachers' commitment and resilience

Figures 10.2 and 10.3 show the extent to which teachers' trajectories in terms of commitment, capacity for resilience and effectiveness were influenced by individual, school, external policy and social contexts, regardless of professional life phase.

10.3.1   Mid-Career Teachers

In the mid-career group, 79% of teachers held additional out-of-classroom responsibilities and were balancing these with their classroom teaching. Whilst they were not considering leaving the profession, they perceived themselves to be at a 'crossroads', choosing between further career role advancement and a continuing focus on their classroom teaching. The 'sustained engagement' group remained engaged and positive, despite the pressures. However, the teachers in the group experiencing a loss of commitment also experienced a loss of motivation and declining
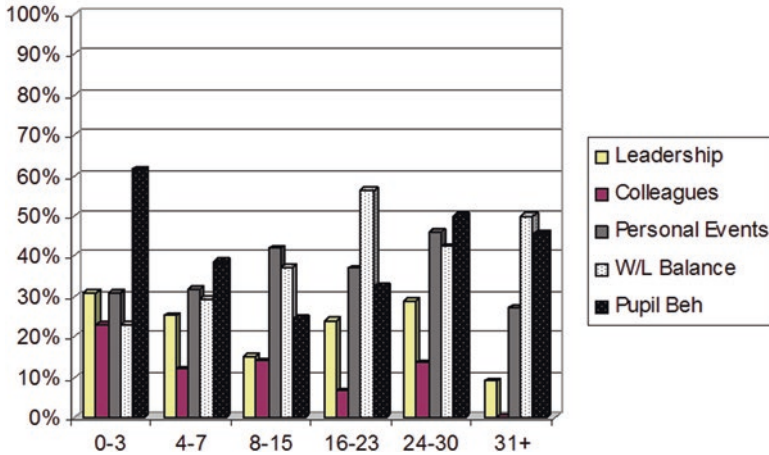
Fig. 10.3 Key negative influences on teachers' commitment and resilience

self-efficacy. In a comprehensive review of the literature, Johns (2010) claims that those who work in the 'caring' professions are particularly prone to this and that, although rates of attrition and absenteeism among teachers in mid-career may be less than for those in their early years of teaching, there may be more who engage in 'presenteeism' at work. These are teachers who are physically present in their workplace but who engage in minimalist participation, perhaps as a result of unac-knowledged or undiagnosed physical and/or mental ill-health associated with, for example, job insecurity and/or uncaring management.

A mid-career secondary school head of department described his life using the image of a mask:

> The outer mask appears as a bleary-eyed face. It has a visible crack running diagonally across it. Others see these tired eyes resulting from my family life. It never occurs to them that these are also the result of adapting to perpetual changes in the school and the reforms to the curriculum being introduced. For me, this [crack] is the consequence of my account-ability as head of department, demands for exam performativity and the fault-lines created by recent restructuring by senior management – changes which were more punishing than anyone was aware of (Leitch 2010, pp. 344–345, cited in Day and Gu 2014, p. 79).

Many of those in mid-career are less likely than early career teachers to have an option to leave the profession or to change schools for financial and family mobility reasons. It is important, then, to consider whether the current trajectories of these mid-career teachers would be likely to continue without productive interventions, and what might be the implications for their willingness and capacity to teach to their best ability and well as they grow older in the system. For both ethical and productivity reasons, it is a responsibility of school leaders to recognise these symp-toms and signs, and ensure that these teachers are provided with appropriate infor-mal and formal opportunities to remain or become emotionally and intellectually engaged in their work.

10.3.2 Later-Career Teachers

Later-career teachers have been defined as experienced teachers who have served in the teaching profession for a lengthy period of time, 24 years or more (Day et al. 2007). As with mid-career teachers, less attention has been given to examining the nature of the tensions and challenges facing those who have had a substantial amount of experience in teaching (so-called 'veteran' teachers) and the effects of context on their willingness and ability to sustain their capacity for resilience. These so-called 'veteran' teachers, like those in mid-career, are not necessarily master teachers (Margolis 2008). There can be little doubt that, 'from a developmental perspective, individual learning needs will be shaped by factors such as length of experience' (Bolam and McMahon 2004, p. 49). However, the emphases on experience and linearity as defining features of teacher learning have been increasingly challenged by research which shows that, whilst learning through experience of practice may lead to proficiency, it will not necessarily lead to expertise (Britzman 1991; Bereiter and Scardamalia 1993; Day et al. 2007; Day and Gu 2014). Thus, in relation to debates on experience and expertise, although veteran teachers may have experienced many years of teaching and become proficient in leading and managing in their classrooms and schools, they will not necessarily have become expert teachers. Some in this phase will experience a decline in energy levels and a resistance to change that requires them to change their ways of thinking and practices. This is well illustrated in this extract from an interview with a teacher of 26 years' experience:

> There was a certain point in my career, it was probably about two years ago, where I just said I'm tired of all the change, I'm tired of all the distress and the negativity that comes with change … so I still give my 100 per cent to the children but I keep out of any issues within the school in terms of politics and staffing problems … I don't want to give my life to that. (Interview, veteran primary school teacher, June 2014).

However, this is certainly not the case for all those in their later careers. Responses to interviews over a 3-year consecutive period revealed two sub-groups: (i) those whose motivation and commitment remained high and (ii) those (a greater proportion than those in mid-career) for whom motivation was declining. Those in the latter group were experiencing increased fatigue and a sense of detachment, as they observed deterioration in student behaviour, and became resentful at being forced to respond to an increasing number of externally driven improvement initiatives in which they had little professional confidence. They also reported a growing preoccupation with personal life events and changes. For later-career teachers in both of these groups, school cultures, leadership and colleague and student relationships were important positive and negative influences on the relative strength of their continuing motivation, work engagement and job fulfilment. Significantly, more students of teachers in this later phase achieved less well in tests and examinations than those in the early and mid-career phases (See Day et al. 2007; Day and Gu 2010, 2014 for a more detailed discussion).

The organisational psychology literature increasingly recognises the value to organisations of older workers, indicating that they can perform as well as younger, less experienced workers and that they can demonstrate more positive work values (Rhodes 1983; Warr 1994; Griffiths 2007a, 2007b). Griffiths (2007a) thus asserts that '*many common myths and stereotypes about older workers' decreased performance and availability for work are not accurate*' (p. 124, emphasis added). Capitalising upon experience is clearly a good investment strategy. School leaders could focus on older workers' strengths; they could capitalise on their job knowledge, encourage them to take on mentoring and coaching roles, and encourage horizontal as well as vertical mobility. By exploring what older workers want from the later stages of their working lives, it may be possible to maximise their job satisfaction and performance (Griffiths 2007b, p. 55). To ignore the specific commitment and resilience needs of veteran teachers, and the increased possibility of decline in the capacity for resilience among a significant number, is to fail to capitalise upon the long-term investment that they and their employers have made to teaching. This group – at least in theory – should be at the peak of their expertise and teaching wisdom. They should be providing a model of commitment and high-quality teaching for their less experienced colleagues.

10.4 Factors that Influence the Capacity for Resilience of All Teachers

It is important, then, to examine the workplace factors that cause teachers to stay rather than move on or leave the profession entirely. Three key contextual factors that influence the capacities for resilience of all teachers, and especially those in their mid and later career phases, are schools' organisational contexts and cultures, work engagement and leadership.

10.4.1 Organisational Contexts and Cultures

> [W]hen schools strengthen the organizational contexts in which teachers work, teachers are more likely to remain in these schools, and student achievement on standardized tests increases at a faster rate (Kraft et al. 2016, p. 1439).

A range of studies internationally provide evidence of associations between organisational contexts, teacher turnover, student achievement, and teachers' capacity for resilience and teacher engagement across all career phases (e.g. Day et al. 2007; Rolls and Plauborg 2009; Johnson et al. 2005; Johnson 2006; Kirkpatrick 2007; Nieto 2003; Borman and Dowling 2008; Weiss 1999). Scheopner's (2010) review of 33 studies over the last 20 years confirms other trustworthy, large-scale research (Day et al. 2007) that retention strategies should focus on 'building and sustaining teacher quality and effectiveness over the whole of their careers … since it is,

above all, retaining teachers' commitment that is most likely to lead to the retention of quality teaching' (p. 254).

> Simple solutions will not suffice. Self-efficacy is vitally important; teachers must experience a sense of effectiveness. Teachers need to feel supported, in compensation that acknowledges the work that they do, from colleagues and principals who encourage and assist them, and unrealistic expectations of what they can accomplish … Teachers value supportive relationships with their colleagues, but structures are needed to encourage teachers to work together, take advantage of one another's feedback, expertise and knowledge (Scheopner 2010, pp. 274–275).

These and many other studies in Finland (Grubb 2007), the USA (Johnson 2004; Markow and Martin 2005), the UK (Smithers and Robinson 2003), Taiwan (Wang 2004), China (Wriqi 2008) and Australia (Johnson et al. 2014) identify that workplace conditions have a key influence on teachers' commitment and retention. From these and other studies, it is clear that the physical, psychological and relational conditions that teachers experience in schools have significant effects on their morale, sense of individual and collective efficacy, agency, wellbeing and capacity for resilience (Day and Gu 2014). Note, for example, this quotation from a mid-career teacher with 11 years' experience of working in a primary school that serves a high-need urban community:

> In terms of a team here we are all really supportive and everybody, if you know people, can see that you're feeling stressed and they'll kind of ask are you all right and make sure you're okay (Day and Hong 2016, p. 121).

10.4.2 Work Engagement

> Engaged employees are energetic, interested and enthusiastically engaged in their work (Leiter and Bakker 2010) … They approach their work with persistence, proactivity and often voluntarily expand their role when they feel that it will benefit the organisation (Macey et al. 2009, quoted in Kirkpatrick and Johnson 2014, p. 233).

Evidence of wellbeing and job satisfaction among teachers is likely to be found in their work engagement, defined in an American study as 'the feelings employees have about their work that influence how they choose to direct their effort and energy' (Kirkpatrick and Johnson 2014, p. 233). Teachers in this study spoke of three patterns of engagement: (i) *modified engagement* as a result of the growth of responsibilities outside the classroom such as families or additional managerial demands, (ii) *focused engagement* to improve their teaching through engaging in professional learning and development, and (iii) *diversified engagement* as a result of increasing their professional work outside the classroom, for example, mentoring new colleagues or after-school community events. The researchers also found that most of the teachers in their study had received little active support, guidance or encouragement from school leaders or colleagues, and that those who taught subjects which 'counted' for less in terms of test and examination results felt devalued. Not surprisingly, they highlighted the positive effects on teachers' work engagement of school contexts which were supportive of teachers' continuing professional

learning and development (Kraft and Papay 2014; Day et al. 2011; Robinson et al. 2009).

This relatively small-scale exploratory research was conducted with 'second-stage' teachers with 4–10 years of experience (whose numbers have increased substantially over the last 20 years in America), who are still 'quite vulnerable to attrition' and so need special attention (Gordon et al. 2006; Kirkpatrick and Johnson 2014, p. 234). Whilst they are likely to be more effective than novice teachers, their effectiveness as measured by student outcomes tends to plateau (Gordon et al. 2006; Rivkin et al. 2005; Rockoff 2004). It may be that this group is assumed to be proficient and so, as the authors pointed out, has (wrongly) received less attention in terms of structured opportunities for professional learning and development than either 'novice' or 'veteran' teachers. Which teachers receive more, or fewer, learning and development opportunities will likely depend upon the ways in which principals understand the likely influences upon teachers within, between and across their professional life phases, and the contributions that professional learning and development can make to building and sustaining their commitment and work engagement and, through this, student engagement and achievement. It may also be that not all principals recognise the associations between continuing commitment, capacities for resilience and quality retention. Thus, whilst this American research was with 'second-stage' teachers, this might apply equally to those in their mid and later career phases, as found in the earlier VITAE project in England.

10.4.3   Leadership

> If you ask teachers, 'What kept you in a school that you're in?' or 'What caused you to leave?' … leadership and support is one of the most critical elements, because everything the teacher does is framed by the way the leadership operates. It is possible to be an effective teacher in a poorly led school but it's not easy. That takes a toll. And it is possible to become an even more effective and successful teacher in a well-led school (Darling-Hammond 2013, p. 18).

A key factor in teachers' sense of commitment and capacity for resilience is the quality of school leadership. Seventy-six per cent of the teachers in the VITAE project cited leadership as a key influencing factor on their ability to be effective, and 58% stated that, unless the leadership visibly supported and appreciated their work, they felt that they were 'on their own'.

A recent wide-ranging review of 'panel data' (Kraft et al. 2016) also found that 'school context measures are stronger predictors of teacher turnover than individual teacher traits or the average characteristics of students in a school' (p. 1415). They concluded that the following features of supportive school contexts were key to teacher retention:

> leadership and professional development (Leadership), high academic expectations for students (Expectations), teacher collaboration and trust, which are widely claimed to result in more rapid improvement in student results and teacher satisfaction (Bryk and Schneider 2002; Ronfeldt et al. 2015), and school safety and order. (p. 1421)

Of these, as earlier research has also found (e.g. Boyd et al. 2011; Ladd 2011; Leithwood et al. 2007; Robinson et al. 2009), leadership was identified as the 'dominant' predictive factor. It explained 21% of the variance across teacher item responses and had 'one of the highest leverage points for shaping the organisational practices and culture of a school' (Boyd et al. 2011; Grissom 2011, cited in Kraft et al. 2016, p. 1440). Kraft et al. (2016) add: 'The relative stability of our estimate for Leadership when we include additional school context measures suggests that the relationship between Leadership and turnover is largely direct instead of being mediated by other school context factors' (p. 1429).

Research on schools has not found any evidence of a successful school which does not have talented leadership and indicates that the principal's influence on pupil progress and results is second only to that of the classroom teacher (Leithwood et al. 2007; McKinsey and Co. 2010; Pont et al. 2008).

The extracts below from two research projects provide examples of the positive and less positive influences that leaders can have on mid- and later-career teachers. The first is about a principal of a school in a challenging socio-economic context and the second from a teacher in an 'invisible' under-performing school serving an advantaged socio-economic context that had experienced disruption in its leadership and had recently appointed a new principal.

> We are led by an incredible, resilient leader. She not only demands the best, she teaches it. She is very good at seeing stress in people and believing in people … We have got a really strong senior leadership team, who step up to the plate when they need to (Day and Hong 2016, p. 122).
>
> There is a lack of dynamic teaching, you got a few teachers that have been here for a long time, stuck in their old ways and I think there's a need to have a bit more emphasis in making their teaching a bit more exciting, a bit more dynamic (Day 2017).

Schelvis et al. (2014) use four 'resiliency-related' theories from outside the educational sector to explore teacher and school resilience:

1. *Resilience engineering*: 'variability in performance is normal and … the challenge is to cope with this variability in a flexible, robust and mindful way'.
2. *Organisational mindfulness*: 'mindful engagement is built around the principles of anticipation and the principles of containment'.
3. *Human resource management*: 'If we want to enhance resilience, we … need transformational leaders and employees that want to align their personal goals with the organisational goals.
4. *Resilience as a social system*: 'If we want to enhance resilience, we can either focus on diminishing risk factors (employee internal and external stressors) … or enhance resources like supportive networks, problem solving ability, appraisal and harmony (protective factors)' (Schelvis et al. 2014, pp. 629–630).

They suggest that, taken together, these theories point to the need to use multilevel approaches to build resilience capacities and that these approaches – anticipating, monitoring, responding and learning – are needed for individuals, teams and schools to develop resilience. It is easy to see associations between these and the literature on effective, successful school leaders and schools. Examples include the notion of

'adaptive leadership' (Heifetz et al. 2009), Leithwood's extensive and powerful work on transformational leadership (e.g. Leithwood and Jantzi 1999) and, more recently, findings from empirical research on associations between trust and the progressive distribution of leadership (Day et al. 2011). All research points to the key role of school principals in (i) shaping the educational vision, setting directions and developing and sustaining structures and cultures in the school and its community which build and sustain appropriate physical, social, psychological and emotional conditions for effective learning and teaching and (ii) actively intervening to build, sustain and renew the commitment and capacities for resilience of their teachers. However, capacity-building strategies are only likely to succeed if they 'build individual, relational and organisational trust, enhance social cohesion, trust and shared responsibilities' (Day and Gu 2014, p. 99). As a range of empirical research on successful school leadership has demonstrated, building trust requires particular leadership values, relationships, strategies and skills and takes time (Tschannen-Moran 2014; Day et al. 2011; Leithwood and Seashore-Louis 2011).

10.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have sought to show that having a strong and enduring capacity for resilience is a key contributory factor in teachers' willingness and capacity to sustain their motivation, sense of efficacy and commitment, and that it is associated with their quality retention. Teachers in mid and later career form the majority of the teaching force in most schools and countries, and it is likely that a significant proportion are at a 'watershed' in their lives. The relatively low physical attrition rates of these teachers are likely to mask their increasing vulnerability to challenges to their capacities for everyday resilience as a consequence of age. They are likely to experience one or a combination of difficulties in responding to increased demands made upon them, excessive added professional responsibilities, changes in student motivations and attitudes to school learning (perhaps associated with the influences of digital technologies), changes in personal circumstances, poor leadership and personal economic constraints on their ability to change jobs. *Building, sustaining and enhancing their capacity for resilience is, therefore, a key quality retention issue for policy makers and principals.* The case for focusing more in-depth empirical research on mid- and later-career teachers' capacities for resilience is compelling.

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Chapter 11
Teacher Retention: Some Concluding Thoughts

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Abstract This concluding chapter draws together the main ideas presented in preceding chapters about how to address the problem of early career teacher attrition. It organises authors' viewpoints within several themes relating to the negative portrayal of early career teachers, how these pervasively damaging representations can be countered and what paradoxical challenges arise when unintended consequences flow from poorly conceived 'solutions' to the problem. The chapter concludes with a short discussion of the gaps in our knowledge as a reminder of the need for further research to promote early career teacher retention.

11.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, we examine the central themes of the book and summarise the arguments presented by the authors against the positioning of early career teachers as problems and liabilities in schools.

In this book we aimed to achieve several things. Firstly, we sought to examine why there is such unprecedented political and public interest in early career teachers and their retention in the profession. Secondly, we sought to critique the ways in which early career teachers have been negatively portrayed as 'problems' that need to be 'fixed' to improve the 'quality' of our schools. Finally, we sought alternative

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perspectives on the challenges associated with attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining 'quality' early career teachers. To reflect these aims, we assemble the key ideas presented in the book that address the following questions:

- What is wrong with the ways early career teachers are currently viewed and positioned?
- Why are they viewed and positioned in these ways?
- How does this affect early career teacher retention?
- What can be done to challenge negative, deficit portrayals of early career teachers and promote their retention in the profession?

11.2   The Problem: Negative Portrayals of Early Career Teachers

In Chap. 3, Down and Sullivan identify an international trend to implicate 'poorly prepared teachers' in the deteriorating 'quality' of our schooling systems. They use Berliner and Biddle's (1995) concept of a 'manufactured crisis' to expose a raft of 'neoliberal and neoconservative views about standards, teacher quality, teacher training and back-to-basics teaching methods' that seek to reassert control over what is perceived to be a 'failing' schooling system. They summarise 'seven key concerns' with initial teacher education which contribute to the production of early career teachers who supposedly lack 'classroom-ready' knowledge and skills, and who are susceptible to burn-out and an early exit from the teaching profession. They see the negative portrayal of teacher education graduates as part of a deliberate 'moral-political' campaign to challenge the tenets of progressive education and address the 'problem' of poor teacher quality.

In Chap. 4, Mockler adds to this analysis by documenting a dramatic change in the way early career teachers are currently represented in media texts, compared with earlier times. She suggests that 'the media's consistent reinforcement of the notion that both initial teacher education programs and their students are substandard seems unlikely to attract the 'best and brightest to teaching'. She makes the telling point that the negative 'media framing of early career teachers holds the potential to shape not only community attitudes, but also the attraction and attrition of early career teachers themselves'.

The policy responses to this 'manufactured crisis' typically constitute what Down and Sullivan call 'muscular forms of accountability'. These include more rigorous quality assurance processes for initial teacher education programs, tightened university selection criteria for entry to teacher education, compulsory literacy and numeracy testing of graduating teachers, and the application of 38 Australian Professional Standards for Graduate Teachers. The chapters by Flores (Chap. 2) and Keltchermans (Chap. 5) show that these are not solely Australian responses to a perceived problem with the quality of early career teachers; similar policy drivers operate in other jurisdictions. The pressure to be internationally competitive in the

all-important measures of comparative schooling achievement – the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) – means that 'policy borrowing' (Lingard 2010) to address the 'quality teacher problem' is rife among OECD countries.

Given the negative macro policy environment which implicates early career teachers in the perceived decline in educational standards in developed countries like Australia, the revelations by Johnson et al. (Chap. 6) that some local school leaders actively seek to attract, recruit and invest in the development of early career teachers challenges the dominant pejorative narrative. Their chapter provides many examples of strategic micropolitical activities undertaken by school leaders that focus on early career teachers' strengths rather than their perceived weaknesses.

Other writers problematise deficit thinking about early career teachers. In Chap. 5, Keltchermans analyses the unintended consequences of embracing induction and support practices, like mentoring, that are predicated on assumptions about early career teachers' perceived lack of essential knowledge, skills and dispositions. He writes that '[t]his framing of early career teachers in terms of individual shortcomings (deficits) automatically results in a remedial perspective. In this logic, the ultimate purpose and justification of support for early career teachers is the remediation of their deficits'. He presents a number of 'alternative representations' of early career teachers that stress and acknowledge their *agency*: 'the human capacity to interpret and judge the particular situations they find themselves in and to act upon this sense making'. Their 'eventual decision to stay in the job or leave' is influenced by the 'degree of fit' between 'active, knowledgeable and sense-making agents and the working conditions they find themselves in'.

Both Sisson (Chap. 7) and White (Chap. 8), although writing about different 'problems' with initial teacher education, identify the sources of deficit thinking that position student teachers and graduate teachers as lacking practical knowledge and skills, and an understanding of teaching in rural contexts. Rather than 'blaming' these teachers (one of six features of deficit thinking: Valencia 2010, pp. 7–9), White implicates systemic flaws in the ways pre-service education is structured to explain why 'novice teachers … who take up a rural position … leave within the first couple of days or months of teaching'.

In summary, many of the authors in this book have implicated the negative portrayal of early career teachers as a factor that compromises teacher retention. Some explain deficit thinking benignly as a form of unconscious bias or as the consequence of holding common, taken-for-granted assumptions about novice teachers (Mockler, Sisson and Keltchermans). Others are more inclined to link neoliberal beliefs and anti-progressive education proponents with persistently negative appraisals of the quality of teacher graduates (Johnson et al., Down and Sullivan, and Flores). The consequences of promoting such adverse representations of early career teachers are quite profound:

- They make teaching a less attractive destination profession. In a reconceptualised understanding of the retention process (Johnson et al.), this means that

issues at the teacher attraction stage significantly impact on the longer-term retention of teachers.

- They affect the morale of early career teachers as they internalise negative messages about their competence. This compromises their level of commitment and leads to higher levels of attrition, particularly in 'difficult-to-staff' schools (White).
- They shift the focus of analyses of the determinants of the quality of teachers' work away from contextual factors to individual factors (Keltchermans; Flores).
- They encourage the development and use of accountability regimes which involve greater standardisation and regulation of initial teacher education programs and their graduates (Down and Sullivan).

11.3   What Can be Done?

11.3.1   Discredit Deficit Thinking

Perhaps the most obvious response to these damaging depictions of early career teachers is to challenge the validity and veracity of these narratives and to directly and explicitly implicate them in the creation of the problem of teacher attrition. By 'naming and shaming' the purveyors of deficit thinking, several authors offer alternative ways of representing early career teachers that recognise their positive contribution to their colleagues' professional learning and school development. As Keltchermans (Chap. 5) notes, 'Acknowledging their expertise and treating them as sense-making agents who represent rich networks and bring valuable ideas and practices to the school does more justice to early career teachers than the remedial perspective'. In a similar way, Johnson et al. (Chap. 6) use the voices of key school leaders to construct an alternative positive narrative about early career teachers' virtues that speaks against traditional deficit-oriented portrayals. These leaders set the groundwork for higher levels of teacher retention by 'talking up' graduate teachers during the attraction and recruitment phases of the retention process. This is timely and significant work as it fundamentally repositions early career teachers as valuable, essential contributors to the quality of education in the twenty-first century, rather than as liabilities to be spurned.

11.3.2   Rethink the Retention Process

The second strategy suggested by some of the contributing authors is to rethink and reconceptualise teacher retention as a more complex, elaborate and time-intensive process than other approaches that focus on the provision of post-appointment

induction and mentoring support. In Chap. 8, White points out that the 'problem' of staffing rural schools in Australia needs to be addressed long before graduating teachers take up appointments in regional, rural or remote schools. She calls for the development of new models of initial teacher education in which 'pre-service teachers are well supported and scaffolded to understand the diversity of rural places and the importance of understanding the "funds of knowledge" …of the students they teach … [I]t is time for a transformative, system approach to teacher education'.

In Chap. 6, Johnson et al. also shift the focus of retention processes to 'early' interventions designed to ensure that graduate teachers 'fit' the quite specific requirements of employing schools. As they point out, 'The most common strategy involved entering the competition to attract and recruit graduate teachers quite early, in some cases before prospective teachers had completed their undergraduate teacher education. The use of "try before you buy" initiatives was common'. They then link these attraction and recruitment strategies designed to identify early career teachers who 'match' and 'fit in' with longer-term initiatives that modify beginning teachers' working arrangements and that invest in their professional development.

In contrast, Day (Chap. 10) recognises the importance of working with early career teachers to ensure their continued commitment to the profession but then shifts his concerns to how mid- and late-career teachers sustain 'their commitment to teaching to the best of their ability'. His contribution is significant in that it uses a resilience perspective to explore how mature teachers navigate changing policy contexts and cope with challenging personal and professional life experiences that impact on their capacity to 'stay in teaching and remain committed'. While Day's concerns with the retention of experienced teachers is different from those of other authors in this book, his nuanced depiction of the changing teacher retention process over time challenges and disrupts simplistic career-stage explanations of why teachers leave or remain in the profession as committed teachers.

11.3.3   Modify Early Career Teachers' Work

The third suggestion to address the problem of early career teacher attrition is to rethink what work we expect our graduate teachers to perform as they transition into the profession (den Brok et al. 2017). As Johnson et al. (2016) point out, 'few concessions are given to early career teachers as they negotiate complex roles. Most are expected to do the same work and perform to the same levels as more experienced teachers' (p. 49). This bizarre and ultimately cruel expectation has been recently reinforced by the Australian federal government's Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) report, *Action now: Classroom ready teachers* (2014). The chair of TEMAG reportedly said that teachers 'deserve the very best' pre-service preparation so that they can be 'classroom ready' and 'be successful from their first day in the classroom' (quoted by Down and Sullivan in Chap. 3). Not

unexpectedly, many early career teachers 'struggle to achieve this level of performance' (Johnson et al. 2016, p. 49). Several authors in this book implicate unreasonable and repressive work expectations and arrangements in the complex mix of factors that contribute to early career teacher attrition. Their responses challenge orthodox practices and propose alternatives that reconfigure the ways early career teachers work.

In Chap. 6, Johnson et al. describe the 're-engineering' of early career teachers' work undertaken by school leaders in their study. They reveal that this involved 'carefully allocating new teachers to teams to promote collaboration; structuring the timetable and workspaces to support other collaborations; and reducing their workloads'. The 'intended outcomes of these efforts to re-engineer teachers' work were the promotion of teacher collegiality, sense of belonging and shared responsibility – leading to higher levels of commitment and improved early career teacher retention'.

In Chap. 9, Preston offers the most dramatic and critical analysis of the 'stressful and damaging introduction to teaching and the teaching profession experienced by most early career teachers as they begin their careers in insecure replacement work'. She identifies that the pathway to teaching for many early career teachers is through 'insecure casual or limited term contracts in different schools. They receive relatively low pay with little or no increments for experience and have few opportunities for career development'. She exposes the exploitative nature of replacement work and warns of the long-term dangers of relying on a teaching force made up of 40 per cent casuals. She points to the scandalous way casual early career teachers are treated with 'a lack of respect from colleagues and students, [which contributes to their] isolation, feelings of powerlessness, and professional dislocation'. The litany of evidence she presents from numerous studies in Australia and overseas leads her to propose a set of alternative strategies that:

- 'Reduce the amount of replacement work undertaken by teachers in insecure casual or fixed term employment'.
- 'Professionalise replacement work' by appointing permanent teachers as relief teachers.
- 'Regulate the forms of employment that can be undertaken by early career teachers'.
- 'Better manage the entry into the teaching workforce' by adjusting initial teacher education intakes in response to teacher supply and demand forecasts.

These suggestions may seem radical in that they challenge longstanding practices based on assumed-to-be-sound evidence. However, the plight of early career teachers who are locked into insecure replacement work requires a fundamental re-think of these arrangements. Preston offers new solutions to previously intractable problems that impair the transition of graduate teachers into the profession.

11.4 Paradoxes and Contradictions in the Field

Paradoxes and contradictions are revealed in policy and practice when mostly well-intentioned actions have unintended negative consequences. These occur when a situation is difficult to understand because it contains two opposite characteristics (Cambridge English Dictionary 2018). The contributing authors expose many perplexing conundrums that beset the field and unsettle taken-for-granted 'solutions' to the problem of early career teacher attrition. For example:

- Keltchermans (Chap. 5) exposes mentoring as a well-meaning but flawed way to help early career teachers as it frequently manifests as a paternalistic, unequal and contrived process that 'remediates' beginning teachers' 'deficiencies'.
- Preston (Chap. 9) reveals that 'giving early career teachers a start' in the profession via short-term contracts and replacement appointments affords them an uncertain and unrewarding introduction to teaching that challenges their commitment and durability, and ultimately influences their decision to stay in or leave the profession.
- Sisson (Chap. 7) shows that an emphasis on theory and rigour in initial teacher education programs contributes to an unhelpful and divisive theory–practice binary between school-based and university-based teacher educators.
- Down and Sullivan (Chap. 3) reveal the consequences of explicitly codifying teachers' work: greater accountability, work intensification, loss of teacher autonomy and the framing of teachers as technicians.
- White (Chap. 8) maintains that investing in monetary incentives for rural and remote teachers will not address the fundamental issues affecting their retention in rural schools: flaws in the preparation and education of pre-service teachers.
- Flores (Chap. 2) argues that the individualised and narrow focus of debates about 'teacher quality' largely ignores the 'contextual, professional, political and personal dimensions' of the notion; context is everything.
- Johnson et al. (Chap. 6) question the taken-for-granted assumptions of conventional human resource development, fit-for-purpose approaches to teacher recruitment by exposing the operation of systemic biases that exclude minority groups from teaching due to their 'differentness'.

These paradoxes were identified by the contributing authors because they were prepared to 'challenge the status quo by unsettling common-sense beliefs, routines, habits and practices' about the recruitment and retention of early career teachers (Johnson et al. 2016, p. 143). In Arendt's (1968) terms, they were prepared to engage in deep 'thinking' – 'the habit of erecting obstacles to oversimplification, compromises, and conventions' (cited in Berkowitz 2010, p. 8). While their efforts broaden 'the debate about teacher retention to include considerations of fairness, equity and

civility' (Johnson et al., Chap. 6), gaps still exist in our understanding of the 'dynamic and complex interplay between individual, relational and contextual conditions that either enable or constrain' early career teachers' agency (Johnson et al. 2016, p. 7). These gaps provide fertile ground for further research into early career teacher attrition and retention.

11.5   Gaps

While some of the chapters in this book directly draw on accounts of early career teachers' experiences, there is a notable gap in our knowledge of what contributes to teacher attrition from the perspective of those who leave. Johnson et al. (Chap. 6) report on the views of 16 recent graduates who were in the first few months of their initial appointments as teachers. Their insights into their transition to the profession were important in identifying a range of school leadership practices that encouraged them to enter into an implicit psychological contract to remain in their jobs. However, they offer little insight into the thinking and decision making of early career teachers who become disenchanted with teaching and subsequently leave the profession. What is needed are more studies of 'the leavers' (Buchanan 2010) or 'the switchers' (Watt and Richardson 2008) that probe the difficult separation process that precedes the eventual decision to discontinue teaching (see also Smith and Ulvik 2017).

In 2012, legislation was introduced in Australia's federal parliament that uncapped university places in a new demand-driven system. This effectively allowed universities to increase enrolments – and revenue from student fees – according to the demand for undergraduate university places. In initial teacher education, this policy encouraged universities to offer more places without a thorough examination of the impact on teacher supply and demand. According to Weldon (2015), the supply of graduating teachers 'increased considerably' in the years following the introduction of the 2012 policy, leading to a situation in which 'supply generally has outstripped demand, particularly for generalist primary teachers and in some secondary subjects' (p. 15). However, population projections – even the most conservative – show 'high levels of growth in the population of primary school-aged children in the next five to ten years' (2015–2025) with increases in secondary enrolments flowing through from 2018: 'Demand for teachers is on the rise' (Weldon 2015, p. 1). Given these vicissitudes in demand, there is a clear need for more sophisticated Australian research into teacher supply and demand at the state and national levels. This is echoed in the Dutch context by den Brok, et al. (2017) who suggest a more systematic approach to collecting and analysing data on teacher attrition and related supply and demand issues. Further research would satisfy Preston's call (Chap. 9) to better balance 'supply and demand by adjusting initial teacher education intakes according to forecasts … to facilitate the smooth absorption into the profession of recent graduates'. Universities have a social responsibility to engage in this research and to resist the temptation to profit from an unregulated 'market' that produces more teachers than needed.

In Chap. 5, Keltchermans is critical of 'remedial' approaches to induction and mentoring. However, research conducted by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership suggests that 'there is broad agreement in the education sector around the value of induction as a support for beginning teachers, but less clarity about how best to implement it in practice' (AITSL 2016, p. 3). The striking disparity between the views of school leaders and early career teachers about the nature and range of induction strategies used in schools suggests that more research needs to be undertaken in this area.

Finally, there is a need to continue research into the professional lives of early career teachers that exposes the exploitative and unjust ways they are 'used' to satisfy the needs of schools and schooling systems that persistently violate the psychological contract between newly appointed teachers and their employers. Such research is needed to address the wasteful loss of 25 to 40 per cent of early career teachers who leave the profession within five years of their first appointment (Ewing and Manuel 2005). Further critical research will focus on this major social, economic and educational problem by providing further evidence that:

- Educating teachers who leave the profession early is a wasteful and inefficient use of public funds.
- Schools are destabilised and disrupted by high staff turnover.
- Schools lose the expertise of new, high-achieving graduates.
- Student learning is compromised.
- The individual's costs are high when graduates' personal and career aspirations and plans are thwarted due to a negative transition to the teaching profession.

11.6   Conclusion

By way of summary, this book has drawn on a number of theoretical and research insights into a persistent issue confounding education systems, schools and teachers: how to keep 'the best' teachers in the profession. We invited key thinkers and researchers in the field to analyse why early career teachers have been targeted in a damaging assault on their integrity that compromises their ongoing commitment to the teaching profession. We brought their ideas together within several themes relating to the negative portrayal of early career teachers, how these pervasively damaging representations can be countered, and what paradoxical challenges arise when unintended consequences flow from poorly conceived 'solutions' to the problem. We concluded with a short discussion of four 'gaps' in our knowledge related to:

- The thinking and decision making of those early career teachers who chose to leave the profession.
- How the teacher supply and demand 'market' works or, more importantly, should work.
- The effectiveness of the induction process and other school support processes.
- How issues of fairness and civility can unsettle orthodox approaches to the attraction and recruitment of early career teachers.

Ultimately, we hope that this book will stimulate debate about how to promote the interests of early career teachers to ensure that future generations of teachers are able to successfully fulfil their ambitions to be quality professionals who can nurture our young people in uncertain times.

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