John Buchanan

Challenging the Deprofessionalisation of Teaching and Teachers

Claiming and Acclaiming the Profession

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To all those, including my students, who have taught me.

A special, belated dedication to those who taught me at school: I wasn't always appreciative of your (dual meaning intended) gifts.

Foreword

A Feast in Which to Indulge—Slowly

John Buchanan's book is no mere snack. It is a rich feast with many courses each of which deserves slow and careful attention. The many advocates for taking life itself a little more slowly ask that we be mindful and focused, ready to analyse and assess. All of that is wise advice when dealing with material as complex and interrelated as that which John lays before us. Generations ago educational change could be perceived as glacial, then almost overnight it morphed into an avalanche. How to consciously deal with such development continues to be of concern to those who have a passion and commitment to education, teaching and learning. John Buchanan relentlessly reminds us that these seemingly innocent words are constructs that shape us, just as we shape them.

The opening paragraph of the preface to the book is explicit regarding the intended audience: teachers, pre-service and in-service; teacher educators; bureaucrats; politicians; parents; even school students—each enjoined to find pleasure their reading. The paragraph concludes with a somewhat whimsical statement, "perhaps the best advice I can offer is not to read the book alone and in the dark. Apart from anything, you'll run the risk of eyestrain." So, all the more reason to take things slowly.

Just as a feast requires the occasional palate cleansing John digresses occasionally by including personal anecdotes and quiet humour that he employs to personalise the abstract. But the overall task is a serious one addressing both local and international trends and contexts with an emphasis upon the consequences of not giving sufficient consideration to the fundamental purposes of education, above and beyond schooling. He is willing to take the risk of writing in the first person so that we can identify his aspiration that is to deal with the difficult issues that bedevil the current state of play.

A strength of the book is the comprehensive coverage of the extant literature that John uses to dispel the oft-held aphorism, 'anyone can teach'. Thus, he reminds us that the field of practice is a complex one that has been under intense academic

scrutiny for many years. He enjoins the reader to dispel with the notion that teaching is all about telling, learning all about listening, and assessment all about regurgitating.

Historically, the book emerges at a time when the community is seriously being asked to re-think these ideas in an era of a pandemic that has led to children being taught at home and where it has become clear that the notion of 'anyone can teach' does not hold water. Indeed, much of the material is prescient and should be read as being written in a specific historical time.

Returning for a moment to the feasting metaphor it is important that Heston Blumenthal's culinary gymnastics aside, it is essential to understand what it is to know the fundamentals of pedagogy, just as one needs to know how food behaves when being prepared, cooked and consumed. Stretching the metaphor a little further, it is also possible to claim that cheap, short-cut routes to preparing teachers is as hazardous as pulling chefs in off the street and expecting them to be able to produce fine dining. Master chefs may turn to a recipe, but in the main they are creative utilising all manner of product, put together in all manner of ways. Similarly, educators, whether classroom teachers or their leaders, may turn to well-tuned rubrics but also employ their experience and imagination to develop their practice.

While the book does not make a claim for Australian exceptionalism it does point out the encroachment of policy borrowing in the form of making international comparisons based upon de-contextualised testing. Much is made of the capacity of teachers to exercise discernment, a capability that is not sufficiently well recognised when international solutions are sought. This competitive striving is being conducted, at times, on the basis of spurious evidence and has led to the perils of standardisation.

Just as a poor restaurant review can stymie a business, so it is the case that education suffers greatly at the hands of an often hostile and ill-informed press. As John notes the media relish a dramatic headline and will be more likely to report on mis-steps than on positive achievement, thus creating a defensive climate that in turn hampers creativity. Our politicians, always sensitive to public opinion, turn to the rhetoric of 'standards' as a means of controlling the profession. Professional practice performance indicators have become both means and ends. The book reminds us that the unintended consequences include an over-emphasis upon meeting bureaucratic goals above praxis—morally defensible practice—that in turn can result in unprecedented levels of teacher attrition. The discussion of standards is particularly powerful and reflects the concept of unintended bias based upon implicit social cognition. As the book notes, the underlying risk is that standards will shape teaching in the image of those who construct them, thus contributing to professional reproduction leaving little room for innovation and change. As is reported in Chap. 1, "Standards offer security—perhaps in dual guises of security blanket and security guard"—serving both to intimidate and protect.

It has not been the intention of this foreword to summarise the chapters of this complex book but rather to highlight a number of its features such as the issue of standards as discussed above. Among the strengths of the work is the attention

given to matters of assessment and curriculum development whether in the classroom or of the practice itself. As well, recent referencing of the place of technology in teaching and learning reminds us just how complex that interaction may be—something that the Covid 19 Pandemic has acted as a reminder to us all. The book cautions the reader regarding the consequences of social media and the proliferation of fake news that offer a monumental challenge to education in a democracy.

In its final chapter the book returns to ask that we examine ourselves as reflective practitioners. The responsibility is formidable.

As a reader, please take the time to go through this text slowly; enjoy the feast, but avoid indigestion, and most importantly partake in the company of others.

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Preface

Who and What this Book is for

I trust that this book will resonate with my colleagues, teacher educators.

I hope that practicing teachers will read it and be reminded of their worth and contributions. I also hope that the book will have meaning for those in pre-service teacher education. But we need more allies than just those within the circle. Naturally, I will be pleased if educational managers, bureaucrats and politicians read the book and consider its claims as if they might bear some truth. I also hope that parents, many of whom are sympathetic to the claims of the book, will read it and be reminded of how teachers value-add to their children's lives, and perhaps rekindle their own breakthrough moments at school, and how education since then has served, and continues to serve, them. Those in senior secondary school, also perhaps aspiring to be teachers, might also find the book interesting to consider. I hope the complexity and demands of teaching set out in the book don't deter such people from the noble profession. Perhaps the best advice I can offer is not to read the book alone and in the dark. Apart from anything, you'll run the risk of eyestrain. I also take Susan Groundwater-Smith's point, in the foreword, that the book presents perhaps more than you can eat in one sitting. While the chapters link across themes, they can be read independently of one another, and not necessarily in the numerical order in which they are presented (apologies to the (my) maths teachers). The order on which I finally settled, more or less, begins with the broad social and educational landscape, and then homes in on the more specific educational context. The organization of the chapters bears some similarity to a narrative text type. Section 1 provides the orientation, while Chap. 3 introduces the complication. Section two follows the players, the protagonists, as they go about their work. Section 3 (spoiler alert) serves as a denouement and coda.

I draw on several lenses through which to examine education and pedagogy, including reviews of the literature and analytical frameworks. In places, I have drawn frankly on personal anecdotes, in the hope that others may see personal similarities therein. I accept that some of the views are personal perspectives, but

they derive from my own experience/s, and critical consideration of associated literature and research. Moreover, the personal anecdotes are not intended as a distraction, but as a link to a deeper truth (as I see it).

I will be pleased if the book contributes to a kinder, gentler community view of teachers and their work. I will be delighted, however, if the book leads to more enlightened and informed understanding of the complexity and demands, intellectual and emotional, of teaching. I also hope that the book will give you an occasional smile along the way. If you grimace, I'll pretend you're smiling.

Ultimo, NSW, Australia John Buchanan

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Part I
The State of Play

This part sets out and explain some of the context for the book. It explores some of the nobler purposes of learning and teaching, and examines trends and processes in Australia and internationally, and their effects on education. It looks in particular at international student performance league tables, and how these are shaping education in Australia and elsewhere, both directly and indirectly.

Chapter 1
Introduction and Context

> Painting is very easy when you don't know how, but very difficult when you do.
>
> Attributed to Edgar Degas.

Outline

This chapter outlines and sets the scene for the book. It offers an introduction to and overview of some of the pressures and policies that shape, and purportedly serve, the standing and professionalisation of teaching. The chapter also explores the possibility that some of these pressures and policies actually serve to undermine that professionalism and standing, as well as the autonomy, creativity, agency and energy of teachers. The book sets out to generate and test some theorems based on evidence and observation—my own and others'. The chapter investigates some turning points in (teacher) education, to explore how we have come to view education and educators the way we do. The chapter and the book focus particularly on circumstances in Australia, but also draw on findings and current trends internationally. This chapter and others in the first two sections hint at possible futures given current trends—a theme that will be reprised more boldly in the final section. The chapters and the book progressively draw together several threads pertinent to education and society. Arguably, this should not be the first chapter of the book. Proceed to chapter 3 first if you wish, which also sets out some historical context for where we are, educationally. Or keep going here.

> Claim *vb* 1. To demand as being due or as one's property;
>
> To assert as fact; maintain against denial
>
> HarperCollins, 1999, p. 296.

J. Buchanan, *Challenging the Deprofessionalisation of Teaching and Teachers*,
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Introduction: On Autonomy

> Knowledge-Based Education – We oppose the teaching of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) (values clarification), critical thinking skills and similar programs that…have the purpose of challenging the student's fixed beliefs and undermining parental authority.

The above quote comes not from a dystopian novel, a satire, mockumentary or dictatorship. If the Washington Post (Strauss, 2012) is correct, it is the education platform of a major political party in the US state of Texas. In the interests of full disclosure, my understanding is that it has since been removed from their platform. But it does offer a window into their thinking.

As a society, we have considerably extended the length of childhood, of dependence on adults, over the last century or so. Accordingly, young people are nowadays "adulting" (Bai, Cohen, Miyakawa, & Falkenberg, 2017; Hill, 2018) more slowly and reluctantly. According to Twenge and Park (2017), teenagers are currently adopting adult behaviours more slowly than did their parents and grandparents. They are less likely to socialise without their parents, earn a salary, drink alcohol or smoke, obtain a driver's licence or to have (unprotected) sex. Sasse (2017) refers to a "coming-of-age crisis", while Bai et al. (2017) posit that "humanity is experiencing an arrest within the trajectory of species' psychological development" (p. 12).

Possibly, the above changes should be unsurprising, and not altogether disconcerting. Today's young people are likely to live longer, so can afford the indulgence of deferring the onslaught of adulthood. In some instances, their parents might be materially more comfortable than those of a couple of generations ago, or perhaps better supported by the state, and with smaller families, obviating the necessity for a 15-year-old to leave school to become a breadwinner. Changes in educational norms have arguably been the most significant prolonger and preserver of childhood; members of the rising generation routinely conclude their full-time studies at the age of 20 or more. And some of the above behaviours, such as refraining from drinking and drink-driving, actually demonstrate advanced adulthood. Moreover, it is reasonable to argue that apprenticeship into a more complex world necessarily takes longer. And my grandparents probably saw my generation and me as cosseted. Compared to them, I was. More sinisterly, though, is this a world for which adults are increasingly ill-equipped to prepare children?

A related question for me is, are young people perhaps willing to trade off their freedom and autonomy, for the indulgence of being "minded"? If so, what might be the reaction of governments, all-too-happy to "protect" their constituents, as a means of purchasing power and possession over them? Might it be that the troubles of the world have prompted young people to retreat to the security of their cubby houses? As Print and Buchanan (2019, p. 90) ask, "have we terrorised or disenfranchised the revolutionary baby boomers' grandchildren into submission?".

A New Dark Ages?

In my moments of quiet desperation, I sometimes wonder, could we return to another dark ages? A time where, for example, democracy could be lost for a millennium? It's already happened once. A world where people could routinely abandon or ignore the quest for evidence-based truth?

I usually dismiss the idea as preposterous.[1]

And yet…

Is the veneer of civilisation wafer-thin? As in *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954)?

I'll be writing about some of these things in more detail in subsequent chapters, but the Internet, which brought about a wave of information, does not appear to have ushered in a wave of (critical) thinking. Has abundance of knowledge led us to treat it with contempt? The statistics on drug use in Australia as elsewhere are alarming, even though some may see my view on this as conservative or reactionary. There are other disturbing signs. We live in an age where science comes under attack. The scientific evidence of climate change and vaccinations, for example, is dismissed by some people who, in most cases, have little or no understanding thereof. This is also perhaps not new; the battle between science and superstition is an ongoing one, and new knowledge always vies for supremacy with old. We live in a society where people attack paramedics, the people who arrive to assist. There were no bollards that I can recall during my childhood, to prevent people from using a vehicle as a weapon to commit mass murders, typically targeting a particular ethnic or religious group. When I was a child, and even more recently when I was a schoolteacher, there was no "lock down" policy for a school, as there is today; it seemed unnecessary. Among my students' biggest concerns is managing their students' behaviour—but that perhaps has also always been so.

These and other signs are enough to make me believe Shakespeare's (1610)[2] warning, that "there are liars…enow [enough] to beat the honest men [*sic*] and hang them up". Giroux (2015) sketches a dystopian world, lying somewhere between Orwell's (1949) *1984* and Huxley's (1932) *Brave New World*, in which,

> the established democracies of the West were moving quickly toward a historical moment when they would willingly relinquish the noble promises and ideals of liberal democracy and enter that menacing space where totalitarianism perverts the modern ideals of justice, freedom, and political emancipation (p. 3).

Compliance and obedience have their place—and their price.

These and other competing imaginaries for the future will form a backdrop for discussions in this book.

It seems to me that in some aspects of life at least, things have regressed this century, in terms of surrendering some of our democracy-won freedoms. How has an educated society allowed this?

---

[1] A word whose etymology connotes "absurd, contrary to nature, inverted, perverted, in reverse order,' literally 'before-behind'". It was the pre-post bit that prompted me to check (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2019).

[2] Lady Macduff's son, *Macbeth*, Act 4, Scene 2.

If the future appears somewhat as a black hole, then education, like most things, fails to escape its gravity. Masters (2016, pp. 2–4) outlines five problems facing education in Australia currently. It makes for stark reading: Australian students' literacy and numeracy levels have been in decline in the twenty-first century; there is a growing disparity in the performance of schools, which is increasingly being linked to socioeconomic factors; large numbers of Australian students are failing to meet minimum standards; one in five children beginning school is developmentally delayed, and at risk of long-term low achievement, and a teaching is becoming less attractive for high-performing school leavers. The last of these is perhaps unsurprising in light of the previous four. With these circumstances, and the responsibilities of education, in mind, I will now turn to examine teaching, and its status as a profession.

Between Profanity and Provider: Is Teaching a Profession Anyway?

The first (hard copy—they're still out there) dictionary I consulted, placed "profession" and its cognates between "profanity" and "proffer". I'm sure that's not significant. Definitions of "profession" tend to include references to the necessity of "special training" (HarperCollins, 1999, p. 1233), "advanced learning" (Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 1153) or "knowledge of some department of learning or science" (Macquarie Dictionary Publishers, 2010, p. 996). Collins (p. 1233) adds "in the liberal arts or sciences".

In the context of medicine, which few of us would exclude from the professions, Cruess, Johnston and Cruess (2004, p. 74) offer a comprehensive definition of "profession" as follows:

> An occupation whose core element is work based upon the mastery of a complex body of knowledge and skills. It is a vocation in which knowledge of some department of science or learning or the practice of an art founded upon it is used in the service of others. Its members are governed by codes of ethics and profess a commitment to competence, integrity and morality, altruism, and the promotion of the public good within their domain. These commitments form the basis of a social contract between a profession and society, which in return grants the profession a monopoly over the use of its knowledge base, the right to considerable autonomy in practice and the privilege of self-regulation. Professions and their members are accountable to those served and to society.

I will devote some time to unstitching this definition, to explore how and where "teaching" appears to align or otherwise.

…mastery of a complex body of knowledge and skills…

The gender-constricted nature of "mastery" aside, managing teaching and learning is, most would agree, complex, and its application, necessarily skill-ful. It is arguably more complex, and therefore more demanding, than most outsiders understand, and this will become a point of discussion later in the chapter and the book. As Sinnema, Meyer and Aitken (2017) argue, "knowledge is central to the agentic positioning of teachers" (p. 19). I'll add here that learning, the by-product of teaching, is complex.

It equates to "knowing the contents of other minds", notes Scott, (2011, p. 155). Säljö (1996, p. 91) defines learning as "the appropriation and mastery [*sic*] of communicative (including conceptual) and technical tools that serve as meditational means in social practices". Tomlinson (2001, p. 4) defines learning as "how students go about making sense of ideas and information", while Metcalfe and Game (2006, p. 150) see learning as "a meeting with difference". Returning to the definition,

…knowledge of some department of science or learning or…

Effective teachers need to be in command of at least two bodies of knowledge—subject matter, and pedagogy, or "pedagogical content knowledge" (Shulman, 1986, p. 9). More recently, a third corpus of knowledge, the application of technologies to pedagogical ends, has been added to the mix, resulting in technology, pedagogy and content knowledge, or TPACK (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). This combination of content and pedagogical knowledge is arguably the preserve of teachers alone.

…the practice of an art founded upon it…

While this sentiment is music to my soul, it may also be the beginnings of a fracture line between education and medicine. To the extent that teaching has been excluded from the professions, it has been positioned as a craft or a trade. Surely, it is all of these. It is certainly art-full. Part of the reason for this fracturing might be as follows. Good teachers:

- Make it look easy—they can orchestrate classroom management, knowledge management and the delivery thereof seamlessly. Shulman (2004, p. 504) describes teaching as "perhaps the most complex, most challenging, and most demanding, subtle, nuanced, and frightening activity that our species has ever invented". More broadly, teaching is one of the most unpredictable and unscriptable pursuits there is. Labaree (2000, p. 228) described teaching as "an enormously difficult job that looks easy".
- Beyond making their work look easy, teachers render it invisible. They don't show their work. Much of the work of teachers, like that of magicians, is invisible to the untrained eye. One difference is that teachers' magic does not routinely rely on sleight of hand. This invisibility applies particularly to classroom management, including preventive strategies. I occasionally ask my student teachers to ask their supervising teacher while they are on in-school professional experience, "can you tell me something you believe you prevented today?" Even experienced teachers aren't always forthcoming with an answer. Some of their management work becomes habitual and subliminal even to them with time. Of course, a teacher's work isn't all preventive; it also consists in creating conditions for learners and learning to flourish.

I believe that the above two attributes of good teachers can mislead the public into believing the claim that "anyone can teach", and it can lead to an unfortunate belief that watching and copying teaching is sufficient. Lortie (1975, p. 61) disparaged this as an "apprenticeship of observation". Most of us, particularly in richer nations, have observed up to 13 years of school education. This, we can be lulled into believing, makes us experts. Bandura (1977) observed that "most human behavior is learned observation through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new

behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (p. 22). I believe that learning how to teach might be one exception to Bandura's "most behaviour" in the above quote, in that how to do it well cannot easily be inferred from mere observation. Forgive the personal reference here, but I've observed a lot of golf, and listened to a lot of singing. It hasn't worked.

A spotlight needs to be put onto the art, craft and science of teaching itself. Palmer (1988, p. 141) mused as follows:

> When I imagine the community of truth gathered around some great thing – from DNA to [Conrad's] *Heart of Darkness* to the French Revolution – I wonder: Could teachers gather around the great thing called "teaching and learning" and explore its mysteries with the same respect as we accord any subject worth knowing?

Palmer proceeded to observe, "we need to learn to do so, for such a gathering is one of the few means we have to become better teachers". If teachers struggle to render their teaching visible to their own trained eyes, how much more so do the uninitiated, or the uneducated-in-education fail to apprehend (in both senses of the word) good teaching?

Teaching is a trade inasmuch as it involves an exchange of goods. (I enjoy savouring the term "goods" in this context.) Not only is knowledge exchanged—sometimes for marks, which risks cheapening that knowledge—but more of that in a subsequent chapter; the (I concede, slippery) terms "common good" and "public good" also come to mind. Returning to the definition of profession by Cruess et al. (2004), it is.

…used in the service of others…

Service of others is most certainly true of teaching; 'a teacher is like a candle – in shedding light for others, it consumes itself' – attribution unknown.

…members are governed by codes of ethics…

Given that a schoolteacher operates *in loco parentis*, in the place of a parent, the ethical implications are obvious. Other ethical considerations of teaching with regard to, for example, curriculum design and delivery, and assessment, will be discussed in later chapters.

…profess a commitment to competence, integrity and morality, altruism, and the promotion of the public good within their domain…

These are among the words that can carry me through a hard or discouraging day's teaching—surely they are integral to the point and purpose of teaching. Teachers often rank highly in public perceptions of trustworthiness, or trust-worth. According to a USA Gallup poll (Brenan, 2018), trust in (secondary) teachers ranked more highly than that in the police and the clergy, for example, and only beneath that in the medical profession. Interestingly, nurses outranked doctors in this poll. Perhaps their relatively lower pay rate is seen as evidence of altruism. Teachers ranked similarly favourably, behind only the medical profession, in an Australian poll (Kimmorley, 2015). The word "profession" is applied unproblematically to teachers in such data collection exercises. I add here that the call for trust, appealing though it is, butts heads with my instinct to apply scepticism.

…members are accountable to those served and to society.

This is the closing excerpt of the quote above, but it's been placed here, since, while it's true enough, it seems to be the pivot point for "public ownership" of teaching, in a way that the public doesn't seem to feel it owns the medical profession. Consider the final two quotes from the definition:

…a monopoly over the use of its knowledge base…

Here is where teaching and medicine appear to fracture more brutally. This may not be a bad thing, in that teaching seeks, naturally enough, to educate, and, in so doing, to "share its wares". Nevertheless, the public and media seem reluctant to concede an exclusive body of professional, pedagogical knowledge to teachers. In this, the public is arguably unconsciously unskilled in the ways of teaching.

…the right to considerable autonomy in practice and the privilege[3] *of self-regulation…*

This, I imagine, looks totally alien to most teachers, particularly to newer members of the profession. The importance of an autonomy-oriented approach, and agency, in all learning, including teacher-learning, and the debilitating impact of their absence, will be discussed later in the book.

Above, I identified a fracture line starting at the third excerpt from the definition. In reality, though, the rift extends back to the very first excerpt. Most of us who are untrained medically would concede that we cannot do the work of a medical practitioner. Yet many of us, watching a skilled teacher, might be lulled into thinking "I can do that". That teaching has little if any mystique, is probably, on balance, positive, in that teaching, unlike magic, seeks to unlock, rather than create, mysteries. As asserted above, good teaching tends to render itself invisible to the untrained eye, resulting in the truism that "anyone can teach". It is perhaps against this truism that teaching and teachers need to defend themselves and provide counter-evidence.

Increasingly, children provide feedback on their teachers. It can be valuable for children to have input into how they would prefer their classes to operate, and this process can provide teachers with useful information on how their students have made sense of the learning activities. Nevertheless, I am left wondering what theories the children draw upon in compiling their feedback. Dewey, Vygotsky…? Lejonberg, Elstad, and Christophersen (2018, p. 283) note that some "have questioned students' ability to evaluate teaching". Yes. It is possible that children's feedback on their teachers resembles that given by learned peers in the profession. I confess to being torn here. The autonomy-oriented teacher in me wants to breathe life and fire into the expression of student views, as part of their "presence, participation, and power" (Cook-Sather, 2006, p. 363) in learning and living, and as a means of getting purchase on buy-in from students, to invest in their learning and its outcomes, to grow their "agency, belonging and competence". Nevertheless, children are in a limited position to offer evidence-based pedagogical advice to teachers, in my experience.

The other main definition of 'profession' in the dictionaries cited above and others is gerundive in nature—the act of professing something. In this, too, teachers are

[3] 'Privilege' basically means 'private legislation'—laws or rules that only apply, or only don't apply, to me, or to you.

professors. Speaking of professions (of faith), it is perhaps worth pondering the following quote:

> I swear…to hold my teacher…equal to my own parents.

It is an excerpt from the Hippocratic Oath, undertaken by doctors, in reference to those who teach them.

And before moving on from definitions, the word "pedagogue" derives from the Greek *paidagogos*—a slave (oh, the irony!) charged with guiding or leading the son of his master. It was all sons and masters back then.

If teaching is a profession, how did the profession fall so far from a widely accepted professional outward appearance? Much that is currently being done to education focuses on "performativity", which, according to Ball (2003), "produces opacity rather than transparency as individuals and organizations take ever greater care in the construction and maintenance of fabrications" (p. 215). When I think about education's current state, I find John Dewey's words of over a century ago, both prescient and chilling:

> The vice of externally imposed ends has deep roots. Teachers receive them from superior authorities; these authorities accept them from what is current in the community. The teachers impose them upon children. As a first consequence, the intelligence of the teacher is not free; it is confined to receiving the aims laid down from above. Too rarely is the individual teacher so free from the dictation of authoritative supervisor, textbook on methods, prescribed course of study, etc., that he [/she] can let his mind *come to close quarters with the pupil's mind and the subject matter*. This distrust of the teacher's experience is then reflected in lack of confidence in the responses of pupils. The latter receive their aims through a *double or treble external imposition*, and are constantly confused by the conflict between the aims which are natural to their own experience at the time and those in which they are taught to acquiesce. Until the democratic criterion of the intrinsic significance of every growing experience is recognized, we shall be intellectually confused by the demand for adaptation to external aims (1916, pp. 104–105, emphases added).

The first selected emphasis underscores the importance of a meeting between teacher, learner and subject matter, an important theme of this book. The consequences of external imposition, and of answering to several managers, the second emphasis, are also central to this book. If, as is reported, teachers tend to choose the profession for intrinsic and altruistic reasons (Heinz, 2015; Buchanan, 2009; OECD, 2005), why are they accorded so little trust? As Churchward and Willis (2019, p. 253) point out, "teacher educators [and teachers] can find it difficult to speak back to the crisis narrative fomented in media, political and public debate".

There are further signs that teaching is viewed as a generic ability, rather than as professional expertise. At university, students, including those not from education faculties, routinely score their teachers' performance. I am not convinced they are well placed to do so, but more about that in Chap. 9. If my doctor's other patients and I were to offer feedback on him (he's a he), it would be on his bedside manner—not that comes to my bed routinely. We would be unqualified to comment on his medical knowledge, or the reasons behind the diagnoses he makes. Similarly, if I'm judging art, I know what I like. But I don't know which way is up with most abstract art. And what makes me yet more of a Philistine is that I'm not convinced that *anyone*

knows with confidence which way is up—that's perhaps art's beauty? I'm certainly unqualified to judge art. Why, then, do we presume non-teachers can evaluate teachers in any more than in an "I-know-what-I-like" way?

This bit is mainly for non-teachers: If you reminisce on your "best teachers"—they were probably your favourite teachers, the teachers who "got you". I think that's a proxy for "respected you", believed in you and saw potential in you. As a result, they probably got the best out of you. There was probably some sort of bond or resonance between you and that teacher. They probably had a passion for their subject area, and ignited or further inflamed that passion in you. They helped you to catch the love they had for their subject area.

Does the above constitute pedagogy? Probably. Palmer (1998), above, observed that connecting with his students, and them to the subject matter, is key to teaching (see also Chap. 2). Hopefully, your favourite teachers also explained things clearly. But can you go to the heart of how they theorised their work (unless you, yourself are a teacher)?

Naturally, as part of the democracy of everything (and that's not meant to be as cynical as it sounds) giving students voice in what they dis/like in their teachers is a reasonable thing. But it arguably offers little helpful advice and may not be as benign as it seems on the surface, particularly when outsiders might see banks of such comments and make judgements summarily. It is also a further mechanism that feeds into the notion that all can teach. By contrast, when it comes to the medical profession, few would believe that "anyone can cure".

Popular movies probably don't assist in promoting the status of teaching, with their "accidental teacher" narratives. Think Whoopi Goldberg in Sister Act, or Jack Black in School of Rock—someone who "becomes" a teacher by virtue of being in a witness protection programme, or impersonating someone else. These movie themes derive from, and feed into, the 'anyone can teach' mentality. I remind myself that these are works of fiction—any resemblance to anyone living or dead is incidental. All their lines, and, more crucially, their students' lines, have been scripted in advance, and are known to the other players. These characters are not to be taken any more seriously than (other) superheroes. In defence of these movies, "anyone can teach" is probably not their central social premise—they are comedies. Perhaps worse still—I'm not sure—is the teacher-as-wounded-martyr—a teacher who lives their life vicariously through their students. Apart from that notion being somewhat creepy, the teacher needs to be able to bring the world to the student, and the student to the world, and needs to "live in the world" to do so.

A History of Teacher Education—Some Turning Points

Shulman (1986, p. 4) reports on "tests for teachers used in licensing candidates", from over a century earlier. He adds, "These tests show us how teacher knowledge was defined…we can compare those conceptions with those analogues today". While space in this chapter does not permit a comprehensive overview of the development

of teacher education, this section outlines some turning points in the preparation of teachers over time. Some of these turning points shed light on how we view (or fail or refuse to view) teachers, teaching and learning.

The credentialing of teachers has risen quite dramatically in the last half-century or so in developed nations, particularly with regard to teaching in the early years of school. In the 1970s in Australia, primary school teachers were typically 2-year trained following matriculation. Teacher education was conducted in Teachers' Colleges, or Colleges of Advanced Education, few of whose staff may have had doctorates. Such colleges were probably not sites of rigorous research, nor were they expected to be. More recently in Australia and similar countries, teacher education institutions have become, or been subsumed by, universities—usually in the form of a Faculty or School of Education, or—often more recently still—"Education and…", or "…. and Education", reflective, perhaps of a declining status of Education (and education?) in universities, even though universities are fundamentally sites of learning and teaching—even in the accretion and dissemination of their research. As Labaree (2018, p. 290) points out, in the USA, "since the 1970s, teacher education has been a wholly owned subsidiary of the university".

Taking a further step back in time, Labaree (2018, p. 291) observes that prior to the establishment of normal schools, which specialised in teacher education, in the mid-nineteenth century, "the assumption was that anyone who had reached a certain level of education could turn around and teach it". Familiarity with the subject matter was deemed sufficient unto teaching that material. In eighteenth-century France, a similar notion was proposed, that school teachers needed but one level of education higher than that of their students; a secondary qualification to teach in the primary years, for example. This is not uncommon in less developed nations today. The French established a new level of education provider, the école normale, to train secondary schoolteachers (Edwards, 1991). A similar assumption prevails in some universities today, in that the teacher is usually expected to have a qualification at least one level higher than that of their students—a Master's—to teach at undergraduate level, for example. Universities often require little in the way of a teaching qualification for staff outside their Education faculties or schools. As such, current approaches to education (outside Education) at university bear similarities to education more broadly in the 1800s and 1900s in developed nations.

The term "normal school" is curious, and appears, well, normalising in its intent. It might lead to teacher socialisation if not institutionalisation? Edwards (1991, p. 249), citing a Ph.D. thesis by Rexford (1936), reports that normal schools in Quebec "would train up young men to act as teachers and instructors". The system appears to model itself on theological training. Indeed, education, or at least literacy instruction, was the preserve of religious institutions for many centuries, perhaps not unlike madrassahs in some countries today.[4] A few words in the from Edwards' quote above are troubling: "train", "men" and "act"; the two troublesome verbs appear to suggest little in the

[4]My understanding, though, that "madrassah" in Arabic can refer to any place of learning, secular or otherwise. Entering the word "madrassah" in Arabic script, مدرسة as a search term, brought up, *inter alia*, a number of government schools in my local area of suburban Sydney.

way of theorising, diagnosing, questioning or problematising teaching and learning. "Train" suggests watching and mimicking, and while many teachers would readily agree that teaching entails acting, "act" here conjures up a relatively narrow skillset or range of competencies. Education appears to be a mechanism for maintaining the status quo—even to the extent of the "men" aspect. There appeared to be little hope of interrogating, critiquing and challenging, much less overturning, society.

The above definitions and snapshots from history suggest a default view of teaching as equating to telling. In some ways, it is curious and fortuitous that we have ever outgrown this view of something being learned, and of a person being learned—that is, of a person—teacher or learner—knowing stuff, and their capacity to recite it (to others). Of course, it is not only modern societies, or Western traditions, that have discovered deeper truths in pedagogy. Other traditions delightfully counter our predilection for individualism with approaches that seek oneness with others, or oneness with Place. Eastern (Buddhist, Confucian, Dao) philosophies seek interpersonal balance and harmony (e.g. Wang, 2019), while Indigenous traditions have applied spiritual and other worldviews to learning from Country (e.g. Country et al., 2015). And, of course, for all and any tradition, there is more wisdom yet to be yielded in the pursuit and service of learning.

The science of learning, and the business of devising practices and establishing circumstances in which this happens optimally—that is, pedagogy—is what establishes teaching as unique among the professions. Naturally enough, teaching also proceeds from command of a body of related content knowledge. At all stages, though—and perhaps particularly at elementary stages, the essence of teaching is that of facilitating (critical) understanding of concepts, potentially complex ones.

The above accounts provide some glimpses of what might be called "credentialling creep"—that is the raising of minimal credentials for teachers. This is, in one sense, the cause for celebration. It is a symptom of, and necessitated by, a more educated society, a society ever more concerned with education, and the means and the will to prioritise education. But this credentialing needs to be educative in its operation. It needs to adopt some of the best aspects of teaching and learning hinted at earlier in this chapter and elsewhere.

Teacher Attraction, Retention and Attrition

In terms of credentialing teachers, and protecting and defending the standing of teaching in the eyes of its members and the public, two competing narratives can be discerned: I refer to them here as the "security guard" and "security blanket" options. The security guard approach decries current shortfalls in teacher expertise, and demands ever-increasingly stringent entry and accreditation requirements, while the second calls for further support of teachers in their work. Each of these narratives arguably has some claim on truth, but for me, the overriding message of these two is: greater support for teachers. Even if one wishes to tread the security guard beat of stricter entry requirements, then an effective way to do so is to make the profession

more attractive. That will, in turn, make it more competitive, entry-wise, which will then make the profession more prestigious and exclusive. Caldwell (2010, p. 53) longs for a future in which "new world-class facilities have been an important factor in attracting able people to the profession". I'm inferring a very broad definition of "facilities" here, to encompass anyone and anything that facilitates learning. More specific ways of making the teaching profession more attractive are explored in the final section of this book.

Teacher improvement, that is, teacher learning, thrives when: there is trust; it is improvement-oriented (even if it might be, potentially, high-stakes); there is scope for error-making, and experimentation; there is a lower power difference between evaluator and evaluated. Proceeding from this, in the absence of trusting the system, the evaluator and the motives, one is unlikely to trust or embrace any advice on offer. There is possibly an optimal middle way, that I'll refer to as a Comfort Zone of Proximal Development (with apologies to Vygotsky 1978)[5]; a point where there is sufficient challenge and sufficient comfort, support and trust, for the teacher/learner to take steps forward, and maximise professional growth, rather than adopting a fight or flight response (obstruction and resistance, or resignation). Recognising the intellectual work and the research contribution of teachers would also be of value, and would raise the standing of the profession in the eyes of the public. Ways of doing this are explored in the final section of the book. One of the best ways of supporting students' learning is to affirm, support and defend their teachers in their work.

Attrition has other consequences. It drains the corporate knowledge and experience of a school staff, which adds to the burden of those charged with the responsibility of teacher professional development. One current characteristic of the teachforce is the flight of men from the profession, particularly from the early years of schooling. McGrath and Van Bergen (2017) tracked the proportion of male teachers in Australian schools over a half-century, from 1965 to 2016. From these figures, they extrapolated a vanishing point for male teachers in another half-century, by 2067. It is possible that we are degrading the environment and habitat for all teachers, putting in jeopardy their capacity to thrive.

The relationship between teacher, learner and the to-be-learnt, Palmer's (1998) interconnection between teacher, learner and subject matter, is a potentially volatile one. Much learning, much of it that is significant anyway, is likely to challenge and seek to dethrone existing knowledge and views. Our attempts to keep this privileging of old knowledge in check, like an approach to dieting, needs to be unrelenting. Furthermore, there is a knowledge and power imbalance in the classroom (even though the Internet and other factors have lessened this imbalance). This may well offend the ego of the learner. In response to a learner's defence, a teacher, too, may become defensive. Teachers can become habituated into being the only ones in the room with knowledge worthy of considering as such. This can have several problems for teacher and, indirectly, for the learner: arrogance and inflexibility among them. Of

[5] Vygotsky (1978) explained the ZPG as follows: "The Zone of Proximal Development describes those functions that have not yet matured, but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow, but are currently in an embryonic state".

course, this doesn't mean a call to cognitive anarchy—anything goes; "the collapse of open-mindedness into anarchy" (Sinnema et al., 2017). All claims need to be subjected to scrutiny and supported by evidence, and, in turn, all evidence needs to be scrutinised for its reliability and precision. "It's complicated", as the saying goes.

I set out hereunder a precis for the remaining chapters of this book. They are repeated at the beginning of each chapter, so disregard them here if you choose.

The book comprises 12 chapters, in three sections.

Chapter 2 The Purpose of Education, and of Teachers

This chapter sets out some of the nobler aims of teaching. It is anticipated that the chapter may provide inspiration to aspirant teachers, and reinvigoration to current teachers, about education, its contributions and its capacity for value-adding to individuals' lives—including teachers themselves—and to the societies they serve. It intertwines discussions of the demands of teaching, and on teachers, and teacher morale and retention/attrition, informed by related literature. More specifically, it introduces some ways in which teacher education authorities have set out to ensure that teachers and aspirant teachers embody qualities commensurate with the professional and personal demands assumed of them, and some potential-associated pitfalls. It includes some autobiographical illustrations, and some personal testimonials (to which the reader might bring their own) illustrating the benefits of education, direct and indirect. The chapter presents implications for teacher education and teacher professional development.

Chapter 3 (Why) Are We Falling Behind and (Why) Does it Matter?

This chapter discusses the dynamic that drives many of the issues that are discussed in subsequent chapters: the perception and/or reality that Australian students are falling behind their international peers. This is leading to outcomes such as greater accountability from teachers and teacher educators, pressure for more content to be added to the curriculum. The chapter investigates to what extent and how current approaches are remedying the problem of positioning on international league tables. The chapter also visits some possible causes of less-than-optimal performance among Australian students at school, and implications of this for teachers' day-to-day work.

Section 2: The "Players"

This section examines, in turn, some of the major forces shaping education, and their capacity for good or ill. These include paperwork and reporting; the foregrounding of basic skills and standardisation in teaching, among other issues, as indicated by the chapter headings.

Chapter 4 "If I Could Just Teach"

This chapter explores how various pressures, such as the international competitions referred to above, are leading to onerous reporting and accountability, which distract teachers from the core business of teaching, and may be sapping them of the time, energy, creativity, agency and will essential for good teaching. The chapter examines the proliferating complexity of being a learner and teacher in the twenty-first century, and at concomitant cognitive and emotional load for teachers. It also investigates other issues such as student resistance to learning, and their possible links to teacher attrition and burnout. It discusses teachers' experiences against a framework of demands made on, and support offered to, the teacher. This chapter

also introduces some of the above issues, and others affecting teachers, as a means of setting the scene for the chapters that follow in this section.

Chapter 5 Basic, Basal Skills and Their Effects on Higher Order Thinking

This chapter investigates the impact of NAPLAN (Australia's Literacy and Numeracy testing regime), as well as other forms of (basic skills) testing, both in terms of literacy and numeracy standards, and for the profession more broadly. It also examines the impact of the My School website, with regard to school branding and reputation, and in/consistencies between intended and actual outcomes thereof. The chapter compares what appears to be a rather dour preoccupation with testing basic skills, with some of the lofty aspirations contained in documents such as the Melbourne Declaration.

Chapter 6 The Pressures on, and of, Curriculum

This chapter follows on logically from the previous one, in that increasingly crowded curricula are symptomatic of concerns about "falling behind". The chapter explores some of the pressures shaping curriculum design—usually in the direction of cramming more content into a course of study. This is likely to make the teaching and learning experience less satisfying, and probably less satisfactory, for both teachers and learners. The chapter incorporates a series of continua, devised by the author, which might provide a backdrop for curriculum development. Alternatives or complements to current subject-based curricula will also be explored.

Chapter 7 The Standardisation of Teaching

The development of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers presents an opportune moment to investigate and evaluate such standards, the nature of standards-based accreditation, and the impact of standardisation on pedagogy, and on a profession where one size doesn't fit all. This chapter investigates notions of "quality teaching" and forming a "quality teacher". The chapter also holds up to the light the concept of a standard as a measure against which others can be judged, and the basis on which a standard assumes and accretes authority and credibility, and explores the extent to which teachers serve standards or vice versa. The study focuses on Australia's Graduate Level standards in particular. The chapter builds on an existing Springer book chapter, (Buchanan, 2017), which critiqued standards and standardisation. In particular, the chapter will include a discussion of recent research on Teaching Performance Assessments, which are linked to the Standards, and the impact these are having and are likely to have on teaching and on the profession, including initial teacher education providers.

Chapter 8 Teacher Professional Assessment and Teacher Professional Development

This chapter focuses on the Teaching Professional Assessment, the newly introduced capstone assessment task for all graduating pre-service teachers in Australia, and the nexus between pre-service and in-service. The chapter considers the backwash effect of the TPA in pre-service teacher education. It also considers the nature of in-service teacher professional development. The chapter reports on the potential of, and weaknesses of, the TPA, emerging from preliminary research, and will propose suggestions for modification accordingly. It discusses the TPA and TPD in the context of an issue central to the teaching profession: assessment.

Chapter 9 Student Evaluation as a Driver of Education Delivery

This chapter focuses mainly on teacher education, where student feedback surveys have routinely been conducted for many years. It looks at how these are contributing to the shaping of teaching and learning, and some associated potential pitfalls. In doing so, it examines the commonly held notion among non-educators that everyone is an expert in education, as we're all experienced it. The chapter sets out some alternative and supplementary means of assessing the quality of teaching and learning more comprehensively. The chapter deals with key concepts of student satisfaction, teacher evaluation, teacher quality and the complexity of teaching. This has implications beyond teacher education, for the evaluation of all teaching and learning.

Chapter 10 Digital Devices, Online Learning and All That: How They Are Shaping Education

Mobile devices can arguably deliver for and deliver from (worthwhile) learning. This discursive chapter examines current literature regarding the problems and prospects with regard to the use of mobile devices in classrooms, and arguments for and against their use at school, and the kinds of uses they are being, and might be, put to. The chapter also discusses the contribution of digital technologies to conforming and potentially constraining teachers. The chapter will also reprise in brief a discussion of student behaviour more generally, and the respect accorded, or not, to teachers, from students and parents. The chapter explores this in light of recent homeschooling, necessitated by Covid-19, and the newfound respect this has garnered for teachers from parents.

Section 3 Playing Our Professional Part (or, "It's Play-Back Time!")

This section explores ways forward to reclaim the profession for those who profess it—teachers. Chapter 11 eyes possible futures, while Chap. 12 sets out some possible courses of action to bring about preferred futures for the profession and the generation, and the planet, it serves.

Chapter 11 Which Future? A Note of Hope?

This chapter explores current and potential developments in education that have the potential to invigorate it, and teachers, and to revolutionise the world. It examines these current trends in terms of the futures they may create or contribute to. It touches on some of the dangers—and benefits—of an educated and informed, articulate and fired up caucus of young learners. The chapter then showcases some of the creative and innovative practices evident in education today. The chapter concludes with an exhortation for teachers to reassert their professionalism, as those who know teaching, and their students, best.

Chapter 12 Recommendations: What We Know and What We Can Do.

This chapter is a call to action, and outlines some of the practical measures that teachers can undertake to reclaim their profession and its standing. In short, it sets forth how teachers can leverage their own skills and knowledge about teaching and learning, and apply these to the re-education of others, not just their students.

There are also themes, or hypotheses, that inform and are informed by the processes of investigation for this book. They emerge in various chapters, and will be reprised more specifically in the second-last chapter. These are.

- Teaching is unrelentingly complex (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Mayer et al., 2017), and teachers work amidst multiple layers of complexity, ambiguity and unpredictability.
- Not everyone can teach. That is, not everyone can do the work of a teacher.
- All education should be agency- and autonomy-oriented. Accordingly, the professional development of teachers, in all its guises, should be similarly oriented.
- Teachers are, and should be helped to be, experts at assessment and discernment. This expertise in discernment has the capacity to address many problems facing education. The expertise should be given opportunity to flourish, and teachers should be accorded trust, with support from expert others, to develop responses to local challenges.
- The unpleasant nature of something, such as testing, should not be sufficient in itself to cause its abandonment. Each initiative should be retained, modified or discarded on its own de/merits. There are numerous unpleasant life experiences, such as vaccinations, colonoscopies and dental work. Their unpleasantness does not merit their abandonment. New experiences typically instil some fear.
- The above notwithstanding, there are risks associated with high-stakes testing (of teachers and students). It risks constricting or distorting a teacher's, a school's or an education system's repertoire, as well as the courage to be frank, and to explore, so necessary for learning.
- The quest for meaning, including prediction—we are all eager, to the point of distraction if not desperation, to establish meaning, find patterns and predict. No doubt the ability to predict has served as a useful evolutionary and survival skill. Despite this, humans are not necessarily highly adept at judging and predicting. Our keenness to predict can lead us into all manner of superstition. It always rains on my golf day. Yours too? It can't be just coincidence, then.
- Linked to the above, we also seek tidiness and resolution, and to be in control. But this can lead to a safe, over-simplistic view of and outlook on the world. Biesta (2009, p. 36) observes that educational strategies that "provide opportunities for students to explore their own ways of thinking, doing and being" may prove superior to "those that effectively proceed to a pre-specified end". This applies, too, to teacher-learning.
- Some of the most productive learning emerges from the potentially confronting business of self-analysis and reflection. This can occur most productively when faced with those different from me. Watching-and-copying teaching is unlikely to incite reflection.

In short, teaching and learning, particularly given their complexity, volatility and capacity to confront, flourish best in a climate of trust and mutual respect.

Concluding Thoughts

This year or perhaps last, we met our first intake of pre-service teacher students who were born after the events of 11 September 2001. For some time, though, we've had incoming students who have grown up in the shadow of those events. Not just terrorism, but stranger danger, cyberdangers and the like cast their shadow over our young people. Even nature seems to be conspiring against us, with the dangers from sun exposure and global warming (although nature is victim rather than perpetrator of global warming). I believe it's an anxious time to be a parent, and to be a child. These dynamics may interfere with the boldness and creativity of teaching at several levels, and may compound the instinctive cautiousness of some. Students, parents, teachers, school executive, bureaucrats and politicians may all be hesitant to take risks, particularly if the stakes are high. How mightily this stumbles in the face of Australia's education blueprint document, the "Melbourne Declaration" (MCEETYA, 2008), that "all young Australians become…confident and creative individuals".

> professional foul *n* … a deliberate foul committed as a last-ditch tactic to prevent an opponent from scoring (HarperCollins, 1999, p. 1233).

The above entry caught my eye while I was consulting "profession" in the dictionary. It would be unfair to accuse educrats and others of committing professional fouls against teaching, to suggest that they are wilfully and knowingly scoring own goals. Yet, the impact of some of their behaviours may have similar effects. Giroux (2015, p. 14) refers to "the push toward pedagogical ignorance and the assault on reason". I'm not going out of my way to find adversaries here, but I do need to say some things that may prove unpalatable to some sectors. Anything that is toxic to the creativity, risk-taking and craft of teaching needs to be (re-)considered for its potential to harm and stunt the profession. Such themes are explored in this book.

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Chapter 2
The Purpose of Education, and of Teachers

Outline

This chapter sets out some of the nobler aims of teaching. It is anticipated that the chapter may provide inspiration to aspirant teachers, and reinvigoration to current teachers, about education, its contributions and its capacity for value-adding to individuals' lives—including teachers themselves—and to the societies they serve. It intertwines discussions of the demands of teaching, and on teachers, and teacher morale and retention/attrition, informed by related literature. More specifically, it introduces some ways in which teacher education authorities have set out to ensure that teachers and aspirant teachers embody qualities commensurate with the professional and personal demands assumed of them, and some potential-associated pitfalls. It includes some autobiographical illustrations and some personal testimonials (to which the reader might bring their own) illustrating the benefits of education, direct and indirect. The chapter presents implications for teacher education and teacher professional development.

> Proclaim *vb* 1 to announce publicly; declare
>
> 3 to praise or extol
>
> HarperCollins 1999, p. 1232

Think back to the note in Chap. 1, the quote attributed to Degas, about painting only being difficult for those who know how.

Picture This

Modern art has lost control, has lost its way, has lost its meaning. As a result, new rules have been instituted to standardise artworks:

All art must demonstrably resemble what it purports to represent. If I can't recognise it, and more seriously, if I don't know which way is up, then what is the point of it? Similarly, all colours must be representative of what they portray. Roses, for example, are to be rendered red. Numbers will be assigned to the permissible colours. These colours will be strictly adhered to. To avoid confusion, there will be one, standard, skin tone. Don't go outside the lines.

J. Buchanan, *Challenging the Deprofessionalisation of Teaching and Teachers*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-8538-8_2

The above is, I trust, risible in theory, and, in parts at least, offensive were it to be implemented. And yet, as with other aspects of education, we often set out to standardise teachers and teaching. This, and the associated possibilities of, and limitations placed on, teaching, will form the backdrop for some of the discussion in this and subsequent chapters. If my education is a leading-out where is it leading me (from and to)?

Introduction

You may have heard the one about the golfer who steps up to the tee, unwraps a brand new golf ball, hits it and slices it into the forest, never to be seen again. He[1] then unwraps another brand new ball, then hooks it into the lake. At this stage, a player behind him asks "why don't you use old golf balls?" He responds, "I've never owned one".

I sometimes wonder if that's the way we treat teachers—churn'em out, burn'em out and turn'em out (into another profession). Of course, that's an exaggeration—many teachers enjoy varying levels of professional satisfaction. But many others do not, and many don't stay the course, so to speak. I hope to explore some of the causes of this dissatisfaction, and possible responses, in this chapter and elsewhere in the book.

Attrition from the teaching workforce is a considerable problem, and a significant symptom of other problems. Sutcher et al. (2016) cite an annual attrition rate among teachers of eight per cent in the US, and rates are high elsewhere in the developed world (Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, Burke, & Louviere, 2013). Attrition is almost certainly a result, at least in part, of dissatisfaction or demoralisation, and may well, in turn, feed into the demoralisation of, and cynicism among, school students and their communities. In some ways, attrition from the teaching workforce should not be surprising, given that we appear to accept career change as the norm of late. On the other hand, job mobility means that teaching needs to retain any competitive advantage it might have vis-à-vis other professions, in terms of salary, workload and demands, respect/prestige and working conditions.

The previous chapter discussed what makes a profession, and, it is hoped, established that teaching qualifies as such. This chapter will pursue the questions of what is education, and what it is for. As part of that question, it will explore the role that teachers play in providing a good education. A premise or problematic that arose implicitly from Chap. 1, and becomes more explicit in this chapter, is.

If teaching is as complex as this, good teachers must be hard to find, or to make, and then easily lost to other professions.

[1] Or she.

What Good is an Education?

It is a grand thing that education sets out to achieve. In 1900, Dewey observed,

> What the best and wisest parent wants for his[2] own child, that must the [global?] community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy. All that society has accomplished for itself it put, through the agency of the school, at the disposal of its future members. All its better thoughts of itself it hopes to realize through the new possibilities thus opened to its future self (p. 19).

School is how society presents itself to our young. I've sometimes asked undergraduate classes of mine, and other groups in more or less formal or informal situations, "do you ever wish you were less educated than you are?" Perhaps this reflects the circles I mix in, but the answer is usually a resounding "no", or a resounding silence. One time a 9-year-old kid put up his hand in response to the question and said, "yeah, I'll be right thanks". When the rest of the group laughed (with him, not at him, I think) he also laughed. I didn't quite catch what he then said, but he made a gesture as if to wave away the comment, suggesting "just kidding". In some ways, I was probably that kid several decades earlier. I didn't necessarily feel the love during a postprandial double maths period. I was fortunate to be in that place, even though it didn't feel particularly privileged at the time. Apologies to the maths teachers I've just offended and off-sided above—yes, I know, you've suffered enough.

I hope you'll forgive a personal anecdote, or triptych, here (or at least that you'll ignore it and resume reading at the next section—but the illustrations do have some bearing on the discussion at hand).

Three Personal Snapshots

Parker Palmer (1998) wrote about the courage to teach. I'm not sure that teaching was a courageous, much less noble, career choice for me in the first instance. It was perhaps the only career that I felt I had observed for long enough to claim that I knew how to do it. I was wrong, of course; I knew nothing about teaching. The job seemed much less foreign, unfamiliar and daunting than working on the 27th floor of a downtown office building, doing, or pretending to busy myself with, I didn't know what, and hoping not to be exposed as knowing nothing. I still remember walking into my first classroom at university. There were seats arranged not unlike at my school, in rows – it was back in the day - and a teacher's desk and chalkboard (how quaint) at the front. The momentary feeling of disappointment at the prospect of 'more of the same' was more than compensated by the comforting feeling of familiarity; 'I think I know how to do this'.

Going back a step further, I certainly wasn't a stellar student at school. I'm forever grateful, though, that education didn't spit me out, but gave me second and subsequent chances, as I gained the wherewithal to appreciate, then love it, and to leverage it better for my good and, hopefully, others'. I'm perhaps sounding somewhat zealous and evangelical there, having personified if not deified Education. As I said above, though, I usually find others in agreement as they look back on their own lives and reflect on the education they've had. Few people I know seem to see their education as burdensome – even though education does indeed bear with it a burden.

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[2] I have no reason to believe that mothers, any less than fathers, want what is best for their children, even though some parents appear to favour their sons over their daughters, education-wise.

Going back further again, in kindergarten (the first of the compulsory years of education where I went to school), we occasionally used to sing. If we were well behaved – it didn't often happen to me; did I mention my stellar school career? – we were invited to conduct the singing. 'Conducting' meant waving your hands in a shallow 'w' fashion, potentially in synch with the piano, and possibly in time with one or two of the singers. Possibly. Some time soon afterward I saw a band with a conductor. This person was paid - *paid* – to *conduct*. This was another job I knew how to do.

The third snapshot above, trivial and superficial though it is, illustrates—perhaps because of its triviality and superficiality—how outsiders might view teaching; a view which dangerously underestimates and seriously under-problematises the complexity of teaching and learning. The view is not dissimilar to the prevailing one for much of human history (see Chap. 1) that teaching comprises knowing then telling, then, perhaps—not always—checking that the learner can parrot what you told them. As I disclosed in the first snapshot, I thought that, through observing, I knew how to teach. I suspect that my school friends who didn't proceed into teaching, still nurse the pretence that they understand what teaching is about, I can only assume, falsely.

The Twenty-First Century School and Its Staff: Qualities Required of Teachers

Global trends in the workforce, as well as life's increasing complexity, have resulted in an increasing demand on the education sector and, in particular, schools and their teachers, to equip students with life and career skills for their beyond-school worlds, prompting the need for highly qualified teachers to meet this demand. Employers require the future workforce to demonstrate skills in, *inter alia*, critical thinking, collaboration and enterprise, which has prompted local and national education authorities to consider mandating these types of skills in student syllabus documents.

To date, schools have tended to concentrate on knowledge, and knowledge about—that is, on "knowing stuff". Current and future work and social circumstances are more likely to demand knowing how to access and evaluate knowledge with regard to aspects such as bias, authenticity and the evidence base for any claims made; in short, to be "data literate" (Mandinach & Gummer, 2016). The workplace is probably also increasingly looking for skills in problem-solving, teamwork, interpersonal skills and the like. The knowledge economy is transmuting into the know-how economy. This change probably makes it even harder to define the qualities that indwell a successful school graduate, or an effective teacher. Stronge (2018, p. 4) claims with some confidence, "in addition to being uncertain how to define effectiveness, we will vacillate on just how to refer to successful teachers". Snyder (2009, p. 7) draws attention to the difficulty in defining good teaching, observing that some have argued that "the 'it' of teaching cannot be defined with sufficient clarity to be assessed".

Various researchers and organisations have enumerated the skills and attributes they see as most valuable in schools and their staff. Three key ingredients of a twenty-first-century school, according to the OECD (2019, p. 9), are "teachers who are *confident* in their ability to teach, a willingness to *innovate*, and strong school leaders who establish the conditions in their schools that enable the former two ingredients to flourish" (emphases added). The importance of good leadership is explicit here. More specifically, the OECD report advocates positive relationships, collaboration, release time for planning and, particularly, a role for teachers in decision-making.

The qualities and attributes required of teachers are myriad. Thompson (2018) lists 20 qualities of effective teachers, most of them amalgams of qualities (pp. 37–38). These include respect and patience, being calm and approachable, clarity of instruction, maintaining high expectations of themselves and their students, passion for teaching, positivity, energy and spirit, building trust, amid realistic and consistent behaviour management, ability to promote lively discussion to advance student learning, explaining in diverse ways to meet all students' needs and presentation of difficult topics in such a way as to promote self-inquiry and self-reflection, humour. Thompson speaks of "*growing* effective teachers" (p. 35, emphasis added)—an apt, nurture-some metaphor. More difficult to discern, though, is the extent to which some of these attributes can be taught or cultured, if they are not pre-indwelling (prospective) teachers.

The NSW Department of Education (2017, p. 3) cites nine key twenty-first-century skills: critical thinking, creativity, metacognition, problem-solving, collaboration, motivation, self-efficacy, conscientiousness and grit or perseverance. I presume that there is no inherent assumption here that such skills or attributes were unimportant in previous centuries. On the one hand, this raises a valid question: what really is new in the twenty-first century (given that we're now about a fifth of the way though it at the time of writing)? In response, however, the "know-how economy", above, could be cited as an important game changer in recent times. In former times, there were relatively few sources of information available, and publication processes provided some assurance (but no guarantee) of the quality and precision of the information. It is likely that any current lists of essential twenty-first-century skills may appear quaint by the close of the century, such is the pace of change. This is not to be critical of the lists or the aims in compiling them. They can serve as helpful signposts.

Mohamed, Valcke and De Wever (2016) synthesised teacher competency frameworks internationally into the following 17, in six domains. They refer to these as International Teacher Competencies (ITCs). The list is lengthy, but is worthy of inclusion. The competencies are paraphrased here.

Knowledge and instructional expertise

Curriculum and subject matter knowledge;
Knowledge of the dis/advantages of pedagogical models;
Instructional strategies and planning;
Using teaching materials to effectively facilitate student learning;
Commitment to promote learning for all students;

Monitoring and evaluation of student learning and development and assessment.

Organisation/management—pedagogical expertise

Management of students and the learning environment and
Provision of quality co-curricular activities.

Diversity

Knowledge of diverse students and special needs, and appropriate learning approaches and
Adapting teaching to the needs and strengths of all learners.

Partnering with parents, colleagues and the community

Effective collegial collaboration and partnership with parents and community organisations.

Professional development attitude

Demonstration of good written and oral communication, and negotiating skills;
Professional growth and development;
Resilience and adaptability;
Self-efficacy reflection, metacognition, interpersonal skills and
Willingness to experiment with new ideas and strategies.

Ethical stand

Personal integrity, enacting statutory responsibilities.

While this list might just as appropriately be placed in Chap. 7, on teacher standards, it is included here as an illustration of the complexity of teaching and the demands made of teachers.

A Personal Vignette 'Education for the 21st Century' makes me reflect, how (if at all) did my education in the 1960s and '70s prepare me for the world of today, about half a century later. In terms of providing me with the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, I think my school performed quite admirably. If anything, it may have overachieved on these two fundamentals. I seem to recall pages and pages of addition and subtraction, and thinking at the time – 'I know this'. I now recognise, though, the value of constant practice, and that lack of practice in mental arithmetic has made me rusty, and yet more dependent on calculators – the initial cause of my rustiness. Moreover, my knowledge of grammar gives me a sense of confidence and control when negotiating with the language and with its other users. In terms of piquing my curiosity and nurturing my instincts for questioning and critiquing, I think my schooling performed less well. It tended to tell me how the world was, and how it had been, and that's that. Then again, my education may have been a case of pearls before swine – I simply wasn't ripe at the time to identify, much less question, my and others' assumptions and blindspots, much less still the

privileged shelf-place I occupied globally at my humble-looking state school. My schooling certainly couldn't have been expected to predict, much less prepare us all for, the knowledge-world and know-how (and know-why/not) mirror-maze of a world I try to navigate today.[3] And yet, we are asking this of today's schools, in a context of much more accelerated current and anticipated change. This is perhaps why, despite a rhetoric of 21st Century skills and the like, schools and systems tend to cleave still to basic skills. They're safer, more familiar, more measurable terrain (see Alismail & McGuire, 2015).

Stronge (2018) outlines six domains in which teachers need to demonstrate and exercise excellence. These comprise: professional knowledge; instructional planning; instructional delivery; assessment; learning environment, and; professionalism, (p. 12). Stronge identifies precipitates of each, as follows:

- Professional knowledge–knowledge; verbal ability; preparation and certification; and experience (p. 15);
- Instructional planning: three key questions concerning what to teach, and how to teach it, and how to know if students have learnt it; focusing on instruction; optimising instructional time; setting learning objectives, and; using student learning data (p. 54);
- Instructional delivery: using a variety of instructional strategies; differentiating instruction; communicating high expectations; promoting complex and higher-order thinking; using high-quality questioning, and; supporting student engagement in learning (p. 92);
- Assessment: designing assessments; using assessment data; encouraging student self-assessment; providing meaningful feedback, and; homework (p. 135);
- [Developing and maintaining a] learning environment: classroom management; elements of organization; disciplining students, and a; positive and supportive learning environment (p. 179);
- Professionalism: caring; fairness and respect; interactions with students; enthusiasm and motivation to learn; attitude toward teaching; reflective practice, and; collaboration and communication (p. 213). Some of the preceding, such as homework, appear to me as less crucial to good teaching than others—although I concede that Stronge highlights parental partnership in homework and support for their children's learning. Suffice it to say that this presents a complex and demanding assemblage of skills, attributes and qualities on the part of an effective teacher.

Other researchers (e.g. Soulé & Warrick, 2015) refer to the four Cs: creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking Van Laar, van Deursen, van Dijk and de Haan (2018) confined their systematic literature review to twenty-first-century digital skills, and distilled the following six: information, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving. Their study was not teacher-specific; instead, it referred to all professions for which teachers prepare students. Arguably, many of their skills correspond to the Australian Curriculum's general

[3] Nevertheless, I recall having to learn the vocative case of the noun "Jupiter" in Latin, so they must have anticipated interplanetary travel?

capabilities such as critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability and, of course, ICT capability (Australian Curriculum, n.d.). Some researchers (e.g. Eguchi, 2016; Qian & Clark, 2016) have coalesced some of these skills under the heading of game-based learning, whether formal or informal.

More broadly, modes of information transmission have become more varied, with the introduction of digital and virtual technologies. Kelentrić, Helland and Arstorp (2018) have developed a Professional Digital Competence Framework for teachers, with seven components, while the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (Redecker, 2017) comprises a total of 22 digital competencies within six areas in digital literacy education. These and other frameworks are discussed in further detail in Chap. 10. Suffice it to say, however, that the introduction of newer technologies has made education, as well as classroom management and on-task behaviour, more complex for teachers.

Significantly, many of the above qualities are personal rather than exclusively professional in nature; "teacher-as-person" skills, as Stronge (2018, p. 212) coins them. These include flexibility and adaptability, care and compassion, high expectations, and a willingness to search for what works. Apart from equipping teachers well for their work, such attributes are worthy of emulation by their students. They are, however, very difficult to assess and, possibly, quite difficult to culture or synthesise.

Of course, while dealing with all the above, teachers implement a curriculum, or curricula. Given current trends, demands and complexities, a siloed, subject-knowledge-based curriculum is coming under increasing scrutiny, criticism and pressure, and may need to be supplemented, if not supplanted, by other curricular structures. It may need supplementing with cross-disciplinary or transdisciplinary structures, incorporating, for example, problem-based learning, service learning or project learning, to reflect the challenges that face the workplace, the people and the planet. Curriculum will be discussed in more detail in Chap. 5.

As I cast my eye back over the above expectations, it comes as no surprise that teachers may be weary after maintaining all the above, sometimes with little support or affirmation, and in the face of occasional if not unrelenting indifference, ingratitude or resistance. I reflect back on my 5-year-old or 15-year-old self, and dealing with 25 of that for 40 years.

Implications for Teacher Retention and Morale

If whitegoods or other appliances routinely ceased working (effectively) after about 5 years, or sometimes after 6 months, we would probably place the blame on built-in obsolescence, or a mix of abuse and neglect. Teachers take more time and money to produce than whitegoods, even if you experiment with fast, cheap teacher-production methods. As with whitegoods, the disposal of teachers also has inherent problems. Moreover, unlike whitegoods, teachers are sentient, adding to the cost of their disposal. Discuss.

"It was an ordinary moment, the moment I knew I was finished; that I knew I had to walk away. A Thursday afternoon", recounts Stroud (2018, p. 325). The lead-up to this turning away from teaching makes for less cheery reading, however. Her story might be more easily dismissed were it less common. When Stroud tendered her letter of resignation, her principal responded "I think I might be next" (p. 331). Stroud concludes (p. 332) "I don't believe that I left teaching. Teaching left me". Numbers of (ex-)teachers refer to the job being different from what they had prepared for. There are no doubt implications here for teacher education institutions. But it does underscore the premise that teaching, once you start, is more complicated than it looks from a spectator's vantage point. The exhilaration of a teaching appointment can all-too-rapidly morph into a disappointment (Buchanan, 2011). Bahr and Ferreira (2018) outline seven reasons for teaching's fading beauty: fixation on competency, obsession with standardised testing, removal of autonomy, workload, poor public image, disdain for teachers and poor salaries.

Means of teacher production (pre-service education) will be discussed in subsequent chapters. To extend the whitegoods/appliances analogy above, though, there are reasons to applaud efforts by industry bodies to tighten entry into teacher education, to ensure the best raw materials. Similarly, quality-controlling the production process, in this case teacher education, has a crucial role to play in ensuring the highest quality finished product, even though a teacher is never "finished", except, perhaps in the sense that Stroud (2018), above, was, one Thursday; there is a risk, if the process of quality assurance and product testing becomes overly rigorous and Darwinian that it might actually finish, or destroy, the teacher in the process. Like any sophisticated product, teachers can sustain damage easily. Moreover, it is much more difficult to identify and define, much less imbue, the qualities of an effective teacher, making the quality assurance process more evasive and troublesome. I also acknowledge the awkwardness of "whitegoods", given the documented whiteness of the teacher profession vis-à-vis the students they teach (e.g. Sleeter, 2016, 2017; Walton et al., 2018). I've perhaps wrung out the analogy about as far as possible.

Schools in rural, regional and remote areas, lower socioeconomic communities, and in some teaching areas, such as maths and science, are particularly challenged with significant difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified teachers. These schools are the most difficult to staff for a number of reasons—they can be the most challenging postings for teachers, both professionally and personally. I observe with some sadness that beginning teachers—those with the least experience—are more likely to find themselves teaching in such schools, possibly replacing a recently departed, possibly scorch-marked, beginning teacher. This appears to be a wicked problem with no obvious solution in sight, and a dynamic that generates disillusionment—disillusionment with the profession by the teacher, and disillusionment with the "blow-in" teacher by the students and the community. For such schools and communities, this dynamic risks perpetuating a cycle of short-term deployment of inexperienced teachers, understandably generating cynicism among these schools' students and communities. For the teachers concerned, it risks exacerbating disillusionment with the profession and its employing bodies, and contributing to teacher attrition. In such circumstances and elsewhere, gifted and talented students may

remain unidentified and their needs unmet. It would be regrettable if we required such students to "act out" before granting them attention.

The Complexity of Teaching

Dateline: 1997, New York. A world chess champion, Garry Kasparov, is beaten at chess for the first time by a computer, Deep Blue.

I occasionally muse about an automaton trying to teach Vicky Pollard a thing or two. Vicky Pollard is a recalcitrant school student character in a British comedy sketch show titled*Little Britain* (Walliams & Lucas, 2003). One of her catchphrases in response to teacher requests or admonitions is to ask, "do I look bovvered?", which she repeats in rapid-fire succession, preventing the teacher from responding to her rhetorical question. In fairness, let's presume that the robot is programmed not to deploy its tasers or other weapons as part of its pedagogical panoply. The scenario illustrates for me of the complexity of teaching, which I find reassuring. If someone were to ask me if a robot could take over my teaching job, part of my response would be "it depends on what the robot is passionate about". That Vicky Pollard-esque, "do I look bovvered?" response on my part may look very hollow one day. I hope not—at least not for some time to come. Chess is so much more reassuringly and comfortingly structured, strictured, predictable and scriptable than is teaching, with as few as 10^{120} possible outcomes (if Wikipedia (2019) and Claude Shannon (1988) are correct),[4] even though some would lessen teaching to a chess game. It strikes me that scripting teaching is akin to advising a chess player of each move to make, before the start of the game, and disregarding the other player's moves. And a chess player only has to take into account the thinking of one other person, while a teacher deals with 25 or so students and their thinking, or perchance their unthinking.

One proxy of the complexity of teaching is the extent to which it could be undertaken, or overtaken, by a robot. Of course, the future is good at mocking predictions made of itself, and there are various figures outlining the proportion of a teacher's work that could be delegated to an automaton. Nevertheless, teaching appears to be among the professions safest from automation. According to a study by Oxford University (Scott, 2017), the likelihood of teaching being automated is a mere 0.4%, the same figure as for doctors. According to a World Economic Forum report (WEF, 2018), automation will result in a net job increase in the education sector. Another WEF report (2016) ranked skills in terms of their usefulness in the workplace in the near future. These, in descending order of the proportion of jobs that will require them, are complex problem-solving; social skills; process skills, systems skills, resource

[4]For those who are interested, 10^{120} is 10 with 119 zeroes after it, and looks like this if *my* maths is correct: 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000, 000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. Happy counting.

management; technical skills, cognitive abilities; content skills and physical abilities. While the skills near the top of the list affirm those that I try to bring to my teaching, and that I try to develop in my students, this means that those with typical teacher-skills will be in sought-after elsewhere in the workforce. I think the word "automaton", above, is telling. Teaching is so context-dependent and complex that it cannot be scripted and rehearsed.

From my preliminary reading, it appears that a robot can make and programme a rocket. I accept that it would be laughable to pretend that I have anything approaching the mathematical expertise of a rocket scientist, or the medical know-how to help people see, hear or walk; I'm simply (oversimply?) asserting that the variables of teaching can be harder to predict. My hope in raising this is that those outside of teaching will also recognise this pedagogical professional complexity. Wahl (2017, p. 510) noted that "teaching is by its nature an uncertain endeavor with no identifiable 'answers'". She adds that, "knowledge is elusive and…teachers develop not through the acquisition of best practices but through cultivating dispositions that are responsive to this uncertainty" (p. 511). Sinnema, Meyer and Aitken, (2017, p. 9) observe that teaching is "complex, situated and active" (I would add "potentially volatile").

Returning to Palmer (p. 10), "good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher". He describes this as "a secret hidden in plain sight". As the previous chapter asserted, this secret seems to have escaped the notice of some non-teachers. The essence of good teaching, for Palmer, is his ability to connect with his students, and connect them with the subject matter at hand. This, in turn, derives from "the degree to which I know and trust my selfhood—and am willing to make it available and vulnerable in the service of learning" (p. 10). Connecting with students, and connecting them with one another and with the world—both in terms of interpreting the world and explaining to the world, often through the appropriation of technologies—is probably akin to Koehler and Mishra's (2009) TPACK—technological pedagogical content knowledge. It's also, as Palmer suggests, a strategy laced with vulnerability.

In my view, learning is the most important, the most vital and most essential endeavour that we undertake as a species. That being the case, teaching is probably the second most important thing that we humans do, after parenting. And parenting only takes the edge because of its educational role. This, in turn, makes teachers among our most valuable people.

The Standardisation of Teaching

Teacher Professional Standards are another teacher-tightening strategy in response to sluggish student performance. In their defence, they are also designed to raise the status of the profession. Nevertheless, they have attracted some criticism in the literature. Kincheloe (2003, p. 6) asserts that, "public discussion of the purpose of

education in a democratic society or inquiries into the relationship between contemporary social problems and schooling are rarely heard in [the] Disney world of standards".

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2017c) recently published a set of mandatory professional standards for teachers. In order to graduate, and to attain and retain accreditation, teachers need to provide evidence with regard to meeting each standard. The seven standards are listed below:

- Know students and how they learn,
- Know the content and how to teach it,
- Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning,
- Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments,
- Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning,
- Engage in professional learning and
- Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community.

These standards are sound starting points. It would probably be churlish to take exception with any of them prima facie. And yet, there is scope for their improvement (Buchanan, 2017). The first, "know students and how they learn", lacks a personal dimension. It does not mandate "know *your* students", even though this is plausibly inherent in, and a subsumption of, the Standard. Naturally, the Standard can really only be evidenced with regard to one's own students. At its essence, this standard requires teachers to demonstrate their knowledge of learning, how it operates and the circumstances under which it operates optimally. As asserted above, this is a noble pedagogical goal. Nevertheless, the inclusion of a personal dimension might make the standard more attractive and conceptually attainable. Curiously, the word "quality" does not appear in the Graduate level of the standards. Nor do the words "create" or "critical" (Buchanan, 2017). Each of these standards has subsections, known as "elements" of which there are 37 in total. These can be found in their entirety at AITSL (2017c).

While these standards and elements represent a gallant attempt to capture the complexity that is teaching, beginning teachers, in particular, may find them overwhelming. A more appropriate term than "standards" or, in school, "basic skills" might be "threshold concepts"; the threshold metaphor suggests transcendence, not mere attainment of, such competencies. This transcendent nature is arguably implicit, in that the Standards progress beyond graduate level, which will be discussed in a subsequent section. Many of the above initiatives have the potential to do good per se, and are certainly intended to be beneficial. The Standards and their impact are discussed in more detail in Chap. 7.

Teaching Performance Assessment

Another hurdle for prospective teachers in Australia is the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA). In order to graduate, all prospective teachers must complete

a culminating Teaching Performance Assessment task or suite of tasks. During their final professional experience, all Education students must demonstrate their capacities in:

- planning;
- organisation and delivery;
- assessment, evaluation and reflection on/identification of their impact of their teaching, with regard to their students' learning (see Darling-Hammond, 2006).

The TPA is framed within the Standards. TPAs have been criticised on several grounds. They have been critiqued as a high-stakes snapshot that may reject some candidates who could otherwise be effective teachers (Goldhaber, Cowan, & Theobald, 2017; Greenblatt, 2018), or may fail to identify and exclude some teachers who are unsuited to teaching for various reasons. They may also fail to capture the complexity that is teaching, and the diverse, complex contexts and dynamics of classrooms and learners (Buchanan, 2017; Buchanan & Schuck, 2016; Lewthwaite et al. 2015; Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, & Russell, 2012).

In a recent study of the implementation of a TPA in NSW (Buchanan, Harb & Fitzgerald, accepted), several potential-associated problems emerged. While the TPA is conducted within a school, it is assessed at university. University staff may be unfamiliar with the discipline knowledge of the teaching and learning being assessed—a science teacher educator assessing a TPA of an art teacher, for example. More disconcertingly, the assessor of the TPA embarks on the assessment task with little knowledge of the context in which the TPA was undertaken. Associated variables include the level of support offered by the supervising teacher and the school, the school's academic culture, the behaviour and attitudes of the students, resources available and the like. Moreover, the circumstances in which the TPA was undertaken cannot be replicated, and repeating a lengthy professional experience would be an expensive endeavour for the teacher education student concerned. Practice teaching and internships are typically undertaken without pay in Australia. AITSL has indicated that all TPAs will need to be moderated across institutions, but the abovementioned differences, among others, make the task of moderation problematic even within any one institution. The TPA and its impact are discussed further in Chap. 8.

More broadly, assessment typically asks what a learner knows and can do. Perhaps a better assessment task for education is to ask what kind of people it produces. The same could be asked of teacher preparation—alongside the importance of what they know and can do is the essential heart of what kind of people these teachers are. This is difficult to assess. Also, if the essence of teaching is knowing *your* students, how well do the Standards' authors know their students, the teach-force.

Before proceeding, I'll present another brief vignette, of my entry into the teaching workforce.

When I completed secondary school, there was a shortage of teachers. During my own secondary schooling, large numbers of American and other teachers were brought to Australia to address the shortage. From memory, I had a brief chat with my school Principal, to determine my suitability for a Teachers' College Scholarship. Apparently I was suitable; I'm not sure what, based on this interview, would have made me unsuitable. The Scholarship's purpose was

not to offset University fees – there were none at the time, apart from minimal administration fees. The purpose of the scholarship was simply to attract more teachers. You didn't even have to be particularly scholarly – did I mention my less-than-stellar school career[5]? At this point, when telling the story, I entreat my students not to despise me. The only 'catch' was that, if you were four-year trained, you were committed to teach for the state's Department of Education for four years, or you would forfeit and be required to return the scholarship money. That means I was guaranteed a job for four years, during which time, with minimal requirements (an observation of a lesson by the school Principal being the main one), I could achieve permanency. I didn't have to undertake an interview to obtain a teaching position. The world has changed. As a further example of world-change, I was notified of my first teaching appointment by receipt of a telegram (look it up).

Some of the current "entrance hurdles" outlined earlier are no doubt designed to make the profession more exclusive. This is a reasonable and noble pursuit, and may well serve the profession favourably. It could make the profession more attractive through exclusivity, and may, in turn, lend more prestige and cachet to the profession and its members. Such strategies, however, present a potentially high-risk tactic. Combined with the ever-increasing cognitive and other demands placed on teachers, and other issues such as (perceptions of) modest remuneration, particularly after the initial years of teaching, these approaches may dissuade the best and most capable from considering teaching. As suggested above, though, the "best and most capable" teachers might not be those who are most adept at passing tests. This may offer further justification for the new interventions and restrictions—and perhaps alternative pathways? Time will tell whether the strategies contribute to attracting or repelling, and who is attracted (and acceptable) or repelled. The procedures by which I was accepted into teaching were by no means rigorous. But they were attractive—they were devised in the context of a teacher shortage. And that attraction may have sorted the market to some extent.

Predictions of a widespread teacher shortage have yet to come to pass—or perhaps education jurisdictions have heeded earlier warnings by researchers (see, for example, Lonsdale and Ingvarson, 2003). Nevertheless, several current circumstances appear to be operating in concert to precipitate a shortage of teachers: There is currently a population bulge among school-aged students in Australia; large numbers of "baby boomer" teachers are reaching retirement age, and fewer applicants appear to be choosing teaching as a career and teacher attrition appears to remain high. Weldon (2015, p. 1) forecasts an increase in New South Wales (NSW) school students of 92,000 by the end of the decade. He conceded, however, that this is in the context of a current oversupply of generalist primary teachers and some subject area secondary teachers. In a US context, Sutcher, Darling-Hammond and Carver-Thomas (2016) use a tenfold proliferation of related media articles as a proxy for evidence of a looming teacher shortage. They cite mathematics, science and special education as areas of particular concern. Clandinin et al. (2015) cite a number of factors governing teacher attrition; support, identity and workload appear to be among the major factors

[5]Nevertheless, I required a minimum matriculation mark for entry into my undergraduate degree and subsequent teacher education programme. This perhaps speaks to the standard needed for such entry.

governing intentions to stay or leave among their cohort of 40 s and third-year teachers. In Australia, one factor may mitigate any teacher shortage: a proposed reduction in intake of migrants (Smyth, 2019) or refugees (Greene, 2019). Many developed countries, however, are either welcoming of or are unable to stem the flow of refugees and migrants.

It is curious that teacher supply is so volatile, given that it takes almost 5 years to produce a school student from the time of birth, and 4 years at most to produce a teacher. Then again, education jurisdictions may have little control over some aspects of teacher supply, such as retirements or resignations, or some issues that govern "student supply" (a crude term), such as changes in refugee or immigration policy.

The Intellectual and Emotional Work of Teaching

In a discussion of the pedagogical dimension of teaching, it is important not to lose sight of the other aspects—teaching as an intellectual work and process. One way forward for the teaching profession may be to elevate it towards more of a research process, to promote schools as sites of knowledge creation as well as knowledge consumption and dissemination. Some schools might be insulted by that call; happily, research is already happening in increasing numbers of schools. Student work is being seen and interpreted increasingly as data. While this is valuable, it is only part of the picture. In the final section, I will outline how and why schools might be increasingly seen as the research hubs of their communities, where teachers, students and possibly partnered outsiders, routinely gather, analyse and report data of various types. This too is already happening in increasing numbers of schools.

Neither should the emotional work of teachers be overlooked, either in terms of its capacity to value-add to learners (Conners-Burrow, Patrick, Kyzer, & McKelvey, 2017), or for what it demands of and from teachers (Day & Hong, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). Twenty-five Vicky Pollards, or a classful of mes, is sufficient reminder.

Postnote: Winter is Coming?

A recent Productivity Commission Report on Schools Workforce (Australian Government, 2012) proposed strategies designed to reduce teacher shortages and improve teacher quality (see p. iii). As mentioned in Chap. 1 (security guard versus security blanket), these two might be at odds. Drawing on the work of the Report asserted that the best preparation for beginning teachers was provided by courses that, "required a capstone project (typically a portfolio of work done in classrooms with students)" (p. 124). This became the Teaching Performance Assessment (see, for example, Stacey, Talbot, Buchanan, & Mayer, 2019). The Report added that Boyd

et al. had conceded that their "results were exploratory and that more research in this area is needed". While both forms of security (blanket and guard) may offer some benefits (as well as limitations), vigilance may be of the essence. A security guard clad in a security blanket does not cease to be a security guard. Some may say that a security guard is of more use in the current educational climate. But in the absence of teacher support, the guard may be redundant, if no one is at the gates trying to get in.

One recommendation of the Productivity Commission Report was the establishment of Graduate Teacher Standards (p. 28). The Report recommends that teachers would be certified accordingly "if found competent" (p. 32). I'm possibly being picky here, but if competence is all they are willing or able to concede, that strikes me as underwhelming for the profession and its members. Drawing on Mockler's work, Churchward and Willis (2019) contend that "the focus on teacher quality can give rise to measurable, standardised technical and procedural processes that distract from the complexity, variety and extent of practices that broadly define good teaching" (p. 253). Naturally, the Report is just part of the storm that was building—and, of course, any storm can deliver life-giving rain, not just destruction or damage. The chapter and the section that follow will discuss some of the consequences of the associated strategies, and some of the secondary outcomes thereof.

It is trite to claim that education is such a powerful force. As one of Quinn and Buchanan's (in preparation) Timorese teacher respondents noted, "many children know your name until they die".[6] Teaching must not and cannot be relegated to a series of safe, simple steps—to do so is to fail to value the invaluable. As Dewey noted, "were all instructors [and instructors' instructors] to realize the quality of mental process, not the production of correct answers, is the measure of educative growth, something hardly less than a revolution…would be worked" (p. 183). The ellipsis in Dewey's quote above replaces the words "in teaching". But the potential for revolution expands far beyond schools and schooling. Revolution is scary business for those of us (who want to be) in control—whether teacher, bureaucrat or politician.

Amidst some of the gloom, there is hope. In an international review of teacher education, Darling-Hammond (2017) identified some promising strategies with regard to improving teachers' teaching and learning (pp. 306–307). These include supportive induction models; opportunities for teachers to learn from and with one another; connection of practice and theory; attracting the ablest candidates through, inter alia, financial incentives and pan-professional capacity-building.

Returning to the anecdote at the beginning of this chapter, I hope that we can find ways to diminish teacher attrition, and the dissatisfaction on which it feeds. Those golf balls are easy to lose, and expensive to replace.

[6] Kindergarten/year one teachers, there's a good chance you know some of your ex-students' passwords. Just saying.

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Chapter 3
(Why) Are We Falling Behind and (Why) Does It Matter?

This chapter discusses the dynamic that drives many of the issues that are discussed in subsequent chapters: the perception and/or reality that Australian students are falling behind their international peers. This is leading to outcomes such as greater accountability from teachers and teacher educators, pressure for more content to be added to the curriculum. The chapter investigates to what extent and how current approaches are remedying the problem of positioning on international league tables. The chapter also visits some possible causes of less-than-optimal performance among Australian students at school, and implications of this for teachers' day-to-day work.

> Exclaim (vb) to cry out or speak suddenly or excitedly, as from surprise, delight, horror, etc.
>
> HaprerCollins, 1999, p. 538

Education in Australia: Shanghaied?

Concerns have mounted in recent years regarding a decline in the performance of Australian school students, compared to that of their peers internationally (The Guardian, 2018a; SBS, 2018; Singhal, 2017). Specifically, relative declines in Australian students' performance in the key areas of literacy, numeracy, science and technology performance scores have been reported of late. There do not appear to be extensive data on whether Australian students are performing better or worse than their counterparts internationally in arts and humanities subjects. This, presumably, is of less concern than performance in the other, targeted subject areas. It appears that there are fewer international tests on humanities subjects, although PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment, OECD, 2018a) offers a global competence test.

According to the 2016 PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) (TIMSS & PIRLS, 2018) test results, Australia's year 4 students outperformed their corresponding 2011 cohort, but were surpassed by students in 13 other countries (Thomson, Hillman, Schmid, Rodrigues, & Fullarton, 2017). Australia recently fell ten places, from 18 to 28th, among 49 countries tested, in year 4 mathematics (Knott,

J. Buchanan, *Challenging the Deprofessionalisation of Teaching and Teachers*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-8538-8_3

2016) in the TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) test. Australia's student performance has also declined in recent years, relative to that of other countries, in PISA's (ACER, 2018a; OECD, 2018b) science, reading and mathematics test scores.

There is considerable doubt, particularly in the academic literature, as to whether these concerns are justified or not, or based on comparable, comprehensive or convincing evidence. Comparing Australia with a city-state such as Singapore, or a city such as Shanghai, for example, may be misleading. Cochran-Smith et al. (2018, p. 109) criticise a populist "failure narrative", while Mayer (2013) disparages "anecdotally informed 'teacher education is failing us' headlines" (p. 9). Cochran-Smith, Piazza, and Power (2013, p. 16) mistrust the evidence base behind claims of a "lack of accountability and standardization of expectations" in teacher education. This dynamic is no doubt inflamed in part by the media's (and their readers'/viewers'?) predilection for bad news stories. More broadly, in a US context, Pinar (2019, p. 4) describes school reform as an "ongoing calamity…more accurately termed school deform".

It is worth noting that the tests themselves don't universally score highly among researchers in terms of validity and reliability (Araujo, Saltelli, & Schnepf, 2017; Komatsu & Rappleye, 2017; Fernandez-Cano, 2016). Of course, it is possible, perhaps inevitable by definition, that the totality of conditions in some schools—the teaching, the culture, the resources and amenities, the community and family support…—all combine to produce better basic skills test results. Such results are possibly achieved at the expense of other things; it's difficult to know. To the extent that test results can lead us to inferences about a school's (or community's) culture and the like, they may have some value. Elliott, Stankov, Lee, and Beckman (2019, p. 133) report two schools of thought regarding student data. They observe.

> something of an intellectual and philosophical gulf between education researchers who seek insights from statistical analyses of complex data-sets such as those provided by the OECD (PISA), and others who seek to develop rich, contextualised socio-historical understandings that can shed light upon why particular classroom practices operate and are sustained within a given milieu.

Fernandez-Cano (2016) undertook a meta-analysis of PISA. In summary, his criticisms comprise.

> an inconsistent rationale, opaque sampling, unstable evaluative design, opportunistic use of statistics transformed by standardization, reverential confidence in statistical significance, an absence of substantively significant statistics centred on the magnitude of the effects, a problematic presentation of the findings and questionable implications drawn from the findings for educational norms and practice.

I should concede that some of the above academic reactions (and my own?) to Australia's "crisis in education" may be, in part, cover stories. The "truth" in Australian students' performance may lie somewhere between these academic and popular/media parallel imaginaries. Limitations in accuracy shouldn't relegate such tests to the scrapheap, but their results, beyond measuring individuals' progress and

helping us to devise optimal ways forward[1] for those individuals, need to be treated with extreme caution and care.

The next section of the book will explore some of the dynamics affecting education and its delivery. As it is, concerns emanating from test scores as cited above are driving much of what is happening in, and to, schools and teacher education providers in Australia. Education is becoming increasingly regulated—some would contend, over-regulated. This is impacting areas such as teacher recruitment, preservice education, and curriculum, and having considerable impact on the teaching workforce, its standing and sustainability, and potentially on learner engagement, creativity and resourcefulness. Much of this is the antithesis of what the "tightening up" of the teaching profession is presumably designed to achieve. Drawing on Sachs (2016) discerns contractual accountability, that is, fulfilling obligations, and responsive accountability; "inclusion and the use of the collective wisdom of the profession to self-regulate practice" (p. 416). She calls on teachers to be activist professionals.

This chapter reprises a problematic raised in Chap. 1. That is: given that raising entry requirements for teachers might be a positive thing, how is the profession transforming to make itself more attractive? Restrictions, in the absence of enhanced profession attractiveness, will most likely result only in teacher shortages, particularly in those geographic and subject areas already most difficult to staff, such as, ironically, the TIMSS (maths and science) subjects. Any shortages are also likely to impact those already most vulnerable—children in low socioeconomic, rural or remote areas, or Indigenous communities.

The Structure of Teacher Education in Australia

In Chap. 1, I reported an increase in teacher requirements through time as a positive, healthy symptom. Other professions are similarly experiencing increases in entry qualifications. Nursing and policing are two that come to mind which, during my lifetime, have begun to require tertiary qualifications. This means that other professions, too, are becoming more demanding in terms of their entry requirements, consistent with expansions of human knowledge in related fields, and in response to engaging with a more educated public generally.

More broadly, a more highly educated public is a cause for celebration; a sign of an economy and of a society that can bear it, and that is prepared to prioritise spending on it, rather than on, say, weapons or prisons. Perhaps most importantly, there is widespread agreement that "good" teachers are central to "good" education (Hattie, 2003), even if we might struggle to quantify "good" in both cases. I confess, too, that expanding teacher education is in my own professional interests.

[1]These ways forward might not always be engineered and paved for smooth riding, but may be sprinkled with chicanes and other challenges, for the sake of challenge, satisfaction, advancement and amusement, but never, one hopes, for the purpose of torment.

Nevertheless, I retain some suspicions regarding current teacher-tightening techniques. I remain unconvinced that current curricular and testing regimes are achieving their stated purpose—to improve students' performance. It is difficult to know, as the ranking assessment tasks compare us with moving objects—the performance of students overseas, and, perhaps, the quality of the teaching that contributes to their performance. Over time, tests are conducted under different circumstances, such as changes in the influences of screen devices, the ascendancy of the visual over the textual, etc. Potentially, this testing mechanism regime is ratcheting up the quality of education everywhere, or at least of those aspects being tested. It is possible that it works that simply. Rankings themselves are also problematic. With any ranking system, there will always be the same number of winners and losers. I've done the maths. Promotion up the ranking ladder comes at the relative expense of someone else on that ladder. Almost every child will be beaten.

It makes sense to select the ablest into teacher education, and to value-add to them in the best ways possible. In particular, nurturing and a nurturing environment, albeit with some challenges, are central to good educational growth—of children and of the teachers who teach them. How to identify, and then nurture, the "best" teachers, remain the elusive problems.

I won't attempt to outline teacher entry qualifications on an international basis. I use Australia, and focus at times on New South Wales here, as illustrative examples. Broadly speaking, there are two main entry paths into teaching in Australia:

- A 4-year Bachelor of Education course or similar

  or

- A 1.5- or 2-year postgraduate qualification, typically preceded by subject area undergraduate studies.

In earlier times, the former was almost exclusively for primary (K-6) teachers, and the latter almost exclusively for secondary (7–12) teachers, but the divisions have become increasingly blurred in recent years.

More recently, a third entry path into teacher education, "learning-on-the-job", has attracted growing numbers of candidates in Australia—Teach for Australia (2020). In this programme, which exists in similar formats in other countries (e.g. Teach for America (2018); School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT), in England (UCAS, 2019)), high-performing candidates enlist to teach, typically in an area of socioeconomic disadvantage, for 2 years, and undertake concurrent professional learning activities. "Teach for Australia" has received mixed reviews. The major criticism appears to be a low retention rate of graduates. The Guardian (2018b) reported that at the end of 3 years of teaching, half of the candidates in Australia had left teaching, a process Redding and Smith (2016, p. 1086) refer to as "easy in, easy out", with regard to such programmes in the United States. Similarly, Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin and Heilig (2005) reported that nearly all Teach for America (TFA) graduates had left within 3 years. Moreover, the programme's aim of deploying teachers to socioeconomically disadvantaged areas remained unmet. To the

extent that the programme attracts highly talented, entrepreneurial leaders-in-their-field, to teaching, albeit fleetingly, it is to be regarded with some praise. Chapter 4 will discuss some related implications concerning teacher retention. I confess, though, to another possible conflict of interest or defence mechanism here. If the "Teach for…" programme proves to be as useful for recruiting quality[2] teachers, and in retaining them, as are current pre-service programmes, I will be rendered redundant. It appears at first glance to be a cheaper means of recruiting teachers. Nevertheless, an undergraduate degree is still required of the applicant, and much of the burden for initial teacher education is placed on schools and teachers. Moreover, "training", one of the Ts in the acronym SCITT, is, pardon the pun, telling. It appears to suggest that the requisite skills, knowledges, attributes and the like for teaching can be acquired from watching and being told. Not only do I see this view as erroneous, I believe it further feeds into the popular misconception that teaching is little more than an amalgam of skills to be deployed.

Teach for… candidates appear to teach as effectively as uncertified teachers from other pre-service pathways (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Heilig & Jez, 2010), but less so than teachers who have attained certification (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Certification in the US differs from educational jurisdiction to jurisdiction. It typically comprises a bachelor's degree, followed by a teacher education qualification. In some cases, exams are set at the end of the degree in order to qualify for teaching. The take-home message from this, for teachers, is that their/our education and experience as a teacher count for something. We did not "fall into" teaching, via a witness protection programme gone wrong, and we are not frauds (see Chap. 1, on teachers in movies).

Entry into Teacher Education and Teaching

If I may be permitted a brief anecdote, I was recently asked by a visiting Chinese academic if the government controls what happens in Australian schools and universities. My instinctive response was one of smugness; the words "academic freedom" (garbed in a cape and red underwear) sprang immediately to mind.[3] I've shared too much.

Before I responded, "of course not. What is this, some sort of totalitarian regime?", I considered some of the constraints that impinge on education in Australia. I have compiled a list below of some of the organisations that oversee education, along with some of their roles. I list them as illustrations of what I sometimes unkindly refer to as "pedagogical arteriosclerosis". (Cover story, anyone?) Examples will most often focus on New South Wales, the state in which I work and with which I am most familiar, but equivalent bodies operate in other Australian states and territories, and in other (particularly) "developed" nations. I hope I have not overlooked too many

[2]When did "quality" morph from a noun to an adjective? Some time before or after "fun" did, I presume.

[3]I confess that I presumed a male superhero here. Apologies for that presumption.

such organisations—and there may be more by the time you read this. Skim read it and move on to the following section if you wish. A word of warning, though, this section extends beyond the initial dot points below.

Organisations charged with oversight and regulation of education include the following:

- ACARA (2016): The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. ACARA is responsible for developing the Australian Curriculum (n.d.), Australia's first-ever national curriculum, which is discussed in further detail below.
- ACER (2018b): The Australian Council for Educational Research. Among other responsibilities, the Council administers LANTITE tests—Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students (ACER, 2018c).
- AITSL (2017a): The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (the national body regulating curriculum and teaching). This is the body that has established a suite of Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2017b), which are discussed later in this chapter, and in further detail in Chap. 7.
- NESA (n.d.a): The NSW Education Standards Authority. This state body regulates schools and teaching. All NSW pre-service teacher education programmes and their constituent subjects (sounds like a monarchy?) require NESA accreditation, as do all beginning teachers, who must pay an annual fee of $100 to NESA (2019a). Similar payments apply in other Australian states. All teacher education programmes in NSW also need to demonstrate that they meet NESA's requirements regarding six priority areas: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, classroom management, information and communication technologies, literacy and numeracy, students with special education needs and teaching students with English as an additional language or dialect (NESA, n.d.b). Each of these entails further elaborations. Literacy and numeracy, for example, embodies 20 dot points.
- Teach NSW (n.d.a): This is the employment recruiting body for the NSW Department of Education, the largest employer of graduates in the state. Across Australia, about two-thirds of students attend government schools (ABS, 2017a).
- TEQSA (2017a): Tertiary Education Quality Standards Authority. This national body is charged with regulating the tertiary sector and assuring its quality. In order to be registered with TEQSA, a university must comply with the Higher Education Standards Framework (TEQSA, 2017b). TEQSA mandates an academic literacy assessment hurdle for all university entrants. This operates in addition to the above-mentioned LANTITE test, for teacher education students.
- TEMAG (2017): The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group. TEMAG exists to "advise the Government on how teacher education courses could better ensure new teachers have the right mix of academic and practical skills needed for the classroom".
- UAC (2019): The Universities Admissions Centre. The UAC administers most domestic students' applications for university. The Centre calculates an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank—further information below) for students

who have undertaken the NSW matriculation exam, the Higher School Certificate (HSC).

Spot test on acronyms, anyone? You might be pleased to know I didn't subject my Chinese colleague to that entire list. I fear she may have fled long before I finished. By now, Captain Academic Freedom was looking a little shabby and moth-eaten. It concerns me that some teachers, both aspirational and practising, might, similarly, choose to flee teaching. Those who are most capable will have the freest range, and most tantalising array, of alternative options. I note in passing that the word "standards" appears in three of the dot points above.

But there's more. Beyond the above, as a condition of graduating, all pre-service teachers in Australia are now required to undertake a culminating Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA), in which they record and report on their planning, implementation, assessment and evaluation of a "cycle of learning", with a view to discerning the impact of their teaching on their students. This will be discussed in more detail in Chap. 8, and while I have some misgivings about a TPA, I believe that it has exposed in some (my?) initial teacher education practice, a certain neglect of helping pre-service teachers to understand and develop skills of discernment in assessing their students' work. I have perhaps fallen into the trap of believing that if they observe (my) good (?) assessment practices, they will "catch" these practices; it's an area where I have not routinely and instinctively "shown my working" (to channel my maths teachers of yore). Quality assessment and associated inferences are not only at the heart of demonstrable quality teaching, and social justice, but discernment is also a preserve of good teachers—something we should leverage as part of our professional toolkit and our professional showcase or shop window to the public. It is possible that, as eye-witnesses to Australia's NAPLAN testing regime (see below, for a description), and international tests, our graduates are witnesses to a thin, and possibly poor, subset of what assessment is and does. Moreover, arguably, one is among the worst adjudicators of one's own assessment tasks, having invested so much in them, and, typically, in the absence of being privy[4] to one's peers' work.

Other issues cloud assessment. There are matters of making un/popular, discriminatory decisions that need to be included in the mix. To the experienced teacher, constructive alignment (Biggs, 1996), that is, aligning aims and objectives, activities, resources and stimuli, and assessment opportunities, seems so obvious—knowing beforehand where you want to go, how you plan to get there, what you need for the journey and at least an inkling of what it will look like when you get there—so you know when you've arrived if you're in the right place—or at least how far from the right place you are, and in which direction it is, so you can recalibrate how to get there. This is not self-evident to the uninitiated.

In addition to the above, in years 3, 5, 7 and 9, all school students in Australia undertake basic literacy and numeracy tests, known as NAPLAN—the National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAP, 2016), developed by ACARA.

[4]I'm using "privy" as an adjective, not a noun here. Just so you know.

These results are used to rank schools in terms of their students' comparative performance. This testing regime, and its effects, will be discussed in more detail in Chap. 6, but suffice it to say that the NAPLAN tests and, in particular, the associated My School website (ACARA, 2019), which publishes results at school level, have sustained heavy criticism, in terms of its capacity to undermine and demoralise some schools, whose results are often mediated by factors beyond their control. Similarly some communities feel stigmatised by the publication of these results.

Another outcome of increased regulation, driven by fears of declining school student performance, is more stringent entry requirements for teacher education courses. Requirements for entry into teacher education courses have become ever more exacting in recent years, and this process looks set to persist if not increase. In New South Wales, at both state and federal/national levels, more, and more stringent, regulations are being imposed. Some would argue current and proposed "right of entry" conditions are nothing short of draconian, while others might see such changes as a necessary reform for the profession as it deals with the demands of the twenty-first century. The dot points below present an overview of current and proposed entry requirements into teacher education programmes, and into the teaching profession. They are set out here largely to provide a sense of the scope and scale of regulations and requirements. As above, you may wish to skim over them.

- In NSW, an ATAR ranking of 70 or more: In each Australian state and territory, an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) is calculated for those students undertaking the matriculation examination. It ranks a student within her or his age cohort for that state or territory (which includes those people who left school earlier and are not undertaking a matriculation exam) (UAC, 2019). An ATAR of 70 places a candidate in the top 30% of their cohort. Matriculation students typically undertake between 10 and 12 units of study. A senior school "subject" can equate to 2, 3 or 4 units, depending on the depth of study undertaken. A matriculant's ATAR is calculated on their highest scoring two units of English study (English being the only compulsory subject in the matriculation exam, which allows for moderation), and their best eight units from remaining subjects that qualify for inclusion (UAC, 2018). In 2018, Federal (Labor) Opposition also indicated that, if elected in 2019, it would raise ATAR entry scores for eligibility for teaching (Singhal, 2018).[5] In 2018, the State Government of Victoria announced an entry score of 70 as a requirement to enter a teacher education course (Cook, Butt, & Effron, 2018). It stands to reason that teachers should be among the "success stories" of the schooling system. One small caveat, though. Success stories may tend to perpetuate, rather than reform, the schooling system. Moreover, the link between academic performance and teaching prowess may not be straightforward, according to Corcoran and O'Flaherty (2018), who propose a suite of harder-to-measure attributes including personality, conscientiousness and extraversion as predictors of success.

[5]The Labor party lost the subsequent Federal election, and remains in opposition.

- A "band 5" or above attainment in three subjects in the HSC matriculation exam, one of which must be in English. The band levels are developed according to performance attainment in the subjects concerned. Band 5 is the second highest level attainable. As an illustrative example, a student's capabilities are described as follows for an attainment of band 5 in 2 unit English.

  Band 5 2 Unit English

  Demonstrates detailed knowledge, perceptive understanding and effective evaluation of the ways meanings are shaped and changed by context, medium of production and the influences that produce different responses to texts. Displays a well-developed ability: to describe and analyse a broad range of language forms, features and structures of texts and explain the ways these shape meaning and influence responses in a variety of texts and contexts. Presents a critical personal response showing well-developed skills in interpretation, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of texts and textual detail. Composes imaginatively, interpretively and critically with flair, originality and control for a variety of audiences, purposes and contexts in order to explore and communicate ideas, information and values (NESA, 2017).

A band 5 in English as a second language does not qualify one to enter teacher education. This may have implications for aspirant teachers of languages other than English, and, more broadly, may serve to whiten and cleanse a profession that is already criticised for failing to mirror the ethnic and cultural mix of students it serves (Petchauer, Bowe, & Wilson, 2018). It bears possible implications for modelling, and teaching about diversity, teaching with the diversity extant in the classroom, and teaching for diversity (Picower & Marshall, 2017).

The "band information" constitutes the only non-numerical feedback matriculation students receive in NSW at matriculation. It is a criterion-referenced classification, not a rank.

- Passing a literacy and numeracy test administered by the Australian Council for Educational Research (LANTITE—the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students) (ACER, 2018c). Three attempts are permitted, at a cost of approximately $185 per attempt. This is a curious test, in that those who fail are offered no diagnostic feedback, nor are permitted to retain a copy of the test. This appears to chafe against an improvement-orientation role of assessment.
- Graduates wishing to teach in a NSW government school must successfully undertake a personal suitability interview (Teach NSW, n.d.b).
- Also in NSW, aspirant entrants into teacher education programmes must furnish a personal statement as to why they intend to be a teacher. If a student does not apply for university through UAC, their personal statement is assessed by the tertiary institution. This adds a burden to university academics' workloads. Applicants typically apply to several universities, only one of which they will attend. Each university will deploy staff to assess the personal statements. Applicants must respond to the following four questions (with prompts provided in italics):

  (1) Tell us what has inspired you to become a teacher and tell us why you think teaching is a good career choice for you.
  In your response, describe who and what has inspired you to become a teacher and describe the types of skills and abilities you will bring to teaching.

(2) Describe one or two leadership, community and/or learning & development activities that you have engaged in.
In your response describe how these leadership, community and/or learning
(3) Describe how you manage your time when you are both planning and coordinating activities in your personal schedule.
In your response provide examples of how you have put both your planning and coordinating skills to use.
(4) Tell us about one or two times where you have utilised your problem-solving skills to achieve an outcome.

In your response explain what you learned, regardless of whether the outcome you achieved was positive or undesirable. (See University of Technology Sydney, n.d.)

Understandably, assessing such statements, particularly in a way that could be demonstrably consistent across or within institutions, is problematic.

In addition to the above requirements, the NSW Minister for Education recently announced that teacher education graduates would require a credit average in their pre-service degree in order to qualify for employment with the Department of Education, and would need to pass a psychometric test to be administered by the Department (Baker, 2018).

As indicated above, such a quest for teacher excellence (however defined) is laudable. But it is difficult to be certain, for example, that the credit average requirement will achieve its aim, that of removing less capable teachers from the profession. It will arguably add pressure to teacher education students and staff, and potentially expose the latter to the risk of coercion or (accusations of) favouritism or corruption. "Pass[6]" will become the new "fail" and pressure may mount on institutions not to "fail" students, particularly in large numbers. Moreover, it is difficult if not impossible to establish if a credit grade has consistent meaning cross-institutionally. Cross-institution moderation would be virtually impossible, and pedagogically difficult to defend, unless pre-service teachers at all teacher education institutions are to submit standardised assessment tasks, to be undertaken under identical conditions, with equivalent types and levels of support. The standardisation of assessment tasks across institutions strikes me as an undesirable outcome. It would negate student and contextual diversity, and would likely clot attempts at creativity, renewal and innovation.

NESA (2019b) has recently mandated specialisations for all students in primary pre-service education. These specialisations are currently confined to mathematics, science and technology, or languages. While this has the capacity to add expertise to any given school's staff (Aubusson, Schuck, Ng, Burke, Pressick-Kilborn, & Palmer, 2015), it is also arguably at odds with generalist practice in primary schools, and its capacity to avoid siloing of subject areas. In summary, it seems that the staff of "operations branch" (Slee & Weiner, 1988, p. 1) continue to devise new ways to tighten and teacher-proof education.

[6] As opposed to an award of Credit or higher.

The curriculum is a further casualty of performance anxiety with regard to our school students. Curricular reforms tend to add more material to an already crowded curriculum, in anticipation, or perhaps realistic anticipation, that other counties might be doing likewise. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Australia has recently developed a national curriculum (Australian Curriculum, n.d.). The effects on, and of, curriculum will be discussed in more detail in Chap. 5.

Other Recent Innovations

As introduced in the previous chapter, Australia has recently introduced a set of professional standards for teachers (AITSL, 2017). They operate at graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead levels. Separate standards are in operation for principals, who, in NSW, must complete 19 online modules, covering, *inter alia*, legal matters and managing complaints (NSW Government, 2020). These, and their effects on teachers and teaching, will be discussed in more detail in Chap. 7. Proceeding from the Standards, a further recent innovation in Australia is a mandatory test, the Teaching Professional Assessment, aligned with the Standards (AITSL, 2017). This will also be discussed further in Chap. 7.

Student behaviour is discussed in more detail in the chapter that follows. Suffice it to say here, though, that the "culture of learning", and the seriousness with which learning is approached, may differ between Australia and some of the jurisdictions with which it is compared. This may have implications for improving our standing, as well as the life-work of teachers.

The typical Australian classroom has become more diverse in the last half-century or so, firstly through migration of families that are more culturally and linguistically diverse than the migrants typical of mainly European post-World War Two migration to Australia, vis-à-vis Anglo-Celtic Australians. With the exception of the Greeks, the majority of post-war migrants were familiar with Latin script on entry to Australia. Most followed Christianity of one form or another—Christianity remains the predominant religion in Australia (ABS, 2017b).

When I was speaking at a teacher education seminar in Luzern, a Swiss colleague (Brovelli, 2019) noted the reference to diversity in the Australian Teaching Professional Standards. This reference to diversity had been unremarkable for me to that point. In twenty-first century Australia, in the larger cities at least, it's *mono*culturalism, where it exists, that is more conspicuous. Government documents, and educational, and educated, thinking more broadly, routinely address multiculturalism. It is interesting that it took an outsider (or perhaps someone with greater powers of observation than mine) to recognise this diversity hillock. Six of the Standard descriptors refer to diversity: linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds (1.1); Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, histories, cultures and languages (1.2, 2.4), full range of abilities (1.3); students with disability (1.4) and varying abilities and characteristics (3.1). A further five refer to a range of: teaching strategies (3.3); resources (3.4); verbal and nonverbal communication

strategies (3.5); strategies to involve parents/carers (3.7) and strategies for reporting (5.5). This observation on my colleague's part is a reminder of: Australia's noble attempts to address a variety of student starting points, and to tailor the curriculum accordingly, and the complexity, borne of diversity, in many Australian classrooms. This diversity provides a wonderful enrichment for our learners. It offers, and at times challenges us with, new ways of thinking, believing, worshipping or not, speaking and writing, assuming, overlooking, hoping, fearing… This paragraph might well have gone in the previous chapter, as evidence of the complexity, albeit beautiful complexity, of teaching (and it represents the kind of society I want to live in and be part of). It's been placed here, though, to raise the possibility that the standards, and so many other restrictions placed on teachers, may serve to constrict the linguistic and other diversity of teachers, and of teaching approaches that they wish to model. As with diversity in the student body (the learn-force), diversity in the teach-force offers an inestimably rich motherlode of information and perspective.

Determining the extent of multiculturalism in a particular country is no straightforward matter. According to Pison (2019, p. 2), Australia ranks ninth internationally in terms of raw numbers of foreign-born migrants, and fourth, after Switzerland,[7] in terms of the overseas-born proportion of its population, at 21%. I'm merely speculating here, but Pison's two highest ranking countries in terms of proportion of immigrants, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, tend to have numbers of immigrant workers remitting money to their families in their "home country"; that is to say, a proportion of those migrants may not have their children in school in the host country. If so, this means that Australia's student body may have one of the most multicultural compositions on earth, particularly if our Indigenous populations (3.3% of the total population (ABS, 2017c)) are added to the mix. Lamentably, only 13 of Australia's more than 250 Indigenous languages at the time of Contact are still being acquired by children (AIATSIS, 2019). Nevertheless, Indigenous cultural diversity has not declined at the same rate as Indigenous languages. Australia's 2016 census (ABS, 2017d) identified more than 300 languages spoken in Australian homes. Ironically, this is only slightly more than the 250 languages spoken in Australia prior to colonisation. Moreover, plausibly enough, Indigenous children and their families may not harbour a sense of hope and opportunity that might be more typical of a family that has chosen to migrate to or seek refuge in Australia. While Australia's cultural and linguistic diversity is joyously enriching, it may account for some short-term shortfalls in educational outcomes vis-à-vis those of some "comparable" jurisdictions.

Anecdotally, many, particularly non-indigenous, teachers report feeling unconfident in teaching matters concerning Australian Indigenous content. Milne (2017) notes a similar phenomenon in a Canadian context, reporting "unawareness and intimidation among non-Indigenous educators regarding how to teach [Indigenous-related] material". While there are valid and pressing reasons for matters of Indigenous culture to be handled with great care, sensitivity and respect, and for non-indigenous Australians, including teachers, to tread softly, it is arguably unhelpful to

[7] Even more poignant, then, that it was a Swiss colleague who noticed and remarked on this.

the cause if non-indigenous teachers are frozen into not treading at all. Craven, Yueng and Han (2014) report positive results from associated high-frequency professional development. Given the harm caused by past exclusionary policies and practices, and the importance of agency, self-efficacy and confidence in teaching (and learning), any two-way inclusionary approaches are likely to pay dividends with regard to educational outcomes for Indigenous and other teachers and students, as well as to serve the interests of reconciliation more broadly.

Moreover, students with disabilities are more likely to be mainstreamed of late. Previous exclusionary practices deprived us all, not just those excluded, of a richer education. Nevertheless, inclusion also increases the complexity of the classroom and its management—procedurally and pedagogically—and imposes extra demands, cognitive and otherwise, on teachers.

Mobile devices, too, have brought mixed blessings to the classroom. Instant access to information has revolutionised teaching and learning, facilitating student-centred and directed learning. At the same time, the temptation to stray from the learning matter at hand looms large. The effects on education of such devices will be discussed in Chap. 9. This is linked to discussions on student behaviour.

As the next chapter will point out in more detail, teachers have to try and educate children who might be facing trauma from one or more of the following: family breakdown or violence, escaping war or other turmoil, poverty, drug dependence and the like. Any or all of these matters might result in lower educational outcomes for the children involved, and account for our lower scoring in international league tables, depending on the prevalence of such issues internationally. In making the learner's job more difficult, such issues also make the teacher's task so much more complex.

If the argument hasn't already been established in Chap. 2, it is hoped that the contents of this chapter have proven convincing in terms of establishing the complexity of the work of a teacher.

Support for Teachers

In any workplace, we appreciate our allies—those colleagues, superiors or subordinates who "have our back", who believe in us, and who don't lose faith even when we're having a bad day or get it wrong; the people we might want to have in the room with us if we're addressing a crowd. Most of us can probably recall a teacher who was like that. As in any workplace, teachers value that kind of support. Without that support, their energy and enthusiasm are likely to wilt.

Teachers in some schools feel that they have few allies. Potential allies might be students, parents, the school executive, the school system or jurisdiction, the community and the media. Parents, reasonably enough, typically have a high investment—emotional, and, often, fiscal—in their children's learning. They're understandably anxious, having raised students in a post-September 11 world. They may not feel

willing, or in a position, to offer encouragement to their children's teachers. Executive staff may be reluctant to concede that they, too, could struggle to deal with wilfully resistant students, and may hesitate to buy into student behavioural issues, and/or may withhold in other ways critical life support from their subordinates.

The media, while not necessarily hostile to teachers, relish a dramatic headline, and so will tend to cast stories negatively. "Crisis" appears to get more clicks than "problem"—if so, many of us complicit in this, by clicking. Punakallio and Dervin (2015) examined 93 front-page newspaper stories (chosen because they were immediately visible, even to non-purchasers, in newsstand kiosks), in Finland. Finland is routinely upheld as a pedagogical utopia. Presumably the nation's tabloid newspapers remain unconvinced. Almost a quarter (23) of the articles were categorised as "teachers' moral decay". A further 14 were classified as "teachers' violence towards students". Counterbalancing this, 19 articles referred to student violence against teachers (p. 312). While this third category might (or might not) garner sympathy for teachers, it is unlikely to present the profession in an alluring light. "Teacher helps student" is sensationally un-newsworthy. Long may it remain so, even though such stories warrant being outed.

One of the most satisfying things for a teacher is witnessing a student who wants to learn, learn. One of the greatest frustrations is to see a subject area that you love, and your own efforts to convey that passion to your students, trampled underfoot, or treated with disdain. When students are keen to engage with the world around them and make sense of it, it is very rewarding for teachers to help them do so. The lot for some teachers, though, ranges from an undercurrent of resistance to outright acts of hostility and sabotage.

Even teachers, bless'em, aren't unfailingly adept at peer support. Understandably, they may be exhausted, in both senses of the word—tired and empty—having given their all to their students, and in no fit position to assist colleagues. As with some students, and workers in other professions, personal, circumstantial issues for some teachers might be sapping them of the opportunity to perform optimally. Teacher Improvement Programmes operate for teachers and principals whose performance is deemed inadequate. Pass rates are low (Singhal, 2019), and, anecdotally, their application is inconsistent if not capricious.

Given this potential for a lack of alliances, it is little wonder that some teachers feel alone and friendless at school. A metaphor emerges for me of a school child sitting alone in the playground, trying to remain—or desperate not to remain?—invisible—it's hard to tell which. Ways of countering this will be discussed in later chapters of the book. And, of course, it's not like that for all teachers. Indeed, I'll be delighted for and rejoice with every teacher who recognises no resemblance between the comments above and their own teacher-lives. But I believe that most experienced teachers will identify with at least some of the concerns raised above.

If a school (and its community) is a community of practice, a community of learning practice, it is unfortunate that not all members work towards that common goal—the supportive education of students, and of those who educate them. This will be discussed in more detail in the final section of this book.

Professional Support and Development

Jensen, Sonnemann, Roberts-Hull and Hunter (2016) contend that "high-performing systems integrate both adult learning and student outcomes within effective professional learning design". It appears that such systems apply what they know about learning to the teachers in their care. The education profession should outshine any other at doing this.

Mentoring is one way that some systems and schools have introduced peer learning and professional development. Gray, Wright and Pascoe (2019) discern three roles of a mentor: role model, nurturer and confidant. Teachers typically assume these roles and more, naturally. Grimmett, Firgasz, Williams and White (2018) identified the following roles of mentors: supervisors and assessors, teachers of teaching; teacher-learners; supporters of pre-service teachers' learning and nurturers/caregivers (pp. 349–348). Gray, Wright and Pascoe (2019, p. 204) ascribed eight attributes to effective mentors: supportive; guiding and offering feedback; effective role model; welcoming; fostering a sense of belonging; trusting and collegial. Apart from any shortfalls in these mentor attributes, schools do not appear to be universally mentoring their newcomers (see Chap. 4). I reiterate, though, that, given the complexity and demands of teaching, teachers may have few reserves left to assist peers, metaphorically fitting their own oxygen masks before (or in lieu of?) attending to others.

As asserted above, assessment is another preserve or domain of teachers. The development of this type of professional discernment has implications for initial teacher education. Pre-service teachers have reported being under-prepared to assess meaningfully, analytically and diagnostically, their students' work. Assessment equally applies to the determination of teachers' readiness for the profession. Means of undertaking this, too, may be in need of remediation. Given this expertise and experience in assessing, diagnosing and responding accordingly, teachers might be reasonably accorded more scope for decision-making.

Concluding Remarks

Day (2017) identifies four trends in education globally: a move in pre-service teacher education towards an apprentice model; closer and more constant scrutiny and assessment of teachers; bounded autonomy—more accountability in the context of less autonomy and globalisation of education standards, through testing (pp. 3–4). This is serious. In a US school context, there have been forces at work (nice ambiguity, that) which "undermine the conditions…necessary for teachers to assume the posture of thoughtful, critical educational leaders" (Giroux, 1985, p. 27). Schuck, Aubusson, Burden and Brindley (2018) report similar goings-on in the UK.

Groundwater-Smith and Sachs (2002) spoke of trust as a resource, both socially and professionally. "Reliability", if we are to settle on that low bar for teachers, loses its definition in the absence of trust. How much more so does visionary professionalism operate on trust? And yet, trust will still have its way; it now resides with the bureaucrats, the has-beens or the never-weres of the teaching world. Bhattacharya, Devinney and Pillutla (1997) portrayed trust as, "a reflection of the expectancy that a party in a social or economic interaction characterised by uncertainty will engage in behaviour that will have non-negative consequences for the other party" (p. 14). It is on this basis that I cannot entrust non-teacher bureaucrats with education.

Before proceeding to the next section, I will present some thoughts about education for consideration. I occasionally ask my students, when we are working towards a definition of something, to think of and share three adjectives that might describe that something. Below I present some of my adjectives for education, with some elaborations. I mentioned in the previous chapter (in case you accepted the invitation to skip that bit) that I never had to undertake an interview to obtain a job in teaching. What follows might form part of a job interview, or pre-interview triage or culling process. I address this to prospective teachers, but also to certain educrats—those outside of teaching who prescribe and shape its policy and practice.

Education is risky—if risk is not for you, maybe you could make more worthwhile contributions working elsewhere.

Education is creative and innovative—if creativity and innovation are not for you, maybe you could make more worthwhile contributions working elsewhere.

Education is (an) expensive (investment)—if expensive investments (in terms of money, effort, emotional capital, risk and the like) are not for you, maybe you could contribute more meaningfully elsewhere.

Education is ambiguous, open-ended and untidy—if these are not for you, maybe you could consider working elsewhere.

In short, I think I would assert the following:

Education is complex—if complexity is not for you, maybe consider another profession.

And education requires relentless, deep, critical (including self-critical) thinking, consideration and decision-making. If these things are not for you, maybe you could serve better elsewhere.

I say these things because, as I argue in the next section, some people who are in education, who are driving and shaping the profession, may be unsuited to the profession.

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Part II
The 'Players'

This part examines in turn some of the major forces shaping education, and their capacity for good or ill. These include: paperwork and reporting; the foregrounding of basic skills, and standardization in teaching, among other issues, as indicated by the chapter headings.

Introduction

Chapter three outlined some of the hurdles encountered for those undertaking initial teacher education. But the concerns (panic?) emanating from international league tables are not limited to initial teacher education. They feed into a number of circumstances for practising teachers also. The following chapters will discuss matters such as a crowded and expanding curriculum, basic skills and their likely effect on higher order thinking, teaching Standards and the Teaching Professional Assessment, the effects of student feedback in shaping and driving pre-service teacher education. The final chapter in this part will explore the impact of mobile devices in the classroom, which forms its own interruptions to teaching and learning, and which contributes further to the complexity of teaching and learning.

Chapter 4
"If I Could Just Teach"

This chapter explores how various pressures, such as the international competitions referred to above, are leading to onerous reporting and accountability, which distract teachers from the core business of teaching, and may be sapping them of the time, energy, creativity, agency and will essential for good teaching. The chapter examines the proliferating complexity of being a learner and teacher in the twenty-first century, and at concomitant cognitive and emotional load for teachers. It also investigates other issues such as student resistance to learning, and their possible links to teacher attrition and burnout. It discusses teachers' experiences against a framework of demands made on, and support offered to, the teacher. This chapter also introduces some of the above issues, and others affecting teachers, as a means of setting the scene for the chapters that follow in this section.

> Disclaimer *n* a repudiation or denial
>
> HarperCollins, 1999, p. 445
>
> a statement that denies something, especially responsibility.
>
> Google Online Dictionary

Introduction

I argued in Chap. 2 that teachers are not only costly to produce, but easily lost or damaged. In addition to the dynamics discussed in previous chapters affecting teacher numbers, the retention of teachers has been problematic for some time in Australia (Buchanan et al., 2013), as elsewhere (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Rinke & Mawhinney, 2017; Kim, 2019). Teacher workloads and responsibilities have risen markedly of late. Manuel, Carter and Dutton (2018, p. 5) surveyed 211 English secondary school teachers in NSW, and summated their respondents' concerns thus:

> Administrative and accountability compliance demands associated with monitoring and reporting of student and teacher performance; high-stakes test preparation, associated data gathering, administration and heightened expectations from the school executive,

J. Buchanan, *Challenging the Deprofessionalisation of Teaching and Teachers*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-8538-8_4

> students, parents and the wider community; the speed of centralised curriculum change and policy reform; and diminished resources and support, including inadequate support for implementing new curriculum.

Respondents of Manuel et al.'s study reported working, on average, 58 h per week. They recounted "intensification of aspects of their workload that were not directly related to teaching and learning, and the impact of this on their capacity for high quality teaching and commitment" (p. 13). Day (2017, pp. 2–3) argues that "there can be little doubt that teachers this century face unprecedented national pressures to comply with policy agendas through increasingly interventionist systems of surveillance of the quality of their work and its measurable impact on pupil progress and attainment".

Some aspects of the above educational climate change apply to most professions, with, for example, the intrusion of ceaseless email and phone access, and response-immediacy expectations that have become the norm—but as with climate change, a new normalcy does not make for healthy or sustainable being. These issues will be discussed mainly in their capacity to distract teachers from the real work of teaching—the work they were educated—and some would say, born—to do. A stereotypical view of a classroom, and a recollection for some, is that of a teacher being distracted from the work at hand by off-task student behaviour. Now, distractions come from multiple sources. Just as students need to be held accountable for any interruptions to education they cause, any of us disrupting the core business of education might need to spend some time out, reconsidering our behaviour. If education is a right, then supporting it is a responsibility; none has a right to disrupt it. The urgency of the disruption is probably in the eye of the disruptor—but this alleged urgency needs to be open to questioning.

Pressures on Teachers' Time and Energy

A quest for "effectiveness" has dominated political responses to perceived declines in student performance. Mockler and Groundwater-Smith (2018) report "the seduction of effectiveness", arguing that "a generation of policy designers have valorised certainty over complexity; formulaic mantra as opposed to differentiation; and narrow, utilitarian economic values as opposed to social and inclusive mores". I would add, "control over free rein". They continue, "*effectiveness* has a pernicious appeal that eschews professional judgement and constructive feedback and makes claims to be evidence-based without challenging the nature of the evidence itself" (p. 37, emphasis in original).

A question arising from this chapter for those claiming to work in support of education is: (how) am I assisting, or frustrating, the work of educators? Those calling for constant vigilance against the authorities, have at times invoked the Latin proverb: quis custiodet ipsos custiodes? Who guards the guards? I also want to ask, quis docet ipsos magistros? (in my poor Latin). Who teaches (and supports in other

ways) the teachers? And to what standards of accountability do we hold these teacher-teachers? It seems only courteous to tell naked ambition that it's naked. Extending from this, if we provide a poor learning environment, we can barely expect better than poor learning. Similarly, in a poor teaching environment, we can barely chastise teachers for not performing optimally. If it takes a village to teach the child, how is the village supporting that teaching?

The demands on teachers are high and unrelenting. The 2018 TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey, OECD, 2019) garnered responses from over 260,000 teachers in 47 countries. It investigated "five pillars' of teachers" work: requisite knowledge and skills; the profession's prestige; opportunities for career advancement; collaboration among peers; and professional responsibility and autonomy. Participating teachers reported that almost a quarter (22%) of their time was consumed with classroom management, which displaced teaching. Only 22% of new teachers have an assigned mentor. ("Assigned", not "chosen" also raises concern.) Respondents indicated that pre-service education didn't universally prepare teachers adequately; initial teacher education in ICT was reported by only slightly more than half of the respondents (56%), and teaching in a multicultural context by just over one in three (35%).

Attention to Teaching Standards

Teaching Standards are one response to concerns about student underperformance. In their entirety, the Australia's Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2017) operate at four levels, as outlined below:

- Graduate level: to be demonstrated for a student to graduate from their Initial Teacher Education course.
- Proficient: a requirement for registration as a teacher, and is to be accomplished within 3 years of graduating. Casual teachers (known by various names in different jurisdictions, such as supply, or relief teachers) have a longer period, 5 years, in which to gather evidence and demonstrate proficient status. Some non-permanent teachers have shared concerns about this, with difficulty in getting their school to support them to attend requisite in-service courses, some of which attract fees (Burke, Aubusson, Schuck, Buchanan, & Prescott, 2015).
- Highly accomplished.
- Lead level.

Attainment at highly accomplished and lead levels is discretionary, except for those teachers seeking promotion. Fees of slightly over $600 and $700, respectively, apply to applicants for highly accomplished and lead levels in NSW (NESA, 2019a). While the Standards may form helpful guidelines, particularly for neophyte teachers, a focus on teacher performance (Manuel et al., 2018) may distract and detract from focusing on students' progress (Buchanan, Harb, & Fitzgerald, accepted). Anecdotally, uptake of these higher levels is low.

A discrete standard operates for school principals (AITSL, 2015). It resides within the contexts of a global economy and society, an inclusive Australia, and the uniqueness of each school within its community (p. 7). It operates through three lenses:

- The Leadership Requirements lens encompasses three requirements: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and personal qualities, social and interpersonal skills.
- The Professional Practices lens embodies five professional practices: leading teaching and learning; developing self and others; leading innovation, improvement and change; leading the management of the school; and engaging and working with the community.
- The Leadership Emphasis lens assumes four focuses: operational, relational, strategic and systemic (p. 12).

This is a noble but exacting amalgam of principles, particularly considering the day-to-day management and leadership of perhaps 100 staff and 1000 students or more, negotiating with parents and the system jurisdiction, engaging (with) the community, budgeting, overseeing toilet repairs, etc.—presuming available funding. The devolution of budgeting to schools has meant that principals, many with little related experience or training, must manage and balance their, possibly substantial, school's budget. Some principals of smaller schools might also teach part or full time, adding considerably to workload, and perhaps compromising the attention required by their students. Such principals are likely to have considerably smaller staff and student numbers. Nevertheless, they must deal with the same torrent of cross-desk administrivia.

Student Behaviour

While it is difficult to quantify such things, most teachers and others would agree that the student behaviour has become more problematic in recent years. Similarly, while comparisons are elusive, it may be that the number and seriousness of student infractions in Australian schools exceeds those in some of the jurisdictions with which our students' performance has been compared, such as Shanghai. Of course, meek acquiescence is not a desirable student outcome; numbers of Australian students recently took strike action to call for action on climate change. I am heartened by their defiance of authorities, including their dismissal of a comment by Australia's Resources Minister, that "the best thing you learn about going to a protest is how to join the dole [unemployment benefits] queue" (ABC News, 2018).

Nevertheless, we casually invoke the expression "classroom-ready teacher" (Buchanan & Schuck, 2016); what, though, of the teacher-ready class (room)? A group of students armed with a sense of the importance, purpose, pathways and privilege of education, its cost to others, and concomitant responsibilities on themselves,

and associated benefits? In 2010, Buchanan (pp. 208–209) reported that student discipline may have become "an issue that dare not speak its name, either by practising teachers, systems or researchers". It is perhaps an issue that few wish to acknowledge. For teachers, it concedes defeat, and for those employed on a day-to-day basis, as casual teachers, it may be an invitation not to be re-employed. Neither are senior teachers or school jurisdictions keen to concede signs of defeat or failure in this regard. In recent years, however, more attention appears to have been brought to the issue. (I'm claiming no credit here.) The figures are nevertheless alarming. In 2018, 45% of principals and deputy/assistant principals reported threats of violence against them, with reports of physical violence increasing from 27% of principals in 2011, to 37% in 2018 (Institute for Positive Psychology and Education, 2019, p. 17). Concerning classroom discipline, teachers may find themselves bearing increasing responsibility, alongside diminishing authority. They may be criticised by parents for disciplining, or for not disciplining. Understandably, this drains teachers (Aldrum, Klusmann, Lüdtke, Göllner, & Trautwein, 2016; Tsouloupas, Carson, Matthews, Grawitch, & Barber, 2010), with inherent student disrespect and antisocial behaviour (Hastings & Bham, 2003). Even the literature appears to recoil from holding students responsible for their behaviour, with titles like "teacher *perceptions* of misbehaviour", and "mediation through the teacher-student relationship", which is possibly implied as the teacher's (sole?) responsibility.

Australia has recently engaged in public debate about standards of behaviour in our parliament, and, specifically, allegations of bullying and intimidation levelled, in particular, at women. A former Foreign Minister and Deputy Party Leader, Julie Bishop, claimed, "it is evident that there is an acceptance of a level of behaviour in [the Federal Parliament in] Canberra that would not be tolerated in any other workplace across Australia" (Branley, 2018). Several women, including Ms Bishop, left the party at that time. I don't wish to diminish the seriousness and extent of the apparent problem in our corridors of Parliament, but I believe that many of us might be shaken to witness the behaviour and attitudes of some students in some classrooms. Armstrong (2018, p. 997) refers to behaviour management in schools as a "wicked problem"; it is among the greatest concerns and preoccupations of my pre-service students. Losen, Hodson, Keith, Morrison and Belway (2015) observe that in the United States, while suspension rates have plateaued since the turn of the century, they remain high. According to Losen et al. (2015), 3.5 million students in the US were suspended at least once during the 2011–12 school year. They contend that the attainment gap can't be narrowed until the discipline gap is addressed. They question whether discipline is being administered equitably along gender and racial lines. Skiba and Losen (2016), among others, question the value of suspensions more broadly. It is easy for armchair observers such as myself to criticise schools, systems or students regarding policy and behaviour. Suffice it to say, though, that the behaviour of some students is unacceptable, and potentially threatens not only education, but also the safety and well-being of other scholars. I trust that, at least, this section might prompt further related debate. I will discuss some tentative ways forward in the final section.

Accountability and Paperwork

Paperwork, including that for pedagogical preparation, has proliferated for teachers of late. Fitzgerald, McGrath-Champ, Stacey, Wilson, & Gavin (2018) report a paperwork "tsunami", with Australian teachers' working hours among the highest in the OECD. Kanbayashi and Nadezhda (2016) argue that paper work and busy work have actually declined for teachers in Japan since the 1950s, but that overall workloads have increased, largely due to increased time devoted to extracurricular activities. This increase runs against the trend for most workers in Japan, whose working hours have diminished in the same period.

Illustrating paperwork and accountability, field trips are an important component of a child's education and exposure to the world, and are mandated by some syllabus documents. But in our state schools, a risk assessment must be undertaken, and a risk management plan developed as part of an approval process for any field trip (NSW Department of Education Policy Library, 2018b). I am advised by a teaching colleague of a nine-page RMP for a swimming carnival. Many parents take their children to the local pool without incident. Some older children even attend unsupervised. On the one hand, it is only reasonable for a teacher, and even more so a large organisation such as the Department of Education, to be highly vigilant to minimise risk of harm to children. And to the extent that these measures may have prevented injury or worse, they are laudable. Potentially, though, this policy is occasioning a retreat from excursions, to the impoverishment of the child. When field trips do occur, their preparation comes at an opportunity cost of either professional preparation for teaching, and/or a teacher's personal life and energies. The precautions vastly exceed those undertaken by "a reasonable parent" taking their children to, say, a local zoo. It is worth recalling that a teacher acts *in loco parentis*. One might ask what reasonable precautions a responsible parent might be expected to take when taking their child/ren out and about. Naturally, institutionalisation of an outing requires higher levels of risk-prevention—parents rarely escort 25 or more children. The Department's excursion policy contains 28 sub-sections, under six headings. Arguably, field trips assume greater importance in a time when, it appears, increasing numbers of children inhabit "small worlds" in which they might rarely venture beyond their house, or, increasingly commonly in Australia, their apartment, except for school (Live Science, 2019).

Teachers are expected to develop and maintain at least a working familiarity with myriad policy documents, from, alphabetically, Aboriginal Education to Workplace Learning, in New South Wales (NSW Department of Education Policy Library, 2018a). A brief scan of the NSW DoE Policy Library site unearthed 90 current policy documents. These are all arguably valid, but may present a bewildering array of demands, particularly to the beginning teacher or beginning principal. They have the potential to complement teaching and learning, or to obfuscate it.

Lack of Support

Regrettably, colleagues and the school executive can't always be relied on for support. Riley, Duncan and Edwards (2009) surveyed 800 Australian teachers about bullying in schools. Colleagues and executive were identified as the alpha bullies, followed by parents, then students. Bullying was categorised as follows: personal confrontation; diminution of professional standing; workload, and working conditions and environment (p. 6). More than 90% of respondents had experienced or witnessed each of the following: withholding of information, imposition of impossible or unreasonable deadlines or targets, attempts at undermining or belittling work, and withholding of praise (pp. 2–3)—presumably from colleagues or superiors in the main. It would seem reasonable that teachers should instinctively recoil from some of these behaviours. Some bullying behaviour was directed at students, and not all was aimed at beginning teachers; some in power are equal-opportunity bullies, it appears. Student bullying of teachers has been reported elsewhere. In South Africa, for instance, Woudstra, van Rensburg, Visser and Jordaan (2018) reported that of their 153 respondents, 62.1% had suffered verbal bullying, more than one in three (34.6%), physical bullying. Smaller proportions (27% and 6.6%, respectively) reported indirect or cyberbullying; Garrett (2018) draws attention to its silence in academic, policy and public discourse. A teaching colleague of mine, who wished to remain anonymous, reported, "unwarranted criticism during staff meetings (e.g. my reports were held up as an example of poor report writing), making derogatory comments about my teaching in front of both students and parents, inconsistent application of professional standards and expectations, extreme micromanaging and undermining initiatives that I led".

Curriculum

One problem that teachers do *not* have is insufficient material to teach. Curricular reforms typically load content and material into the curriculum, partly because of fears that other jurisdictions are doing so. This expansion does a pas de deux with expanding knowledge—that in itself is probably inevitable and arguably meritorious, but adds to the teacher's and the student's burden. Moreover, as Manuel et al. (2018) observe, the necessity for teachers to familiarise and resource themselves for constantly updated curricula further adds to workload. This will be discussed in more detail in Chap. 5, where some possible alternatives to current curricular structures will be considered.

Australian Classroom Demographics

One current characteristic of the teach-force is the flight of men from the profession, particularly in the early years of schooling. McGrath and Van Bergen (2017) tracked the proportion of male teachers in Australian schools over a half-century, from 1965 to 2016.[1] From these figures, they extrapolated a vanishing point for male teachers in another half-century, by 2067. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018a), the proportion of single-parent families remained steady between the last two censuses, in 2011 and 2016, at about 15.8%. This would equate to about four children in an average class of 25. Of Australia's 900,000 single parents in 2016, more than 80% were women (ABS, 2017). This may exacerbate any potential problems related to the scarcity of men in teaching. Television (advertising, sit-coms and the like) offer few positive male role models. Ditto news programmes. Male-absent families are not the only problem to affect our students' application to school and learning. What follows is a snapshot of some of the challenges faced by Australian society, including schools and teachers.

Unemployment sits at just over 5%, about one in 20 adults looking for work; this statistic is soon to soar. Underemployment affects 8.4% of eligible workers (ABS, 2019a). The number of divorces granted in Australia increased slightly from 2016 to 2017, in a context of fewer people marrying. The median length of an Australian marriage is 12 years (ABS, 2018b). I am surmising here, but the eldest child/ren of such a marriage might be, on average, about 10 or 11 years old, and, of course, any subsequent children younger again. Fyfe and Cook (2019, p. 22) report that "schools are often the setting for disputes over access to children, with teachers and principals left to enforce court orders". The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018c) reported in 2007 that 45% of the population would experience mental illness in their lifetime. In 2017/18, just over one in every five Australians had a behavioural or mental condition (ABS, 2019b). The increase from the previous year was mainly attributed to a rise in anxiety and depression. Homelessness increased 4.6% in the 5 years to 2016 in Australia (ABS, 2018d). According to the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS, 2018), one in every six Australian children is living in poverty (about four or five in an "average" class). About one woman per week in Australia is murdered at the hands of her current or a previous partner (Australian Institute for Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2018). Suicide rates increased in Australia during the period from 2008 to 2017, from 10.9 to 12.6 per 100,000 people (ABS, 2018e). The ABS (2018f) reported 1808 drug-induced deaths in 2016. While this represents a reduction in the per-capita rate, it is the highest number on record. And the deaths are only the tip of the ice(etc.)berg.

Teachers, these are the children the village presents to you, to educate. Thank you. And amid all these complications and preoccupations ("is my maths textbook at mum's place, or dad's place?"[2]) you succeed in educating them. And you regularly

[1] In the 2 years to 2016, the male proportion of primary teachers was decimated, falling from about 20–18% (The Conversation, 2017).

[2] Or at mums' place or dads' place?

manage to make the classroom a desirable place to be, perhaps most notably, but also most thanklessly, for those children who might be living uncertainty if not turmoil outside school. None of this is to present our young people in deficit mode. It's just that they often carry more than their books and other equipment (minus their maths book some days?) to school. And, of course, illness and/or injury beset the adults and/or children in any family, for shorter or longer periods. Accordingly, concerns beyond (and/or at) school might be competing for some of your students' cognitive bandwidth. And complicating your work. I dip my mortar board to you.

Remember, too, the multicultural and multi-able nature of Australia's classrooms, raised in the previous chapter. As mentioned there, this is joyously enriching, but does demand more from teachers in helping their students learn, while coping with acquiring English as a subsequent language, and, for some, processing the traumas that led them to become refugees, or dispossessed in other ways, or rising to the challenge of disability.

Inequality of wealth—or inequality of poverty?—is on the increase (ACOSS & UNSW, 2018). There are pragmatic, as well as "touchy-feely" implications here. We sometimes speak of a brain drain. But what of a heart drain, where people in the caring professions—teachers and nurses, including casual teachers—can't afford to live in the wealthiest areas? A case of the poor disenfranchising the wealthy, through denial of service? Poverty-related concerns and worries—hunger, for instance—will also impinge upon a student's, and their parent's or parents', capacity to prioritise and support school learning.

Suffice it to say that not everyone feels the luck in the "Lucky Country" (Horne, 1964). The above statistics are disturbing to the extent that they may reflect an education system that has not served Australia well or provided a sound basis for its young. But perhaps here I'm falling into the trap of seeing school and teachers as the main or only cause of our downfall, or cargo cult for our salvation. Realistically, teachers have limited capacity to change a family's or community's circumstances. In any case, such problems, one or more of which might be affecting a significant proportion of students in any given class (and in some classes more than others), are going to impact significantly on a young person's capacity to recognise, and to take full advantage of, the school's wares. Their resultant attitudes and behaviour are likely to affect not only them, but also those around them, and their teachers, diverting them in their quest to understand. I hope I haven't already scared off any prospective teacher (or prospective parents—keep making babies—but nurture them as best you can!).

There are further insecurities for the young in our schools. Some of these effects might motivate them to work and study harder, or may have an opposite, demotivating, demoralising or alienating effect:

- Our young people may well be facing a climate change crisis, among other environmental degradations, largely of my generation's making. The crisis is likely to take hold only when I am dead, or old enough to welcome death.

- The young may also be facing a housing crisis, a shrinking and deterioration of their habitat, again, largely of my generation's making—although we intended them no harm as we inflated home prices.
- They may also be facing a work-related crisis, with, *inter alia*: the onset of automation, the great human redundancy, and the "gig economy"—such a grand example of "Newspeak"[3]—and such a festive-sounding euphemism—I'm using euphemism euphemistically here. Employers/owners are likely to warm to automatons that will work unquestioningly and unceasingly, won't divert from task, or trouble themselves with issues industrial or ethical. Fortunately, teachers will be troubling themselves with industrial and ethical issues for some time to come, given the complexity of teaching and learning.
- My generation has also flocked to China as a two-dollar shop, engorging its monetary and military might. It may turn out that the price we paid for all our shiny Chinese gewgaws is higher than we originally anticipated, to be borne by future generations.
- Covid-19.

Perhaps our young people's sole remaining comfort is their belief that their music is better than my generation's. I haven't the heart to tell them.

Attention by teachers to such issues comes at a cost, and can contribute to teacher burnout and teacher walkout (Molloy, 2019; Schipp, 2017). Of course, some of these worries, such as climate change, are no respecters of educational jurisdictions, and confront children everywhere, negating any national school league table disparities. Indeed, the effects might be more catastrophic in high-performing, low-lying locations like Singapore and Shanghai. And possibly the younger generation has always been more fearful than their elders about the future. I grew up during the Cold War, ("*1984* and all that"), and the threat of nuclear annihilation,[4] brought about largely by the previous generation. Then again, that generation fought and died against fascism (for which my generation, in its adolescence, wasn't unfailingly grateful). Yet there is hope; technology will deliver today's young people beyond their wildest daydreams (and nightmares—remain vigilant).

Supporting Teachers' Work

In principle, specific support mechanisms are available to beginning teachers. These include the provision of mentors and reduced face-to-face teaching time, but provision thereof appears somewhat sporadic (Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, Varadharadjan, & Burke, 2018; Hunter Institute of Mental Health, 2019). Moreover, mentor relationships should be supportive, and work in the service of a mentee's goals, to minimise "judgementoring" (Hobson & Malderez, 2013, p. 89). Schuck, Aubusson,

[3] Ironically, from an Australian perspective, Newspeak was Orwell's (1949) language of Oceania.

[4] This threat hasn't greatly diminished. It's just that we talk about it less now. Which is probably not a positive development.

Buchanan and Russell (2012) undertook an international study investigating early career teachers' satisfaction with their work. They theorised a two-dimensional model, support and demand, and found that high demand (characteristic of almost *all* beginning teachers' lives) is manageable in contexts of high support. Numerous beginning teachers report finding themselves teaching the more difficult classes in the more difficult schools. When developing the timetable the year before, it might be difficult to assign a problematic class or student to a known staff member. Much easier to assign said student or class to a new teacher who will graduate next year, arriving to replace dear old Syd, who's retiring. It would be regrettable if a mentality prevails, however, of allocating the most difficult classes to new teachers "because that's what they did to me when I started". Would it be unfair to call that out as a form of ritual, systemic hazing? Anecdotally, such treatment isn't limited to new teachers.

Beginning teachers may be more likely than their more experienced counterparts to secure employment as casual, or supply teachers (Schuck et al., 2016). All of the above-mentioned difficulties amplify for casuals. The most inexperienced teachers are likely to find themselves with the least support, particularly in terms of dealing with student behaviour infractions. This is toxic not just to the teaching experience, but also undermines the learning experience.

Supporting teachers includes letting them do what they do best—teach. I referred briefly in Chap. 1 to popular movies, and the scripting of the actors' lines, and in Chap. 2, to teaching undertaken by programmed automatons.[5] In some circles, this programming and scripting appears to be coming closer to reality. Direct instruction poses one threat to the quality of education and to the standing of the teaching profession, as I see it. It may be an appropriate, even ideal, approach, if the aim is for the student to parrot what is said by a teacher. Direct instruction has been shown to stifle higher order thinking. Zhang et al. (2016) found that children engaged in collaborative interaction, as opposed to direct instruction, acquired and were better able to transfer skills in decision-making. I accept that rote-learning is at times an appropriate building block for greater things.

Given the limitations—technical and pedagogical—of automating or stage-managing learning and teaching, it is regrettable that so much of what happens in schools, (and universities) and so much of teachers' work, is becoming increasingly micro-managed, and only tenuously, if at all, connected to the core business of school, i.e. pedagogy. Experienced teachers have little use for lines and numbers for colouring in; they are capable of adorning their own canvases. Anecdotally at universities, it appears routine for staff to receive feedback on subject outline documents pertaining to the use of colons and similar fundaments, rather than advice on quality pedagogy. Sadly, in my own work I no longer find it remarkable to be asked to replace a colon with two semicolons, or to insert a finger space before a capital letter; forgive me—the exact details escape me. Over the years I have become habituated to this level of feedback. Don't get me wrong; I love, for example, a well-placed apostrophe, but such placement falls short of contributing to the heart and mind of education. I'm not singling out my employer for criticism here; this is industry-wide,

[5] "Programmed automatons" now strikes me as a contradiction in terms.

apparently. Similarly, regarding assessment, I am no longer a novice, and can mark holistically. Multiplying the number of subjective decisions made on an assignment might look more convincing to the uninitiated, but does not remove the subjectivity of the exercise.

Teacher Retention and Attrition

As reported in Chap. 3, at the end of 3 years' teaching, half of the "Teach for…" (Australia, America) candidates had left (The Guardian, 2018b; Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin & Heilig, 2005). There may be several reasons for this: some who enter a Teach for… programme are career-changers, so they might be expected to keep seeking new horizons. They may have been attracted to teaching by push factors rather than pull factors, and they may have harboured unrealistic expectations of teaching. They have been away from schools for longer than those who proceed directly into teacher education from school, and so the changes they experience will be greater. Moreover, such teachers might enter the profession with a certain sense of privilege—by definition the profession, and, in particular, the Teach for… programmes, attempt to attract leaders in their field—candidates who might have become accustomed to receiving accolades both in their former work lives and during their studies. The loss of second-career teachers is lamentable, given their greater experience-based capacity to contribute to school renewal and re-visioning (see Varadharajan & Buchanan, forthcoming). In any case, such a high attrition rate is alarming. It questions the outcome value of a short-term strategy to relieve teacher shortages. More research is needed into various aspects of this new teacher education approach.

Perhaps those most likely to stay in teaching are those who have known nothing else. In terms of push factors, these teachers cannot make informed comparisons with other professions and their working conditions. In terms of pull factors, all other professions will remain unfamiliar, and therefore, perhaps, forbidding. Some of the teachers who remain, then, might be doing so by default? The Teach for… attrition statistics are particularly stark if the US National Center for Educational Studies (2015) statistics of 17.3% attrition for teachers generally is taken into account. While Teach for… programmes do not require previous workplace experience, some graduates may be in a position to make informed comparisons with at least one other career. Their attrition rate is suggestive of the conditions and satisfaction levels of teaching vis-à-vis their previous profession/s. If it is on this basis that many Teach for… recruits are leaving, then teaching is not scoring well on the league table of professional attractiveness. That so many of these teachers leave so soon is costly and unfortunate, and most likely symptomatic of things unwell with the teaching profession. Or it may reflect the abbreviated pre-service preparation offered.

Moreover, for every teacher who acts on their intention to leave the profession, many more harbour intentions of doing so. A National Education Union (2018) survey of about 8000 teachers in England found that 81% had considered leaving

the profession in the previous 12 months. The main cause was unmanageable workload. Teachers' altruism is "susceptible to being whittled away under the weight of unreasonable and unmanageable workloads" (Manuel & Hughes, 2006, p. 26).

Teacher attrition is a problem more broadly. One might adopt a laissez-faire market approach, in terms of matching jobs and people, but a cynic might argue that the attrition rate keeps alive a teacher preparation industry, at considerable cost to the public purse—I say this at my own peril. Moreover, for each teacher who leaves the profession for push factors—overwork, underpay, dearth of support and respect, etc.—there is a pathway of disillusionment. Even if one wishes to reduce education to a market approach, surely, business is the art of providing a satisfactory product, one of which the "seller" can be proud, and in which the "buyer" (the teacher, as well as the student, parent and community) can be confident. Moreover, success in business derives from dealing with people—employees, customers, passengers and clients.

Much of the above can lead to resignation on the part of teachers, in both senses of the word. Rinke and Mawhinney (2017) report that their 24 ex-teacher participants, "were pushed and pulled *into* teaching, pushed and pulled *out of* teaching, and pushed and pulled *around* their passions (p. 360, emphases in original). For some, it's a rough ride.

For those entering or about to enter the teaching workforce, take heart—the profession might not (and *need* not!) be quite the graveyard depicted above. Weldon (2018) asserts that commonly cited attrition figures of up to 50% in the first 5 years may lack a strong evidence-base. Indeed, the dual narratives of high attrition, and a rising mean or median age of teachers seem to be mutually contradictory, as does the duality of high attrition and difficulty for some beginning teachers in securing work, particularly if, as is reasonable to assume, large numbers of "baby boomer" teachers are currently retiring. The US's National Center for Educational Studies (2015) conducted a longitudinal study of over 150,000 teachers who graduated in 2007. Five years later, only 17.3%, about one in every six, had left teaching. Nevertheless, this still equates to more than 26,000 teachers nationally leaving the profession within 5 years. This could be seen as worrying in terms of the public investment in teacher education.

Weldon (2018) distils six reasons for teacher attrition. These are (p. 71).

- Demand effect—teachers unable to find regular employment.
- Personal effect—leaving for personal or family reasons, such as illness.
- Compatibility effect—leaving due to feeling unsuited to the role.
- Career choice effect—leaving to pursue an alternative career.
- Environment effect—leaving due to lack of support, school and leadership culture, workload, etc.
- Performance effect—teachers sacked/de-registered due to poor performance or illegal activity.

I will discuss each of these in turn. As Weldon points out, not all of these reasons for leaving are necessarily negative. Naturally, personal and family reasons can affect employees in any profession. Data on the proportion of teachers this happens to, vis-a-vis other professions appears scarce. Petrone (2019) ranks education as the profession

with the fifth highest attrition, after (with attributed reasons) technology (demand and competition), retail (transformation to e-commerce), media and entertainment (gig economy), and professional services. Weldon notes, for example, that more women than men appear to interrupt their careers for child caring. Such women might be replaced by other women of childbearing age. The fact that teaching is a workforce peopled by more women than men has sometimes been interpreted as a symptom of poor conditions, such as low remuneration. This may well be part of the equation. Gender pay gaps in sport, which typically disadvantage women, suggest that this bias might be operating more broadly. Women worldwide earn less than men. The World Economic Forum (2019a)[6] contend that this is because work done by women is ipso facto, less valued. If so, an argument can be mounted that everyone (well, at least all of us who get to go to school—and that proportion, happily, is increasing globally) is now disadvantaged, because we devote less money to attract teachers because women outnumber men in the workforce. When I was at school, I recall that my female teachers were paid less than their male counterparts. Even in those endarkened days, that struck me viscerally as well as intellectually as grossly unjust and indefensible.[7] I suspect that lower pay rates are also a further symptom of an "anyone can teach" mentality. Salary increases might be awarded more on the basis of sympathy for the poor, put-upon teacher, than in recognition of teachers' intellectual work. Pay rises are typically forthcoming only after several industrial strikes shaming the government—but not shaming them sufficiently to prevent the same ritual dance a few years later when teacher salaries lag behind again. The WEF (2019b) also predicts that it will take, on current trends, about 202 years to neutralise the gender pay gap. I wonder if, together, we could hurry that date along a bit? I'll be old by then. As an aside, it's curious that in some football codes in Australia, we impose a ceiling *cap*—you're not allowed to pay the members of a team more than a certain amount in total. And this cap appears to be routinely breached. Footballers.[8] Imagine living in a society where we had to be hosed down in our enthusiasm to pay teachers more. And—delicious irony—all because we wanted (them) to perform better in *league tables*!

[6]The WEF site contains some interesting statistics and compelling arguments that might make for engaged discussion in classes of boys, girls or mixed. "Bias impoverishes all of us, even though it disproportionately disadvantages its targets. Discuss."

[7]My male teachers may have caned us with more vim. Beyond that, I can discern no difference in gender performance. Caning is a competency increasingly less required of teachers nowadays. My education might be characterised by a carrot-and-stick approach. Although I cannot ever recall being offered carrots by my teachers.

[8]Don't get me wrong. I like sport. But I sometimes think the excitement is disproportionate to the importance. I listen to, say, cricket commentators getting so excited when someone hits the ball. Hard. And it goes a long way. That sequence of events no longer holds the element of surprise over me. I sometimes wonder how excited the commentators would become if something really important happened on the pitch. Like an outbreak of measles.

The profession may be well rid of poorly performing teachers, depending on the adequacy of the judgements that have been made on their inadequate performance (Weldon's performance effect, above, and, possibly self-judged compatibility). Leaving to pursue another career is likely to be an amalgam of the new career's attractiveness relative to that of teaching. Inability to find steady employment (demand effect) may be a factor of some of the other decisions to leave teaching. Some issues may be the fault of neither the teacher nor the profession. For example, it may be that the prospective teacher is unwilling, or indisposed, to travel far from home, or cannot afford to live in an area where there are teaching vacancies. Inability to secure a teaching job may also be a casualty of poor planning or irresponsibility on the part of governments or teacher education providers, preparing more teachers than are needed to offset resignation and retirement. A prospective teacher who is unwilling to travel might be fairly criticised for having undertaken teacher education in the first place. But, of course, circumstances can change between deciding to become a teacher and graduation. New carer responsibilities might commence, for example.

This leaves Weldon's (2018) remaining two motives: environment effect and compatibility effects. Compatibility effect may find its origins, in part, in uninformed decisions made on the part of the prospective teacher (exacerbated by the "anyone can teach" notion?). To the extent that this is so, then it is not just the profession that suffers from such misconceptions, but also at least some prospective teachers. The environment effect is more squarely placed at the foot of the profession, some of its more senior members, its systems, jurisdictions and the government. An environment for good teaching is an environment for good learning.

It is unlikely that most teachers leave for one of Weldon's reasons alone. It is possible, for example, that the nature of the work itself (as in any line of work) may have effects on matters such as health and relationships. The extent to which this impacts the teaching, as opposed to other, workforces, merits investigation.[9]

In most of the above cases, however, the decision to leave teaching is unlikely to be taken lightly, given a multi-year investment, associated tuition fees and forgone wages, in learning to become a teacher. This, apart from any emotional investment, in teaching, self, learning and learners.

Teacher stress has been shown, unsurprisingly, to correlate with burnout and attrition (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Brewer (2018) defines burnout as "the development of negative emotions, cynical thoughts, and physical and mental exhaustion as a response to stressors associated with one's career". Blackman (2017) refers to the taboo of discussing teachers' mental health. Skaalvik and Skaalvik sought responses from over 760 schoolteachers to identify the most significant stressors in their work. The respondents noted four main contributors: classroom management/discipline; demotivated students; value dissonance (misalignment with school values) and time

[9] In deference to footballers, I recognise that they, too, have short career lives. And as we're belatedly discovering, their work (our entertainment) also has debilitating effects on their health in the long-term. Teaching is not alone in scarring its employees. This is common to other professions, such as police and the armed forces—but are these curious comparisons to make with teaching?

pressure. By far the greatest was time pressure. No doubt the factors operate cumulatively; demotivated students may be seen as a cause of discipline problems. In the light of the other three stressors, a feeling of not belonging to the school and its values is likely to be particularly alienating. Some of this dissonance with school values might also be part of the cause of student disengagement.

Mérida-López and Extremera (2017) found a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and teacher burnout. Clearly, the attributes that teachers bring to their work are pivotal. Emotional intelligence and resilience can only last so long if not refuelled. What happens when circumstances overwhelm a teacher? Moreover, resilience might be used to encourage acquiescence. We say that the teacher is key. But perhaps it's the student who's central to some of these dynamics? Shen et al. (2015) analysed surveys from over 1000 physical education students and their teachers. They found a negative correlation between teacher exhaustion and students' perceptions of teacher autonomy support. In other words, the more that students perceived support from their teachers, the less exhausted teachers became—perhaps because of improved student behaviour? I'm not placing the locus of responsibility primarily on students to lift their teachers' morale, just observing that they have the agency to do so, and that they might reap the benefits.

A Note of Hope

If time pressure is the foremost problem, then remedies should not be elusive. A behaviour management and modification plan for this time-pressure troublemaker might include smaller classes, lower face-to-face teaching demands and/or a devolution of some duties (some paperwork? Playground supervision?) to other, additional staff. This may be costly, but current circumstances are also costly for many teachers, and therefore for the profession in terms of teacher burnout and replacement, and painful falls from league table ladders. Starting salaries for teachers in Australia are competitive according to Weldon (2015) but become less so as teachers proceed in the profession unless they seek promotion, which typically trajects them beyond the classroom and face-to-face teaching. It hardly needs to be said that salary increases will present the profession to the public in a more prestigious light. If, as the literature and common sense suggest, teachers are the foremost factor in teaching, and given what we demand of them, higher recompense would not be unreasonable, and would be a token of the village's estimation of learning.

Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan and Russell (2012) used a mixture of support and demand as one means of measuring the life-work of a teacher. An adaptation of this model might entail support, challenge and autonomy/agency. Whether part of, or separate from, support, this is likely to fuel a teacher's desire to continue—knowing that they can make a difference for good—and are trusted so to do. This will be reprised in the final chapters.

One effective if not essential way to support students, and get the most out of the education system, is to support its teachers. Every other player can be a part of this:

other teachers, students, the school executive, parents, the community, the media, education jurisdictions and governments (Day, 2017). Ways in which this might be done will be touched on in the remaining chapters, and discussed more fully in the final section of the book.

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Chapter 5
Basic, Basal Skills and Their Effects on Higher Order Thinking

This chapter investigates the impact of NAPLAN (Australia's Literacy and Numeracy testing regime), as well as other forms of (basic skills) testing, both in terms of literacy and numeracy standards, and for the profession more broadly. It also examines the impact of the My School website, with regard to school branding and reputation, and in/consistencies between intended and actual outcomes thereof. The chapter compares what appears to be a rather dour preoccupation with testing basic skills, with some of the lofty aspirations contained in documents such as the Melbourne Declaration.

Introduction

The unexamined life is not worth living

Socrates

(I doubt Socrates was referring to basic skills testing.)

सर्वे मानवाः जन्मना स्वतन्त्राः वैयक्तिकगौरवेण अधिकारेण च तुल्याः एव ।
सर्वेषां विवेकः आत्मसाक्षी च वर्तते । सर्वे परस्परं भ्रातृभावेन व्यवहरेयुः ॥

I'm forever thankful I was taught how to read. I hope that I will never take that for granted, much less treat it with disdain. And I hope nothing in this chapter conveys the impression that I treat the gifts, for that is what they are, of reading and understanding, as trifles.[1] I remain ever indebted, and I hope, unerringly grateful, to those who gifted me these priceless things—both directly (my elders—family, teachers and others),

[1]Trifles, either in the sense of trivialities, or as spongy desserts, but that distinction is beside the point. Do read on.

J. Buchanan, *Challenging the Deprofessionalisation of Teaching and Teachers*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-8538-8_5

and indirectly (the governments that funded education—including the education of my elders, to pass on their gift—and the taxpayers, and the prevailing pro-literacy culture, enabling the funding of education). The prevailing pro-literacy culture is probably as much a gift of, as to, education. I've yet to meet anyone who can read, yet wishes they couldn't, or wishes they could read more poorly. As humans we are instinctively curious, and eager, almost to the point of desperation, to make meaning.

Increasing numbers of Australians, literate in Hindi, Nepali or other related languages, would be capable of reading the above ancient text easily—a valuable addition to our national linguistic footprint, and our international competitiveness (if learning is to be seen as a competition). For the record, the above text, translated into English (if Omniglot (2019) is correct) is, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood".

Nice

It's Article 1 of the UN (n.d.) Declaration of Human Rights, in Sanskrit. I'm so unschooled in Devanagari script, that if I found the above text on a scrap of paper, or chiselled on a fragment of stone, I would probably turn it upside down—overturning the Declaration—on the presumption, based in part on my previous limited experience, that one writes above the line. I would also have guessed, incorrectly, that the script is written from right to left—to my eyes, that is, the direction in which the symbols[2] appear to face. Also, it appears to me that the numbers 1 and 2 appear at the right-hand end of the lines of text. How good is learning? (You probably knew.) In a busy life, I all-too-rarely take a few moments' pause to think on't.

Accordingly, I heartily welcome various governments' initiatives everywhere to ensure (multi-)literacy for all.

Returning briefly to the Declaration above, I'm trying to conjure a gender-inclusive alternative to "brotherhood". "Kinship", maybe? Even "kinship" excludes. I might settle on "humanity and solidarity". I'm open to suggestions.

If anything, a part of the Declaration I savour even more than the "free and equal" bit (which I perhaps do take for granted, never having had to fight seriously for freedoms or for my (more than?) equal slice of opportunity), is the "reason and conscience" part. I had to take the Omniglot website on trust for my translation from Sanskrit to English. For all I know, the text could be a fascist manifesto of superiority, or any other manner of things I would find abhorrent, or at least would want no association with. In the absence of "understanding", language is no more than a noisy gong or clanging cymbal/symbol (with apologies to St. Paul[3]), or worse. And in the absence of open-minded, empathic and multi-perspectived "reason and conscience" (Declaration 1, above), my "education" poses a threat. This chapter is

[2]They are not letters as such, or characters, as I am led to understand it. Sanskrit uses an abugida, or alpha-syllabary, a system of consonant–vowel sounds/symbols. "Abugida" comes from the first four letters of the Greek alphabet, alpha, beta, gamma, delta (α, β, γ, δ). I mention that partly because you (and I) are perhaps more likely to remember it now, if you didn't already know. For much of this information, I've relied on the Wikipedia sites "Abugida" and "Greek alphabet", in the hope that they are faithful to the truths they purport to represent.

[3]Bible: 1 Corinthians, 13:1, Revised Standard Version.

the first following the introduction to this section, because basic skills exemplify much that is diminished with regard to education and how it operates.

Basic Skills and Education of the Person

> History has come to a stage when the moral man [*sic*], the complete man, is more and more giving way, almost without knowing it, to make room for the political and the commercial man, the man of the limited purpose. This process, aided by the wonderful progress in science, is assuming gigantic proportion and power, causing the upset of man's moral balance, obscuring his human side under the shadow of soul-less organization.
>
> Tagore, 1917, p. 16.

Tagore continues, "for the sake of humanity we must stand up and give warning to all".

I will touch in this section on some of the commercial and political ends into which education and life, more broadly, are being shoehorned. Basic skills appear to be part of an increasingly instrumentalist approach to education—education not for (inter)personal enrichment, but for pragmatic purposes alone. Nussbaum (2010, p. 10) refers to Tagore's almost-without-knowing-ness above as a silent crisis, "a crisis that goes largely unnoticed, like a cancer". Unnoticed for a while, at least.

Tagore sees nationalism as the root of much evil. Curious, then, that international league table scores may have ignited or intensified the perceived need for basic skills testing.

Parents might ask, "what is the optimal environment in which I wish my child to learn, flourish and self-actualise?" Accordingly, we might seek the optimal conditions under which teacher-learners will flourish. What combinations of guidance and freedoms and associated risk-taking and tolerance might this entail?

Australia's NAPLAN Testing regime—An Illustrative Example

Basic skills testing has been conducted in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in Australia since its inception in 2008. The tests cover four domains: numeracy, persuasive writing, reading and language conventions (such as grammar, punctuation and spelling) (ACARA, 2011). Lingard, Thompson and Sellar (2016) point out that Australia's NAPLAN testing is a census, rather than a sampling operation, as is the case in some other nations (e.g. the pan-Canadian Assessment program or the National Assessment of Educational Progress in the United States); virtually all students in the abovementioned grades sit the test every year.

One question raised by this is how basic skills are. Masters (2016) defines literacy as the ability to "apply fundamental concepts and principles in real-world concepts" (p. 2). This transcends the basic; Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill and Krathwohl (1956)

position application among the higher levels of their hierarchy. If basic literacy resides solely or mainly at Freebody and Luke's (1990) "cracking the code" level of interaction with a text (see Chap. 10 for more details), this must become fairly frustrating, particularly by year 9.[4] An associated question this raises for me is why we are still busying ourselves with basic skills in year 9. "When do we get to do some advanced skills?", some year 9 students may be asking. Why were these not covered before the tenth year of compulsory schooling began? Disillusionment in the middle years of secondary school is widely known. Some research has drawn explicit links between disengagement and high-stakes testing (Mora, 2011) and an authoritarian school regime (Jia, Konold, & Cornell, 2016). Such an approach may give politicians opportunity to dog-whistle that our teachers, and/or our kids, are too inept to get even basic skills right. For me, one of shortfalls of basic skills testing is that it may obstruct connecting the whole learner with the whole curriculum or the whole world.

In my moments of cynicism, I sometimes postulate that Australia adopts a cautious approach to education reform; we tend to wait until a policy has been shown to fail elsewhere, then adopt it. I'm not the only one. Hargreaves (2010) describes Australia's publication of basic skills test results as "an odd choice—a bit like Cricket[5] Australia looking for improvement tips from Bangladesh or the Netherlands![6]" (p. 56), or as Australia "colonising the sinking sands of soulless standardisation…that most other nations have left behind" (p. 57).

As mentioned in Chap. 1, the unpleasantness associated with a procedure shouldn't, per se, deter us from undertaking it. Chemotherapy, for example, is beyond unpleasant, so I'm led to believe, but this shouldn't deter one from considering it, depending on other circumstances. Such procedures do (or may, depending on other circumstances) justify themselves based on their attendant benefits. The tests—like any data gathering exercise—should be subjected to their own test of benefit versus harm for the people from whom the data are collected, as is the case with any ethically conducted research. I will begin with some acclamations that have been accorded to basic skills testing, before proceeding to a discussion of some of its drawbacks.

[4] A personal account may be of use here. I recently visited North Korea, the DPRK. The tour guide taught me how to pronounce the Korean alphabet, Hangul. After a few days' practice, I found myself able to read, well, to recite, simple words and phrases. If the Korean word was pronounced similarly to its English equivalent, or if I was reading a name known to me, such as Kim Jong-un (you see his name a lot), there would be an "a-ha" moment for me. If not, I found myself simply making some sounds that, hopefully, equated to a Korean word, but which, anticlimactically, meant nothing to me.

[5] Cricket is a sport. Look it up. (Sometimes there aren't enough footnotes in all the world.).

[6] His words, not mine, dear Bangladeshi or Dutch readers.

Acclamations

Several benefits attributed to basic skills testing have been reported. These include its focus on the key areas of literacy and numeracy, and attention to pedagogy accordingly; its diagnostic capacity; the comparative data that it collects, particularly over time and its capacity to increase accountability (Thompson, 2013). Hargreaves sees some benefits of high-stakes testing, such as an increased sense of urgency to help those most at risk, and a potential for increased calls for funding to fix the crisis. Wiliam (2010) claims that high-stakes literacy and numeracy testing can realise positive, substantial results. He adds that although resulting data may have limited inferential validity, their impact may nevertheless justify such tests. Beyond its provision of useful information on student performance in the key areas of literacy and numeracy (Thompson & Harbaugh, 2013), reported advantages of NAPLAN include increased collaboration and idea-sharing among teachers, including across year-groups, and guidance, particularly for beginning teachers (Lingard, Thompson, & Seller, 2016). Cizek (2005) is dismissive of most criticisms of basic skills testing, arguing that criticisms of such testing have become ever more strident in the context of increasingly scant evidence.

The above justifications are not all primarily pedagogical in nature. The focus on literacy and numeracy is no doubt a positive, but this focus risks becoming an end in itself, rather than establishing these basics as keys to further knowledge and reckoning.

In some jurisdictions, basic skills testing has led to structural, as well as cultural, changes and supports. The NSW State Government has instituted a Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan. The LNAP incorporates five key literacy and numeracy improvement strategies: a continued focus on intervention in the early years of schooling; clear guidance on explicit teaching and better, faster diagnostic assessments; more support for literacy and numeracy in secondary schools; quality training for teacher education students in literacy and numeracy and rigorous evaluation to focus investment and effort on what works. This approach deploys a literacy and numeracy instructional leader in targeted schools, whose role it is to lead the school's efforts in the three areas of diagnostic assessment, differentiated teaching, and tiered intervention, to support students' literacy and numeracy (NSW Department of Education, 2018). Research into the effects of this programme is in its early stages.

Criticisms

In broad terms, Lingard, Thompson and Sellar (2016, p. 2) refer to the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM), asserting that it has "infected school reform agendas in many nations". Scott (2011) differentiates the type of knowledge necessary to do well in formal assessment tasks, and knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for life more broadly.

Criticisms of basic skills testing regimes such as NAPLAN are premised on grounds that are socio-emotional or sociological (e.g. Bousfield & Ragusa, 2013; Rice, Dulfer, Polesel, & O'Hanlon, 2015), technical (e.g. Singhal, 2019) or pedagogical or educational (Cumming, Wyatt-Smith, & Colbert, 2016; Ragusa & Bousfield, 2017) in nature. While Hargreaves points to some benefits in basic skills testing, he sees the drawbacks as dramatic, and the associated "improvements" often artificial; "fake or fabricated" (p. 56), a point that Wiliam (2010), too, appears to infer, despite his overall approbation of basic skills testing. Criticisms extend to teachers' basic literacy abilities. Stevenson (2018) undertook a systematic literature review of teacher basic skill, and observes that, "the results of some of the studies reported here would certainly provide ammunition for those who criticise the quality of PST preparation" (p. 130). But she also points out that 15 the 52 papers included in the study report on perceptions rather than actual knowledge. As Barnes and Cross (2018) point out, "quality" (their quotation marks) comes at a cost. Drawing on Darling-Hammond (2013), they identified four criteria by which to examine the formation, implementation and outcomes of related policy, and, in particular, the LANTITE (Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education) gatekeeper pre-service teacher basic skills test. These are the political drivers behind such policies; how related problems are constructed; interpretation of the policies and their impact though implementation. They dismiss LANTITE as somewhat of a tokenistic gesture. The literature is replete with elements of basic skills testing whose effect is to pervert learning. I will set out some of them below.

Quelling Equity

Among the most strident criticisms of NAPLAN are those concerning assessment and equity (Ladwig, 2010; Wu, 2010). Particular criticisms pertain to some of the groups that could stand to benefit most from a diagnostic test, such as Indigenous students (MacQueen et al., 2015), and those who speak a language other than English as their first (Creagh, 2014; Cumming, Wyatt-Smith, & Colbert, 2016).

Australia is characterised by a long, lagging, academic tail among its schoolchildren (Masters, 2016). For some, the "land of the fair go"[7] must seem long-gone. This disparity is on the increase (Ainley & Gebhart, 2013). For Indigenous students, the proportion of at-risk learners, at 42%, is double that of non-indigenous students (Masters, 2016), giving these students considerably worse odds than does a game of Russian roulette, even though the consequences might be less immediate and irrevocable. Wigglesworth, Simpson and Loakes (2011, p. 320) contend that NAPLAN sample test content "relies on cultural knowledge which Indigenous children cannot

[7] According to Gwynn (2012), the term "fair go" in its current meaning of an even chance, originated during the shearers' strike of 1891, which is sometimes seen as the birth of the Labour and Union movements in Australia.

be expected to have". A counter-argument might be mounted that Indigenous children from remote communities also need and deserve access to mainstream ways of making and interpreting meaning. The extent to which NAPLAN testing and preparation provide a bridge to this is open to question. I recognise the culturally normative potential of such proposals—but excluding minority students from mainstream cultural capital, in order to address this risk and "preserve" minority students, strikes me as a greater harm.

Other groups disproportionally at risk (Masters, p. 19) are males (28.5%, as opposed to females, 15.5%), children in very remote areas (47% versus 21% in large cities) and students from communities of low socioeconomic status (32.6% versus 15.5%). Naturally, some students might belong to several or all of these categories. They (or, of course, some children from "respectable", well-to-do families and communities) might also be dealing with some of the problems listed in Chap. 3, such as drug dependence and abuse, family violence, illness or injury, or mourning other losses. It is difficult to expect such children to be school-ready, much less school-enthusiastic and less school-engaged. Such students might not share education jurisdictions' fascination with basic skills; associated teaching and testing may fail to engage these students. Arguably, though, basic skills might disenchant almost all students, so on that basis, the scheme can at least make some claim to equity. As Masters (2016) points out, by the secondary years or earlier, these students are disillusioned with, and languishing in (or away from), their schooling, and perhaps actively disrupting it, further squandering their and others' futures and potential.

If the figures are to be believed, the testing hasn't bridged the gap between high and low achievers. Biesta (2009, p. 34) contends that "equality of opportunity hardly ever translates into equality of outcomes because of the role of structural factors that are beyond the control of schools and teachers". He calls for "undermining part of the 'blame and shame' culture of school failure".

Luke (2010, p. 43) enumerated three pedagogical features most likely to be of use to "at risk" students. (I would argue, all students):

(1) An everyday focus on curriculum content and issues of substantial intellectual demand and depth;
(2) Sustained, scaffolded student talk and dialogue around issues of cultural and intellectual substance and
(3) Visible connections of school knowledge to everyday civic, cultural, political and social life.

Basic Skills Testing Regimes Appear to Offer Little to Fulfil the Above Trifecta

An associated problem remains as to how to extend all students to their fullest, while narrowing the attainment gap. Some learners will always have greater, or less, capacity and support to alchemise the ideas and information put to them, or those that they go out to meet. But if Luke's three processes, above, lift *everyone* in the

room's reasoning, that is, a highly desirable outcome. I propose that the approach also has the potential to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills, as learners are given reasons for, and practice in, their use.

As intimated above, it is possible that NAPLAN actually militates against equity. The media have reported stories of parents of lower achieving children being asked to absent their children on NAPLAN day (Andersen, 2010). This seems unlikely to enhance equity. The National Assessment Program (2016a) offers two groups of students' amnesty from the tests: "if they have significant or complex disability, or if they are from a non-English-speaking background and arrived in Australia less than one year before the tests". Some schools justified their decision to exclude such children, explaining that if a child is incapable of reading the test, there is little to be gained in attempting it, and participation risks the collateral damage of tension, demoralisation or worse, for these children (Cobbold, 2009). Nonetheless, if the risk of demoralisation is unacceptable for some children, but acceptable for others, this would seem at odds with equity.

The equity issue is linked to the market-based underpinning philosophy of NAPLAN, to generate more competition among students and among schools. While this might have a positive outcome in terms of "smartening us up" (?), it can scarcely claim to be equitable. Thompson (2013, p. 63) describes such a market-based logic as "seductively simple". Hargreaves views basic skills testing as

> a politically plausible and manageable strategy that seems to create improvements in measurable results, at least in the short term, by concentrating almost all effort to a relentless degree on what is tested, using heightened competition, a narrowed and almost obsessive focus, and public transparency as a way to drive up scores (p. 56).

High Stakes Nature of the Testing

Detractors call attention to the high-stakes nature of the tests, among other criticisms. This leads to, and perhaps from, a conflation of individual performance and school performance/reputation, and a muddying of motives to promote the interests of the individual learner or the school. In this, too, the process is Darwinian—the individual is expendable for the sake of the herd.

In a US context, Darling-Hammond (2013) contends that "efforts to evaluate and compensate teachers-based directly on students' test scores can create unintended, dysfunctional consequences" (p. 62). In the context of the No Child Left Behind policy in the USA, Ravitch (2010, p. 17) laments that "because test scores were the ultimate test of a school's success or failure, they became more than a measure; they were the purpose of education". Ravitch (2010) also bemoans the corporatisation of education in the United States, where decisions have been made by, and possibly for, corporates, with little background in and understanding of education, and little interest, other than a pecuniary one.

Moreover, high-stakes testing has potential for negative unintended outcomes (Wiliam, 2010). One is the associated stress on students (Rice, Dulfer, Polesel, &

O'Hanlon, 2015)). It may be, though, that potential stress per se is insufficient cause to abandon such testing. Assisting students in coping with such stress may be more productive, as might be reminding them that there are limited consequences for the student of performing poorly, as discussed in a subsequent section.

Wiliam offers a number of proposals to improve such testing, including reducing the number of curricular outcomes, only some of which might be tested in any given year; clearer communication of such aims, so that teachers are more likely to teach to the outcomes, rather than to the test instrument and supplementation of multiple-choice items with some constructed responses.

Curricular Shrinkage

One oft-cited problem regarding basic skills testing is a narrowing and shallowing of learning experiences (Thompson, 2013; Wiliam, 2010), a curricular infarction. This results from, and in, a narrow range of tested skills (Carter, Manuel, & Dutton, 2018). A "teach to the test" mentality takes hold, with commensurate displacement of other teaching and learning (Ward, 2012). As such, such testing can constrain and corrupt the written curriculum. Caldwell (2010, p. 53) looks to a time when "teaching to the test and narrowing of the curriculum are dysfunctions of the past".

Basic skills are driving and shaping curriculum more broadly. Masters (2016, p. 6) observes that "current curricula are often dominated by substantial bodies of factual and procedural knowledge, at a time when it is increasingly important that students can apply deep understandings of key disciplinary concepts and principles to real-world problems". Luke (2010) spoke of "the conditions for yet another 'back to basics' movement—with the potential to further narrow, fragment and trivialise the enacted curriculum" (p. 46), while Supovitz (2009, p. 221) reports "a steadier diet of test preparation activities that distract from the larger goals of educating children". Thompson and Harbaugh (2013, p. 310) outline various consequences of high-stakes basic skills testing, including constricting the curriculum and displacing time that would otherwise be spent on other subjects, as well as,

> adopting a teacher-centred style which has flow on effects of less-inclusive classrooms where students have less voice, less time spent on higher order thinking skills, [and] less conversation between teachers and students occurs for no appreciable improvements in literacy and numeracy.

The "den of inequity" inherent in such a regime does not escape Thompson and Harbaugh's notice.

Biesta (2014, p. 49) asks "whether we are indeed measuring what we value, or whether we are measuring what can easily be measured, so that we end up in a situation where we value what we can measure". Basic skills testing may be displacing grander, nobler aims. With regard to higher order goals such as the Melbourne Declaration's "successful learners…confident and creative individuals", school Principal Tom Moth (2020, pers. comm.) ponders, "how do we know we have succeeded? The

issue with these goals is that we don't know until much later in life. Which isn't a bad thing, but it's hard to quantify when we want/need it".

Addressing Symptoms, Rather Than Causes

Basic skills testing appears to address symptoms, rather than causes. It is akin to lamenting bushfires and droughts, without inquiring as to what might be leading to an increase in their duration, scale, frequency and intensity or to constantly weighing someone who is over- or underweight, in the absence of investigating causes, and perhaps even in the hope or expectation that the weighing will remediate the problem. I concede that constant weighing, and public-making of the results, may result in changes in some people's eating and exercise regimes—hopefully for the better. Might the health benefits (ahem) outweigh the negative psychological and morale effects? Health experts and (some) social media appear to be at odds on this. And what happens to those who, ashamedly or proudly, keep on being fat, or underweight? I presume they just keep on being so. And proud. And/or ashamed.

NAPLAN's in/Effectual Nature

Since the turn of the century, NAPLAN results have more or less plateaued (National Assessment Plan, 2016b). In a report commissioned by the Federal Government, Caldwell (2015) saw this as a situation lying in wait for the next teaching method breakthrough. This may be true, but there may be a finite number of new approaches to improve literacy and numeracy acquisition. Caldwell also discerned a positive correlation between school autonomy and student achievement.

For better or for worse, and despite its high-stakes nature, there are no real consequences for students performing poorly in NAPLAN, apart, perhaps, from a sense of personal shame. As Masters (2016) points out, students are routinely promoted to the next year of schooling, regardless of whether they have met the year's or stage's outcomes; there appear to be few if any consequences for poor individual performance in NAPLAN tests or elsewhere. As such, some students begin the school year behind their peers and the syllabus. Their new teacher/s are charged with helping these students to catch up, while also extending the other, more advanced students in their classes. On the other hand, delaying students is also likely to have social and self-esteem consequences. It may result in bullying of, and/or by, these older, larger, students in the class. Organising and structuring learning around modules that can be taken in a variety of sequences may provide one possible strategy. Such a system might offer core and optional modules. This could normalise different-aged students in any class. I recognise that this would be organizationally more complex, and its normalcy might still not succeed in eliminating bullying and shaming. Curricular organisation is discussed in more detail in the chapter that follows.

It is possible that the main if not sole effect of high-stakes testing is an improvement in students' ability to do basic literacy and numeracy tests. But, perhaps counterintuitively, it doesn't seem to even do that as well as *not* having basic skills tests, if Finland is an indicator (Hancock, 2011).

One further critique of the ineffectual nature of NAPLAN has been the lag time between the sitting of the test (in May) and publication of results (at the end of the school year). More rapid publication of results in recent years has alleviated these concerns somewhat, however.

The operation of NAPLAN has been divisive for Australian education, according to Thompson and Harbaugh (2013). Criticisms of NAPLAN testing abound. NAPLAN can strain relationships between teachers, students and the community (Thompson, 2013). Some stakeholder effects are briefly enumerated below.

Parent Views

Parental views of NAPLAN do not appear to have been extensively canvassed to date. Rogers, Barblett and Robinson (2018) undertook research on NAPLAN with 345 parents of students in independent schools in Western Australia, and with a representative sample (40) of their teachers. Results from parents were fairly evenly spread across the Likert scale response range, but in all questions, responses from the participating teachers were skewed towards the negative. Questions concerned NAPLAN results and raising teacher accountability; indicating teacher quality; diagnosing student needs; comparing student performance and the fairness of the test. Rogers et al. concluded that the notion of national testing meets with higher community approval than does its implementation. Naturally enough, parents are eager for diagnostic information on their children's literacy and numeracy progress, and, perhaps, their children's school's progress accordingly. The extent to which NAPLAN provides this reliably is perhaps the central question.

Effects on Teachers

The side effects for teachers and the profession appear to include a sapping of innovation and creativity (Hargreaves, 2010). Basic skills testing has "depressed the status of teaching and made attraction and retention of high quality teachers (and leaders) even more difficult" (p. 56). NAPLAN is also serving to reform good teaching and teachers. Thompson and Cook (2014) report "the breakdown of the production of the 'good teacher' and the overlaying of a new, more powerful ethic, the teacher who seeks to achieve the best results as recorded through NAPLAN by manipulating the data" (p. 129).

Perhaps a further harm caused by basic skills tests, as far as the image of teaching is concerned, is their propensity to reinforce of a public view that teaching and learning

are tidy and simple. Noddings (2012) recognises teaching and learning's complexity: "Any mode of thought that lays out complete and final answers to great existential questions is liable to dogmatism." She proceeds,

> a great attraction of care ethics, I think, is its refusal to encode or construct a catalog of principles and rules. One who cares must meet the cared-for just as he or she is, as a whole human being with individual needs and interests (pp. 108–109).

To "needs and interests" above, I would add, potential; those being cared for, including those whose intellect is being cared for, need to be assisted to move on to greater and bolder things. There has also been an associated absence of teacher input into related decision-making (Lobascher, 2011).

As with other aspects of (teacher) education, basic skills testing is driven by politics and shaped by media. Smyth (2007, p. 301) refers to the reform of teachers' work with regard to the influence of "political interference and media hyperbole". He continues, "this blitzkrieg amounts to a 'political spectacle' and blatant neo-liberal ideology dressed up as rational analysis".

Effects on Students

There are flow-on effects for students, as well. As outlined above, basic skills testing does not appear to have enamoured young people to their studies. While cause and effect are difficult to isolate, numbers of students choosing to study maths (Hine, 2017; Murray, 2011) and science (Palmer, Burke, & Aubusson, 2017; Treagust, Won, Petersen, & Wynne, 2015) at higher levels appear to be in decline, in Australia as elsewhere. Masters (2016) also reports a decline in numbers of students choosing the subjects in senior school. If so, this has serious implications for the future of advanced maths and science studies in Australia, including the recruitment of teachers in these areas, particularly if we are concerned about comparisons with some other jurisdictions regionally.

International Testing Problems

The section above discussed problems for some Indigenous students and those in remote communities with regard to national testing. This can operate on a global scale with the imposition of tests such as PISA and TIMSS. It is difficult to moderate for different circumstances internationally, and even nationally, particularly in the absence of a One World Curriculum—not that I'm advocating the development of such. Some might argue that various national curricula already have little to distinguish them.

As with international testing, the comparison of test results within nations has been subject to considerable criticism (Derrington & Campbell, 2018). School differences

typically account for less than 10% of student score variation; such variation is as low as 5% in Finland (Masters, 2016). Australia appears to be an outlier here, though, with a disparity figure rising from 20% in 2000 to 28% in 2012 (Masters, 2016, p. 2).

Upon entering year nine in Australia, students have been schooled for about 10,000 h.[8] This represents more hours than in many comparable countries (OECD, 2014), including some high performers, such as Korea and Finland. It would seem reasonable to have progressed beyond basic skills by year nine. And skills are but a narrow tranche of education. If skills must have their way, perhaps "advanced skills" could be tackled in the higher grades.

The My School Website

In Australia, basic skills test results are made public, at school level, on a publicly accessible website, with a view to helping "parents, educators and the community to find information about each of Australia's schools" (ACARA, 2016). The My School site (ACARA, 2016) has sustained heavy criticism for presenting information devoid of context to outsiders, arguably presenting parents with misleading information, and raising anxieties about schools' reputation (Lingard, 2010) and, by implication, the reputation of the students at those schools, and the character of their communities, thereby demoralising them. As such, it can easily appear punitive, rather than developmental, in intent.

Presumably AITSL's mantra, above, of offering "parents…information about each of Australia's schools" presumes an open market situation concerning schools. Indeed, the Labor Prime Minister of the day, Kevin Rudd, asserted that My School would enable parents to "vote with their feet" (Coorey & Patty, 2008), and shop around for the schools they considered best. This differs considerably from our refugee policy, but I digress. The problem is, (in NSW in any case) you cannot attend a government school unless you live in that school's intake area. This bears more similarity to our refugee policy. Typically, the most desirable schools are in suburbs where homes are more expensive and expansive. Parents have been known to "forge their address" to enrol their children in a more desirable school (Baker, 2019). This parental dedication to their children's education is at once heart-warming and heart-rending. The reality, though, is that My School does little to support (parents' aspirations for) educational and social mobility. It does not attempt to address social dis/advantage associated with differences in school performance. Of course, a counter-narrative might argue that these parents have more hide than heart. The audacity and effrontery of these parents, aspiring to a better future for their children, when they haven't done the due diligence to live in the right part of town to do so. I concede that, having expressed cynicism about the refugee policy above, I accept the practical reality that not everyone can live in the one "best" country or suburb, or attend the

[8]This may be less than relevant, but Gladwell (2008) proposes the same figure, 10,000 h, to attain world-class proficiency in a given skill.

one "best" school. Accordingly, even those who are arguing for a more open triage system regarding school choice are still grappling with the symptom rather than the root cause, dis/advantage, even if some disadvantage is self-inflicted. That said, Hargreaves (2010, p. 57) points out the preponderance of publicly subsidised private schools in Australia, in a context of "failing to invest in the public system, so the move to private education is really like an emigration from an impoverished alternative". Some parents might then conclude that the difference must be the children themselves; "I don't want my child rubbing shoulders with those (I can only presume) less able, less aspirational, less entrepreneurial others' children". By that logic, the parents at the posher schools do not want your children contaminating theirs. In terms of school choice, children from less wealthy families in remote communities probably have fewer options than most; quite a bloody education revolution (Coorey, 2007). Biesta (2009, p. 34) argues that "the elasticity of school choice is generally very limited, and also…equality of opportunity hardly ever translates into equality of outcomes because of the role of structural factors that are beyond the role of schools and teachers".

The My School site claims to compare only similar schools. It uses the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) (ACARA, 2015), an index which claims to enable "fair and reasonable comparisons among schools with similar students". It draws on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data, which is probably the most comprehensive set of such data available. The data derive from "student factors"—the occupations and education of their parents, and "school factors"—geographical location and proportion of Indigenous students.

Problems remain with this categorisation, however. The My School website concedes that schools with similar ICSEA values may have different levels of resources and facilities, and be located in different regions. The site doesn't appear to explain what, if any, effect this might have on student performance. Moreover, Reid (2010, p. 17) objects that it is "fatuous to compare schools with very different student and resource bases by creating lists of 'like schools'". Schools and communities are arguably more unalike than alike, rendering comparisons potentially misleading, whether this is the intention or not. Reid (2010) proposes an alternative system that is more likely to capture some of the complexity of teaching and learning; a system characterised by consultation with the profession; a defensible evidence-base; a broad range of data sources; recognition of the complexity of the learning process; a quest to address causes rather than symptoms; promotion of collaboration (p. 20). Performance cannot be taken as a proxy for improvement.

My School, as a public database, needs to adhere to reasonable standards of data collection, analysis and interpretation, dissemination and ethics. And it should tell us something we didn't know. My School appears to fail many of these tests.

It is worth considering the possible consequences for "underperforming" schools that continue to "underperform". The My School approach appears akin to a Darwinian game of poison ball—those who jump lowest or last are eliminated. Market forces (or the government) might shake empty such schools and force their closure—except that zoning largely prevents this. And in such a case a community might be left with no local school. And/or which teachers might one dismiss? And

how long would replacements be given to "turn the school-ship around"? To date, none of these things seems to have happened. Perhaps mercifully.

Basic skills are a microcosm of myriad processes currently constraining education. In my own teacher-education work, I am now required by our accrediting body, to state the lecture in which I teach towards a particular Standard, the workshop in which we practise this, and the assessment task in which this standard is assessed. In one sense, this is natural enough. But the assumption appears to be that I would neglect to do this, to prepare my students for the tasks on which they will be assessed, but for providing this information on a template. Or that, having completed this template, I will now, in the absence of surveillance, carry out the promise. And the "teaching-then-practising" mode strikes me as privileging lower order replicable skills. Don't get me wrong, I'm all for practising decency, anti-racism, anti-misogyny and the like. I'm just not sure you can workshop that sort of stuff. To achieve these higher order goals, young learners will require, and, I hope, demand, an education system that is emancipated, not emaciated.

Returning to Masters' (2016) five problems facing education in Australia, outlined in Chap. 1, it seems that education is being shoehorned into fixing problems not of its making. One response is to make teaching more attractive. Another is to fix the socioeconomic problems. Trust again raises its head here. Successful jurisdictions appear to be achieving what they have through trust (Hargreaves, 2010) and respect. In other words, in such systems, teachers are treated as professionals; trust is accorded to, and built among, teachers, through collaboration and the accordance of autonomy. Hargreaves recommends, "getting students and teachers passionately engaged in learning by creating lively professional learning communities rather than data-driven drudgery among teachers" (2010, p. 60). These are among the fundamentals for value-adding to students. It is not unreasonable to apply them to teachers.

Some Responses

I'm not convinced if, as a parent, I'd be excited to send my child to the school with the best reputation for doing basic skills tests. That is, unless I had good evidence that this was in some way related to other positive features of the school. I argued in the previous chapter that the curriculum, and associated assessment, shape teachers' thinking about their roles and responsibilities. High-stakes assessment does this more so, and may concentrate teachers' minds on basic skills, at the expense of higher order, lateral thinking. It may also lead to distortions in performance, such as poorly performing children—arguably those who could benefit most from a diagnostic test—being discouraged from taking part in the tests.

The obsession with basic skills testing is sharply at odds with lofty statements like the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008), about young Australians becoming "successful learners…confident and creative individuals", and "active and informed citizens" (pp. 8–9). In one sense, we don't need to (re)claim the moral high ground

with regard to education. It's there and it's ours. We probably need to *pro*claim it more often and loudly.

How can it be, if indeed it is the case, that we are regressing? Not just compared to children in other countries—I've already discussed some of the difficulties with that in regard to comparing individual children across different circumstances—but in terms of some of the social metrics discussed here, such as wealth- or poverty-disparity, and in Chap. 3. I accept, though, that what we're attempting may be part of a compulsive middle class colonialisation, exorcising working-class tendencies from those so afflicted, and reshaping them more in our image. Nevertheless, constant testing appears to be battling with the symptoms rather than the causes. Perhaps particularly sobering is the fact that the extra instructional hours in Australia appear to be having little positive effect, and perhaps a negative effect, on outcomes.

This cuts to the heart of the purpose of state-organised education. Tagore was highly critical of the motives of the pernicious nation-state. With regard to one nation, in particular, he observed.

> the voluntary submission of the whole people to the trimming of their minds and clipping of their freedom by their government, which through various educational agencies regulates their thoughts, manufactures their feelings, becomes suspiciously watchful when they show signs of inclining toward the spiritual, leading them through a narrow path not toward what is true but what is necessary for the complete welding of them into one uniform mass according to its own recipe. The people accept this all-pervading mental slavery with cheerfulness and pride because of their nervous desire to turn themselves into a machine of power, called the Nation (1917, p. 26).

His observations apply more widely than to Japan, to which they referred.

I don't wish to overstate a case for conspiracy here. Returning to Tagore's and Nussbaum's comments near the outset of this chapter, I believe that much of this is barely known, even to those who are driving the processes. But this makes the process more, rather than less, insidious. Sachs (2016, p. 414) calls on us to "make it clear that a top-down approach is simply not working, nor, in principle, is it likely to work".

As with many things educational, it is difficult to isolate cause and effect. A focus on high-stakes basic skills testing appears to be having a number of side effects on education and on the profession. It might be disengaging students and discouraging them from pursuing higher levels of maths and science study in the senior years, when these become optional. It appears to be having a demoralising effect on numbers of students, schools, teachers and communities. It seems to be constricting the curriculum, and may be tranquillising Nussbaum's "ability to imagine well" (2010, p. 26). I have written in several chapters about the autonomy orientation of education, its capacity for leading out. Perhaps most fundamentally, basic skills testing until year nine may be retarding the onset of independence for young people. Greater student autonomy might be achieved through curricular approaches such as problem-based, project-based or service learning. The next chapter will explore some of these options.

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Chapter 6
The Pressures on, and of, Curriculum

This chapter follows on logically from the previous one, in that increasingly crowded curricula are symptomatic of concerns about "falling behind". The chapter explores some of the pressures shaping curriculum design—usually in the direction of cramming more content into a course of study. This is likely to make the teaching and learning experience less satisfying, and probably less satisfactory, for both teachers and learners. The chapter incorporates a series of continua, devised by the author, which might provide a backdrop for curriculum development. Alternatives or complements to current subject-based curricula will also be explored.

Introduction

The curriculum is a further casualty of performance anxiety with regard to our school students.[1] Accordingly, new material is routinely added to fill the gaps that are, or might be being, addressed in other countries—a curriculum "arms race". One symptom, it seems, of the panic regarding student performance internationally, is the urgency and intensity with which curricular reforms are applied and must be enacted.

Moreover, as life becomes increasingly complex, school is often positioned as the place where such complexities might be addressed. Cybersecurity, drug awareness and combatting obesity come to mind as relatively recent examples. While it is

[1] I sometimes refer my students to an outtake at the end of *Toy Story 2* (Lasseter, Plotkin, & Jackson, 1999), in which Mrs. Potato Head keeps packing new things for Mr. Potato Head to take on his journey. The clip can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vw7KmYjnHYs. Eventually (spoiler alert) Mr. Potato Head's eyes and ears pop out under the pressure. I use this as a metaphor for the crowded curriculum—I'm not sure if that was its original intention—but it does illustrate a point: "unlimited" knowledge ("just in case", in the words of Mrs. Potato Head) within the limited scope of a school curriculum and the capacity of minds to absorb and make sense of it. As Mrs. Potato Head continues to cram things in, she also advises Mr. Potato Head, "you never know". Are the filmmakers trying to tell us something here, in curricular terms?

J. Buchanan, *Challenging the Deprofessionalisation of Teaching and Teachers*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-8538-8_6

reasonable to locate school as the most appropriate place for the above forms of education to take place, their inclusion comes at the expense of other curricular material, or at least depth of study, and, possibly, student engagement. Further still, many schools appear to be taking on roles previously ascribed to parents, such as providing breakfast for children, or offering tips on nutritious lunches. Other, moral, issues, might have been dealt with by faith institutions in more "churched" times in Australia. I should concede early, however, that I am hesitant to be too critical of curriculum writers. Curriculum writing, like teaching, is contested and complex.

Curriculum Construction

Discipline-based subjects compete with one another for market shelf-space in the crowded curriculum. Accordingly, there seems little time to ponder, to wonder, to wander, to imagine, to muse, even to saunter.[2] Masters (2016, p. 6) observes that current curricula are characterised by large bodies of factual and procedural knowledge; siloed subject delivery; passive, reproductive learning and competitive learning, rather than the collaborative learning more typical of workplaces. This can result in "mile-wide, inch-deep" curriculum (p. 8). There will always be a trade-off between breadth and depth. Masters calls for the pursuit of: cross-disciplinary team-based problem-solving (p. 9). Comber, Woods and Grant (2017) speak of finding time in a crowded curriculum for "extended, collective, problem-based learning" (p. 119). In particular, I have concerns for the "have nots" educationally speaking—those students and communities, who, for whatever reason, have less capacity or inclination than others, to absorb, and regurgitate large volumes of content rapidly and on demand. Pinar (2012, p. 35) calls on a "new and different rhythm" for teacher education—I would add all education—to allow creativity and individuality in teaching to flourish. Mezirow (1997) speaks of transformative learning, in which one broadens, deconstructs, dismantles and/or reconstructs one's frame of reference. How might we wish to challenge and transform the thinking of our students? What kinds of "habits of mind", (p. 5) that is, habitual ways of thinking, do we want to promote (or discourage)?

While this fattening of the curriculum is occurring, it could be argued that the curriculum is also narrowing. Steers (2014) warns of the consequences for art of England's national curriculum, which he sees as foregrounding "core subjects". Not only are educational jurisdictions prioritising such subjects, but students are increasingly jettisoning subjects considered non-vocational, such as music (Aróstegui, 2016).

Australia has recently developed its first national curriculum, the Australian Curriculum (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority, 2019). The Australian

[2]Which comes from sainte terre—(heading towards) holy land.

Curriculum (AC) is not entirely national, as the two most populous states, in particular, New South Wales and Victoria, continue to adapt the curriculum idiosyncratically. New South Wales, for example, has no specific Civics and Citizenship (C&C) syllabus, but incorporates related outcomes into its history and other syllabuses. Also, there is no economics and business syllabus in NSW. Its equivalent, Commerce, begins in year 7, while the Australian Curriculum Economics and Business syllabus begins in year 5 (ACARA, 2016a). The AC is much more national than anything that preceded it, though. The Curriculum is outcomes-based. Outcomes need to be met during each, typically, 2-year "stage" of schooling.

The new Australian Curriculum is an example of a discipline-based approach, with all its inherent problems and blessings. On the positive side, discipline-based knowledge is easy to assess. It is more controllable. This, I believe is both its beauty and its t/error (with apologies to Dorothea Mackellar (1908)). The design and outline are provided. Success or failure in such an endeavour is easily and readily identifiable, measurable and comparable. This probably sounds more cynical than is intended. We all gain confidence and satisfaction, and genuinely so, from achieving something concrete. Moreover, particularly when we are new to something, we might appreciate a structure and framework. For us as teachers, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that, for our learners, by definition, this stuff is mostly new. More problematic for curriculum designers, politicians, teachers and learners, however, is a more open-ended curriculum, where the aim is to create a framework, rather than to complete one prepared earlier. Perchance, to take that frame and break, bend, dismantle or otherwise manipulate it. In fairness, too, the Australian Curriculum does have open-ended elements, such as a year 9 science project.

In reality, a good curriculum will probably combine elements of both of the above—prescribed knowledge and high-order thinking. Memorising the alphabet, for example, is likely to be handy for life. It is reasonable not to invite young learners to critique and suggest improvements to the alphabet. Eventually, as learners become more adept with the basic tools of understanding and communicating with the world, they might be invited to break or bend the rules with more purpose and effect, just as do artists. Particularly as children progress through schooling, it seems reasonable that there should be more uncharted and borderless territory, and more blank canvasses. This might be achieved through a number of alternative approaches to curriculum. Some associated possibilities will be discussed briefly later in this chapter.

A national curriculum carries some benefits, particularly for beginning teachers, who may otherwise feel awash in a sea of possible outcomes, knowledges and ignorances. A national or otherwise imposed curriculum may allay (rightly or wrongly) the public's concerns not just about children in neighbouring countries. Principals, too, might be worried about what children in neighbouring schools are doing, and the beginning teacher might be concerned as to what the children in classrooms up and down the corridor are up to. (For those in portable/demountable classrooms, imagine a corridor.) Might teachers in other classrooms be doing better stuff, or doing it better, than I am? Then again, peer observations might be a better way of addressing these concerns. A national curriculum suggests, perhaps with some plausibility, that this is "the evidence-supported best way". The approach has attracted some criticism,

however. Local content and student input might be sacrificed in such a standardised approach. Luke (2010, p. 42) contends that a nationally agreed curriculum may be "an educationally unwieldy response based on perceived, but empirically undemonstrated problems of teaching and learning", while Zhao (2012) argues that a national curricula and standards are likely to be of little help, referring to them as "the wrong bet" (p. 23).

What is Curriculum, and What Does It Do?

> People shape, and are shaped by, their history.
>
> Personal musing

The above musing also applies to curriculum, I believe. Space, and the purpose of this chapter, do not permit a lengthy discussion of curriculum here, but I will provide a brief thumbnail sketch and encourage you to read further elsewhere.

Because I enjoy words, I'll indulge myself with a little word history here. You may wish to skip to the next section, but the etymology of "curriculum" may shed some light on how we frame the concept (main source: Online Etymology Dictionary, 2019a). The word was originally linked metaphorically to a running course—the metaphor may have particular resonance as we enter an age of increasing measurement and comparison. The word course itself (for sport, study or a meal) derives from the same source. The stem also occurs (see what I did there?) in terms such as curriculum vitae (the running of your life); career (as a noun, to refer to your life-work, and as a verb denoting running—usually out of control); a corridor runs along the building; your eyes run across the page with a cursory glance, as does the cursor (originally a running messenger, from which we also get "courier"); cursive (running) writing; a current runs along body of water or an electric wire, as does our blood course through our veins; currency (back when it was current) ran through the economy, and my pockets; a precursor is a forerunner; parkour; discourse means "running around", "excursion", "running out", incursion, "running in", and intercourse, "running into"—a poor sense of foreplay if you ask me.

In a sense, curriculum is "the way things run around here". Curriculum is "the entire program of the school's work…It is *everything* the students and their teachers do" (Richmond, 1971, p. 4, emphasis in original). Several researchers have noted a gerundive, noun–verb nature of curriculum—thing and action, process and product—the running of the place. Pinar (2019) conceives curriculum as "*complicated conversation*, conversation informed by academic knowledge" (p. vii, emphasis in original); "our key conveyance into the world, and…*the world's way into us*" (p. 1, emphasis added). Stenhouse (1975) tentatively proffered a definition of curriculum as follows: "an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice" (p. 4). Buchanan (2016, p. 48) asserted that a curriculum is

"arguably an unexamined belief statement that prescribes ways in which we would like the next generation to be like us". The irony of "unexamined" in the definition aside, curriculum, in this sense, is inherently conservative, and uneasy to change. Pinar (2019, p. 1) refers to a "conversation among older and younger generations", but I suspect the conversation is fairly one way (or unfairly so?).

Curriculum is autobiographical. Ewing (2013) describes curriculum in terms of (my inference here) "our" story, the one that tells (us) where we've come from. The first person plural (our, we, us) in English has a cunning capacity to include or exclude the person being addressed; curriculum possibly does likewise. Grumet (1981) described curriculum as "the collective story we tell our children about our past, present and our future". Pinar (2004) defines curriculum theory, the science of examining and analysing curricula, as "the effort to understand curriculum as symbolic representation" (p. 16). Ultimately it is someone with the power and mouthpiece to be heard, declaring what is important to know and why. As such, it has tended to represent white, male, urban ways, possibly to the exclusion of troubling and challenging itself with other ways of doing, thinking and knowing. Paraskeva (2016) labels such eliminations, and their concomitant blinkering of thinking, as "epistemicide".

Curriculum interacts with, as well as acting on, learners and teachers, and shapes and drives the ways schooling is done. Ewing (p. 7) observed that curriculum is something to which we bring "our own biographies and baggage, or virtual schoolbags". It is a set of layered narratives (Pinar & Reynolds, 1992) or palimpsest. Despite this over-writing, curriculum represents our heritage, and, as such, might assume elements of untouchable sacrosanctity, or may, in turn, be discarded for a new curriculum, and in the process, rendering itself just plain untouchable. Van den Akker (2003) distinguishes five core features of a curriculum, its: vision or philosophy; aims or goals; processes of teaching and learning; learner experiences and outcomes. Connell (1998, p. 84) noted curriculum as "the most difficult area of educational study-where complex theory of knowledge meets the practice of classrooms in complex and turbulent ways". This reminds me of the reference above to careering—running crazily—although I sometimes think that curriculum isn't turbulent enough, at least not in its implementation.

For better or worse—probably for better, actually, but more of that later—curriculum is driven by experts, who love their subject area, perhaps more than the "average" (or very average?) student. This has several implications. Such experts are steeped in the tenets of their area of study, which probably lends further inertia to their hold on the subject. Moreover, they are also the success stories of (or, perhaps in some cases, despite?) the education system—those most suited to that system, and to whom the system is most suited. It might be interesting to know the proportion of white, male, urban curriculum writers. There is every possibility that, in envisaging and designing the curriculum, any writers have an idealised learner in mind, one who is highly: interested, curious, engaged, conversant in the language of instruction, numerate, and with a substantial crowd-source, fan-base or cheer squad for their learning at their disposal. In short, a student who is highly enamoured of the subject, and of learning, and highly enabled to pursue its charms and mysteries; a

student possibly made in the expert's image. While collaboration is to be encouraged, design of curricula by committees of experts may increase the likelihood of curricular bloating (Luke, 2010). Naturally enough, I'm not calling for people with disdain for or ignorant of the subject area to be the curricular linespeople here.

Not only is the curriculum developed by passionate experts, but it is delivered, in secondary school in any case, typically by lovers and success stories of the subject area. Again, I wouldn't wish it otherwise, but this sets up a mismatch, and might further highlight a student's real or perceived failings. Once a student abandons hope and ceases taking school seriously, school becomes both a poor place to be in and a catalyst for other in-class problems.

Basic Skills

This prioritising of assessment-driven basics on curriculum, and therefore on teachers' workload, and its consequences, presents problems for the future of education and its students in Australia. It is unfortunate if cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities—cast your eyes over those titles again—"Cross-curriculum priorities" and "General capabilities"—are sacrificed on the altar of subject-based knowledge, or if they are taken hostage by the tools of literacy, numeracy and ICT capabilities, so essential as stepping stones to *further* learning. It is regrettable if we forsake the cross-curricular priorities of engaging with our Indigenous peoples, with our region (well, the Asia-half of it), and with our environment (ACARA, 2016b), for the sake of covering curriculum. Burridge and Buchanan (2016, p. 46) assert that each of the cross-curriculum priorities "offers potential opportunities to address the global, regional and local implications of social justice and human rights issues". Similarly, it is unfortunate if we bargain critical and creative thinking, ethical and intercultural understanding, and personal and social capability (ACARA, n.d.) for the basics. In any case, such a choice is unneeded; there is nothing to prevent students from "cutting their literacy, numeracy and ICT teeth" on materials and topics of substance. These priorities and capabilities are discussed further later in this chapter.

In particular, preoccupations with basic skills are tending to displace other aspects of curriculum. This appears unlikely to be engaging or fulfilling for students, akin to practising hammering, rather than using a hammer to make something. At the very least, I believe it's important to provide students with a mental blueprint of what they will be able do and make with the skills they are acquiring. There may even be an argument to give students a run at some of those more advanced tasks, alongside, or even before, some basic skill acquisition, letting them stumble along the way with their (il)literacy and (in)numeracy, and then helping them right themselves. This might motivate them to work hard at honing and refining those skills, with the longer term goal in mind and in view. At the moment, some of those basic skills must begin to look like ends in themselves, by year 9 in Australia, at any rate.

Ewing (2013, p. 190) describes curriculum as "a moral practice of mindful action". This resonates with Habermas's (1990) calls more broadly for communicative action

and moral consciousness in education. Habermas describes communicative action as "a circular process in which the actor is two things in one: an *initiator* who masters [*sic*] situations through actions for which he is accountable, and a *product* of the traditions surrounding him, of groups whose cohesion is based on solidarity to which he belongs, and of processes of socialization in which he is reared" (p. 135, emphases in original). Habermas sees moral consciousness as a developmental psychology which can form the basis for moral philosophy, that is, thinking about morality (p. 119). As part of this, I would anticipate a critical eye on the socialisation within which we are being reared or incubated (see Habermas, above).

Some Stressors Impacting Curriculum

This section will attempt to grapple with some of the contextual complexities affecting curriculum. Devising an optimal curriculum is no straightforward matter, and any of my criticisms here are tempered by a reminder of this complexity. As with isolating "the teacher effect" as a measure of identifying teacher quality, it is difficult to isolate the curriculum effect. A number of stressors shape the curriculum in various ways, but typically resulting in the ongoing addition of content, rendering it more "choresome" for students and teachers, "force feeding" the former, particularly in the senior years. Some of these stressors include.

- Un/founded concerns that students internationally are surpassing students locally in performance of basic skills and other educational metrics. Such comparisons are perhaps invalid. "Sydney" schools, for example, may compare competitively (if competition is the goal) with another urban demographic such as Shanghai or Singapore. Moreover, there are other variables such as the numbers of students not speaking the language of instruction upon arrival at school. These international comparisons likely drive many of the other dynamics.
- Claims by employers that graduates lack basic skills, giving rise to questions such as "What are they teaching at primary school/high school/university?" I concede to being part of this dynamic, in decrying on occasion the "skill-gaps" in some of our entrant students.

These problems are amplified by the media and their predilection for "bad news click bait".

- An assessment-driven curriculum, particularly in the senior years, and on basic skills.
- The basic skills preoccupation doesn't appear to be achieving what it sets out to—to improve our students' performance relative to that of students in other systems internationally. More broadly, Ravitch (2013, p. 4) claims that "the solutions proposed by the self-proclaimed reformers have not worked as promised. They have failed by their own most highly valued measure, which is test scores". Related to assessment is the "magic of numbers", such as average (from an Arabic

term referring to "damaged goods", for those interested in such things (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2019b)), and the potency of 50%.
- While external testing provides useful data, this carries with it other consequences, such as competition among schools for the best scores (and students), and associated reputation building or damage.
- As mentioned above, a view persists of school teaching as a panacea for all society's ills, and concomitant "dumping" of new content into the curriculum.

Extending from this is the "school of the gaps". Well-meaning schools are increasingly, for example, providing breakfast for their students. This is on the reasonable premise that a hungry child will struggle to concentrate, and that well-being is a sine qua non for any learning institution, or any humane one. If education is to be autonomy-oriented, however, might this compromise parents' autonomy and responsibility? And/or might it fail to attack or at least expose some underlying causes, such as ignorance, or poverty, and the causes that further underlie poverty? An educational response would probably entail teaching parents (how) to make breakfast for their children, but can this responsibility be reasonably expected of schools? Schools are limited in their capacity to exercise control over numerous issues affecting student performance, and probably can't be expected to do so in the absence of considerable increases in staff numbers, even if remediating, or papering over, such problems is likely to lead to improved (basic skills test) results. Such initiatives impinge on teachers' and schools' "curricular bandwidth", in terms of preparation time and energy. I concede the issues perplexes me: Is the provision, or teaching how to provide, breakfast, naked middle class colonisation? If so, is its inclusion nonetheless justified? Might it be an intermediary step to something more autonomous?

- Linked with the above point is competition for market space from subject disciplines. Plausibly enough, subject syllabuses are compiled by devotees of the particular subject area, but this may also contribute to curriculum overcrowding. It may also contribute to the (reasonable) student mantra of "what do we need to learn this for?" Arguably, this might lead to force-feeding students with more than they need to contribute socially (and precipitate contributing anti-socially). Discipline advocates might (reasonably) counter that the subject is beneficial as an intellectual exercise.
- Standardisation of teaching in an industry where not everyone can be expected to fit into a garment of the same shape and size—unless the garment is meaninglessly amorphous and large, meaning minimal "fit" for any learner. Linked to this is a "nutrition approach" to curriculum. A view that what benefits some, benefits all.
- Deference to first language and to home culture. Dennaoui et al. (2016), among others, have noted ongoing English literacy problems for such students. I recognise that this is contentious and controversial. Ironically, such a well-intentioned approach to preserve home cultures and languages may perpetuate exclusion, by keeping mainstream ways of thinking, doing and being, and the tools that access these, beyond the reach of the children who might need them most, if school provides the only access point to such instruments. Might it be akin to

> excusing the non-swimmers from the pool, because they're non-swimmers? Or the overweight children from physical exercise because it might be too taxing? Maintenance of first language and culture is also a valuable pursuit. A two-way, or transition approach might be the best response to this. All learning should transition, or educate, (lead out, presumably to a place of independence) each child. A complex issue, requiring more discussion than this, I concede; there remain compelling arguments for first language retention. How does this fit with a competitive, marksist approach to education?

Tensions also arguably exist regarding other aspects of schools' work, such as the treatment of students. Which student attributes do we wish to nurture? If resilience is to be held up as a desirable student attribute, a tension arises with unconditional praise. While such praise is helpful for younger children, as they mature, students may need exposure to, and assistance in managing, the disappointments that come with attempting, experimenting, risking, learning and unlearning, possibly failing, and to develop associated resilience and determination.

Other Issues

Many current syllabuses tend to position students as passive receptors of and responders to a received document. This may fall short of enhancing collaboration, initiative, criticality, autonomy and agency. Repositioning students as responsible agents and initiators, rather than as spectators and recipients, of their learning, may diminish off-task behaviour and disengagement. Moreover, it will guide and assist learners along the path to work- and citizen-ready autonomy. Pinar (2019) laments that educators also exercise little control over much current curriculum reform. Not mincing his words, he contends that through a process of yoking curriculum to standardised tests, and using these to adjudicate students' and teachers' performance, "right wing zealots and technological company profiteers have taken control of the U.S. school curriculum" (p. 106). The shape and form of a syllabus might offer further help to schools in their current efforts to take students on as partners in and shapers of their own learning, and holding them accountable to articulate their learning.

A discipline-based curriculum is premised on convenient but arbitrary divisions. In an observation that might be seen as somewhat "new age" nowadays, Dewey (1907) contended that.

> Experience has its geographical aspect, its artistic and its literary, its scientific and its historical sides. All studies arise from aspects of the one earth and the one life lived upon it. We do not have a series of stratified earths, one of which is mathematical, another physical, another historical, and so on (p. 106).

This might be described as the whole curriculum for the whole learner.

The Australian Curriculum—An Illustrative Example

Australia is currently implementing its first national curriculum, the Australian Curriculum (Australian Curriculum, n.d.).

It comprises eight subject or content areas, as outlined above:

- English;
- Mathematics;
- Science (including senior physics, chemistry, biology, earth and environmental science);
- Humanities and Social Sciences (geography, history, economics and business, civics and citizenship;
- The Arts (dance, drama, media arts, music, visual arts);
- Design and Technologies (design and technologies, digital technologies);
- Health and Physical Education and
- Languages (Australian Curriculum, n.d.).

In response to Australia's multicultural nature, strenuous efforts have also been invested in the teaching of languages other than English in our schools. To illustrate this, in NSW, for the Higher School Certificate, the matriculation exam, over 31 languages can be studied. These comprise Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Chinese, Classical Greek, Classical Hebrew, Croatian, Dutch, Filipino, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Latin, Macedonian, Malay, Maltese, Modern Greek, Modern Hebrew, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese. Many of these can be taken at various levels, including beginner, continuing and extension level (NESA, n.d.).

Regrettably, despite these efforts, and Australia's multilingual composition, the numbers of students studying languages other than English in Australia are low and declining (Tovey & McNeilage, 2018). Such subjects are seen as disadvantageous for employment (Lo Bianco, 2009) or university entrance (University of Sydney, 2018). Australia is a highly multilingual nation, but individually, apart from those whose first language is not English, few of us function bilingually. A concern for students who might otherwise choose to study a language other than English is competing against students who may have one or more parents or grandparents who speak the target language as a first language; determining the status of a "beginner" language learner is difficult in a competitive market.

The above list of languages on offer tends to reflect globally and regionally important languages, and languages representative of our larger immigrant communities. Nevertheless, there are some notable omissions. No Pacific Island languages appear in the list, despite local communities of, for example, Tongan, Samoan and Māori immigrants and their descendants in Australia. The proportion of people of Pasifika descent in Australia is 0.88% (Batley, 2017), almost one in every hundred people. I note, however, that schools can arrange to teach languages of their choice, based, for example, on local demographics.

In NSW schools, provision for "special religious education" (SRE) has also been legislated. The NSW Department of Education (2019) reports that "The Education Act 1990 states that 'in every government school, time is to be allowed for the religious education of children of *any religious persuasion*'" (emphasis added). "Any religious persuasion" is subsequently qualified by the department as "an approved religious persuasion". Until relatively recently, this, in practice, covered various Christian denominations—Baptist, Presbyterian, etc. More recently, SRE has come to include Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and other faiths, according to the school's demographics, and available instructors. Such 30-min weekly lessons are typically delivered by volunteer visitors to the school. In a recent innovation, special education in ethics has been added as an alternative to SRE in NSW; "Special education in ethics can be offered as a secular alternative to special religious education" (NSW Department of Education, 2019). Studies of Religion is offered as a matriculation subject in NSW schools.

The Australian Curriculum broadly adopts an "expanding horizons" approach. History, for example, commences with family then local history, and geography opens with local area studies. A logic inheres to this, but it may be worth considering that young learners can sometimes confound us here. Among their favourite topics appear to be the faraway: ancient Egypt, dinosaurs, outer space, infinity. It is probably worthwhile giving younger learners at least tasters of these, as forerunners of where their studies and interests may take them subsequently.

Among the possible casualties of overcrowding are the Australian Curriculum's General capabilities (see Dyment and Hill, 2015, for example, on sustainability) and cross-curriculum priorities (see Salter & Maxwell, 2015).

The cross-curriculum priorities are as follows (ACARA, 2016b):

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures,
- Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and
- Sustainability.

Conspicuously absent from the second of these cross-curriculum priorities is any reference to the other half of our region—the Pacific. Australia has considered this area as less strategic than Asia. Decisions and actions taken in Australia have consequences for Pacific Island nations, however. These include detaining asylum seekers on Nauru and Papua New Guinea's Manus Island, and environmental consequences, such as disposal of plastics, sending debris to any and all coastal areas, and carbon emissions, leading to sea-level rises. Our own demographics (Pacific Islander and New Zealand ex-pat communities) would also suggest according greater importance for this region, as would Australia's history as a colonial power over Papua New Guinea. This matter has recently taken on an added strategic impetus, as China has increased development aid to the region, and Australia is eager to maintain its influence in the area (Riordan, 2018).

The general capabilities are as follows (ACARA, n.d.):

- Literacy,
- Numeracy,

- ICT capability,
- Critical and creative thinking,
- Personal and social capability,
- Ethical understanding and
- Intercultural understanding.

The first three general capabilities above, literacy, numeracy and use of technologies, constitute a sine qua non for effective teachers; they are must-haves for the students in their care. The future of literacy and numeracy, in particular, is secure; they enjoy the privilege and protection of state-wide testing every 2 years. Similarly, the study of technology does not appear to be under threat. But the remaining four may be vulnerable, as there is little if any corresponding assessment or reporting mechanism—and they are difficult to assess.

There is arguably a false membrane between literacy, numeracy and ICT, and the other four General capabilities: critical and creative thinking, or ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, or personal and social capabilities (ACARA, n.d.). It is reasonable to fear that these last four might be pushed to the side of a bulging curricular plate by teachers. More importantly, literacy, numeracy and ICT are mere instruments—devices for gaining and communicating deeper, more perceptive, incisive, creative and compassionate thinking and ideas. The General Capabilities come with no outcome tests or accountability. I have no desire to increase the burden of teacher accountability here, but in the absence of measurable related outcomes, teachers may be less likely to prioritise, or perhaps even notice, these capabilities.

I see it as more serious than this, however. If literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are permitted to displace the other four general capabilities—critical and creative thinking; personal and social capability; ethical understanding and intercultural understanding—we risk nurturing—and I hope I'm not overstating this—a generation of more literate, more numerate and more ICT-savvy monsters. With my pre-service teachers, I occasionally use the example of Pol Pot's Killing Fields. Compared to his countrymen and (especially) countrywomen, Pol Pot was privileged with a standard of education that would usually be the preserve of royalty. He returned home, not to become a teacher, nurse or social worker, but to put to death about a quarter of his countrymen and women. And their children. That figure of 25% of Cambodians translates to about 6,000,000 people in Australia—a number that refuses to stop whispering to my heart (see Buchanan, 2013). I suppose the trade-off is that we might outmatch those kids in Shanghai. Or not. Of course, the choice is not so stark. But any aspect stripping a course of study of its human side, of stripping us of our capacity for "a decent, respectful way of meeting and treating one another" (Noddings, 2013, p. 117) needs to be regarded with suspicion.

Possible Guidelines for Curriculum Construction

I recently hosted a reference group in response to concerns about NSW's crowded curriculum. The terms of reference were as follows: Identify essential knowledge, skills and attributes as the common entitlement for every learner, ensuring parity of access to learning that is necessary for success, taking account of.

a. the evidence on how skills and attributes are acquired through knowledge-based disciplines;
b. the extent of overcrowding of the curriculum;
c. the appropriate scope for school community choices about content.

As part of the prompts, I posed the continua below, to promote discussion. I believe that these might assist curriculum designers as they approach their task, framing reformation of the curriculum. As stated at the outset of this chapter, I acknowledge the difficulty in constructing curriculum. Groundwater-Smith (1989) noted that curriculum design is "subject to a plethora of opposing tensions and pressures" (p. 93). The backdrop to these continua is the potential for teacher and student autonomy and responsibility. Possible attributes of either end of each continuum are proposed.

Who Decides What is Best to Learn, and How?

Local decision-making——————————Systemic decision-making

(relevance) (equity?/consistency)

Prescriptiveness——————————teacher decision-making

(consistency—"received wisdom") (agency/autonomy/local knowledge)

Children choose——————————The "system" chooses

(Engagement) (competitive advantage/equity?/expertise)

Inclusivity——————————-Decluttering

(overcrowding, exclusion?) (constriction/irrelevance)

Discipline-based——————big ideas/problem/project/skill/attribute-based

(easier to map for overlap and gaps?, to assess) (more engaging, authentic)

The following prompt questions (with some minor modifications here) were disseminated prior to the reference group convening. As with the continua above, I provide them here as possible curriculum framers. I confess that my responses to the questions are tentative. It may be, though, that there are few if any right answers, and many right-ish answers. I also pose them as further evidence of the complexity of organising learning.

The Nature of the Learner, and of Learning

How do you cater for the full range of learners (i.e. "every learner" in the wording of the Review)? (How) do you overcome dis/advantage with regard to socio-economic status, location, dis/ability, gender, language.

(How) can you extend all students to their fullest, and at the same time, close the attainment gap?

Can you teach attributes? Is one entitled to them (see Terms of Reference, above)?

How do you ensure addressing the needs of all learners, without constantly adding straws to the curricular camel's back?

What role do informal learning, mobile learning and other forms of technology-mediated learning, play?

What do we do about concerns that Australian students are falling behind their peers internationally? (How) does this shape what we view as success?

The Nature and Context of the Curriculum

What opportunities and constraints does the current outcomes-based education approach present?

What influence do teacher professional standards have, in a one-size-doesn't-fit-all enterprise such as education?

Do we make the curriculum from a build-up or pare-down approach? (Do we sculpt, or 3D-print, a curriculum?).

(How) is it possible to map the curriculum across subject areas against skills and attributes, and eliminate gaps and overlaps? (E.g. "dinosaurs have been done to death".)

Should skills and attributes be the primary curricular organisers, and should discipline-based studies subserve this?

Should literacy, numeracy and ICT cease to be discrete subjects, but be embedded in other learning as appropriate?

(How) might a core-lobe, or core-extension approach help (or hinder) enhancing the curriculum?

How much of the Syllabus should be at the discretion of teachers? How do you ensure and balance equity, equality and local relevance?

What types and levels of support might be necessary to effect the changes being proposed?

"If you need a Syllabus, you shouldn't be in teaching". Discuss.

Curricular approaches, and how they shape and are shaped by teacher and student thinking and doing.

A question arising from the prompts above, is, do you conform the child to the curriculum, or the curriculum to the child? It is probably not quite as stark a decision as that, and to some extent, both processes will happen. But I fear that the former is

the position to which we default when we run out of energy and ideas. Luke (2010) warns of the dangers of a "settled" curriculum. There are, however, likely to be some things on which we can settle, such as basic communication skills. The questions above don't explore many alternatives to a discipline-based curriculum. Some others are explored below.

Various alternatives and supplements to discipline-based curricula have been proposed. Each also shapes how teachers view their role. Before proceeding to outline some of these briefly, I would like to digress to some research I conducted recently on metaphors (Buchanan, 2015), as well as a common topic of conversation I have with students and colleagues. That is, how we position our role and responsibilities as teachers. I think many of my chosen metaphors position me too much as the centre of the learning process: tour guide, travel agent (and the ultimate in control freakiness?) airline pilot. I actually think my role is more akin to that of a fossicker, to look for, and then polish, gems or veins of gold—in myself, in my students, in the activities we undertake, in the resources I choose and in the media we use to make sense of and communicate what we are learning. Accordingly, I teach my students to fossick. Part of fossicking is locating and recognising currently unseen precious stones and the like.

On the topic of metaphors, it may be instructive to consider metaphors for school. I occasionally ask students and others for their chosen metaphor for school(ing). I include some of the more memorable, colourful ones below for your consideration as to the running of (a) school.

Re-education camp,
Battery hen/foie gras farm,
Penal(ising) colony,
Sheltered workshop,
Resort/spa,
Crèche,
Launch pad,
Fat camp and
Crash test dummy laboratory.

I can't hope to comprehensively cover a broad range of curricular approaches, but propose the following as a precursor to further reading. Student (and teacher) autonomy and agency form a backdrop to this section.

I sometimes ask my students to rank the subjects in the NSW Curriculum, from most to least important. These subjects are, alphabetically: Creative Arts; English; History; Geography; Mathematics; Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) and Science. Civics and Citizenship, while part of the Australian Curriculum, is not a discrete subject in the NSW curriculum. Most students rank English in first place. A few nominate mathematics. Very few ever nominate anything else. Science and PDHPE occasionally get a nod. Hardly anyone nominates history and geography, the subjects I teach. I've learnt to live with it. I think there might be fewer right answers than at first glance, however. I can't recall anyone nominating "Arts" as the most important. But on occasions might it form a basis, or at least a starting point, for all learning, with its capacity to stimulate thinking, resonate with

the viewer intellectually and affectively, and provide stimulus for thought, discussion, dis/agreement and action? Perhaps the key is flexibility and adaptability—there will be times when a picture book or other visual text inspires, leads and "frames" a unit of work for me. (I'm not sure I like the term "frames" as it suggests pre-set limits to the learning and experiences. But I also recognise that some structure is inevitable.) Naturally enough, for me, an environmental sustainability-based approach appeals. It is a natural fit for English/communication, mathematics, science, geography, the arts, civics and citizenship. The links with history and PDHPE are a little more tenuous, but can be found. Or, consistent with flexibility, these subjects can be taught discretely for the duration of this cross-curricular or transdisciplinary unit. As suggested above, different subject areas should be allowed to step forward and take the lead at various times.

A portfolio approach might also bear fruit, but would require designing out gaps—and/or deciding which "gaps" are to be tolerated and why. A passion-based curriculum, possibly mediated by core and lobe elements, might also reap benefits—offering choice, again, in line within tolerable limits. Dewey's "fourfold interests" of children (1907, p. 61) can be summarised as: finding out (inquiring), making (constructing and creating) and telling (communicating). Summarised further, these could be seen as, exploring/experimenting and expressing, or input and output. A syllabus of experiences might be built around this. In the early years in particular, a play-based approach (Sahlberg & Doyle, 2019) offers promise; in high-performing Finland, lessons are not allowed to eat into lunch (Sahlberg, 2019). Nussbaum (2010, p. 101) asserts that "play teaches people to be capable of living with others without control; it connects the experiences of vulnerability and surprise to curiosity and wonder, rather than to crippling anxiety".

Fraser, Aitken and Whyte (2013) propose a more democratic curriculum in which students have choice, and in which they are more likely to invest. They contend,

> When children come home talking excitedly about the latest issues they are grappling with in class, this shows that something important has kindled their desire to know more. When students want to bring resources from home that contribute to the class study, do extra at home for the sheer pleasure of it, offer to lead a group of peers, start contributing in unexpected ways, make suggestions to the class on how to improve something or want to stay in when the bell goes because what they are learning is just so absorbing, then we know that students are taking learning to heart. We know that they are curious and inspired.

I recently wrote (Buchanan, 2016), about a transdisciplinary approach to organising learning. A transdisciplinary approach, as I see it, is more than a cross-disciplinary one. Cross- disciplinary approaches are of value, and may be used for, for example, studies on environmental sustainability. I believe that each of the disciplines has approaches and instincts to lend to other disciplinary pursuits. For example, the forensic, analytical and sceptical instinct of science could lend itself well to any problem-solving (and solution-problematising) and lateral, creative thinking. These might be applied to art and text criticism, or history studies, for example. Asking "why is it so?" also lends itself to both science and history. Maths teachers often ask students to "show your work"—this can be useful in other subject areas, such

as explaining/making visible how a learner arrived at their response. The aesthetic appreciation and creativity of the arts can be applied to other subject areas.

A move away from discipline-based learning (such as towards project or problem-based learning, or service learning—or a mixture, e.g. the "year 5 gift to the school/community", or "year 9 gift to humanity" (see Buchanan, 2013)) may provide some of the flexibility arguably absent from many current curricula. Such an approach invites students to identify a problem before attempting to resolve it, test and, as suggested above, problematise the proposed solutions, that is, to question the answers. Such an approach permits the application of skills in real-life situations, and systemic thinking, with its focus on cause, effect and the like. Hunter (2015) also evokes lofty curricular aims in her high possibility classrooms approach, which encompasses: theory; public learning; contextual accommodations; life preparation and creativity.

Another possibility is modules, to be completed in a variety of sequences (within tolerable, or optimal frames), and levels of depth, with prescribed minimum completion levels. This might require the devising of short, medium long-term pathways (what and how to learn next, what subjects to take and why, etc.). A related question would be: what are agreed minimum acceptable levels of attainment, before a student can opt out of further (e.g.) maths or art study—and what implications might this have for other subjects (e.g. use of numeracy or aesthetic appreciation/critical literacy in other subjects)? This reprises the transdisciplinary question above, as to what the subject areas bring to each other's table.

Curriculum shapes and changes the ways in which teachers approach their work. An associated question is: what kinds of approaches to knowledge and thinking does the curriculum want to foreground in teachers' minds, dreams, aspirations and visions? Some jurisdictions, Lithuania and parts of Germany among them, have instituted curricula that focus and insist on, and assess, collaboration (Naujokaitiene & Passey, 2019). Unsurprisingly, this has influenced how teachers typically conduct their classrooms, with increased opportunities for student presentations.

A "pure" approach, in my view, is probably less attractive and productive than a mixture of some of the approaches outlined in this chapter. I imagine, for example, that a curriculum, based exclusively on project after project, would become tedious and repetitive. One feature common to most of the above is that they position learners more actively as drivers and directors of, and responsible for, their learning, and communicating it to one or more audiences; they accord the learner some autonomy, responsibility and the potential for agency. The approaches also tend to be cross- or transdisciplinary. At higher levels of sophistication, for older students, these would generally require the collaboration of teachers across various faculties. This could create complications for workload and timetabling, but the results may make the effort worthwhile.

A Word on Assessment

I will briefly touch on assessment here, as an important touchstone of curriculum, as a matter of social justice, and as a segue to the next three chapters, which are also set against a backdrop of assessment. No lengthy etymologies here, I promise, but "assessment" derives from the idea of calculating someone's taxes. If that sounds unfriendly, its more general origins hail from the notion of "sitting beside" (in order to assist) (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2019c). I find that a much more comfortable notion. Consult Online Etymology Dictionary "*sed-(1)", if you're open to more related etymology. As assessors, though, we are the metaphorical tax collectors (and currency distributors) and judges.

Curriculum also drives assessment. My students sometimes claim that students should be afforded opportunities to present their learning in ways most comfortable for them. I see this as a double-edged sword. While this is useful as a starting point, might it be an example of allowing the non-swimmers to avoid swimming, as suggested above? While it is important to give access to all learners to understand the concepts, and in so doing provide a variety of explanation modes, the range of skills in communicating their understanding of these is also important. I extend this to education of learners with disabilities. The initial goal is to make the concepts accessible to all learners. Aspirationally, though, a goal is to remove as many supports as their learning and its expression can bear, assisted, as needed, by an increasing array of assistive technological supports, again, removed as and when this becomes appropriate.

While rubrics may be helpful in terms of giving your students a window into your thinking, they can tend towards a colour-by-numbers scenario, and serve to stifle creativity, imagination and lateral thinking. Regular basic skills tests may have a similar effect. Assessment is an integral part of the learning cycle. Whether formative or summative, it looks forward and backward. Ewing (2013, p. 6) warns that seeing assessment as only the end of the story "implicitly presents a false authority about a particular construction-a certainty that belies the complex interactive and dynamic nature of curriculum and assessment". Assessment often asks what learners know and can do. A more productive question might be to ask what kind of person do we want our education system, and our time with us as teachers, to produce? At the risk of tedious repetition, I refer back to Pol Pot, above.

Assessment is something teachers, more than anyone, should be getting right. I think we are in a position to tell others how to assess—to assess our students, ourselves and our profession. This is not to say that we refuse to take counsel from others, but that they, too, need to learn from our experience and expertise. As with academia, there are sound reasons for peer review, complementing if not replacing, external review of teachers' work.

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Chapter 7
The Standardisation of Teaching

Abstract The development of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers presents an opportune moment to investigate and evaluate such standards, the nature of standards-based accreditation, and the impact of standardisation on pedagogy, and on a profession where one size doesn't fit all. This chapter investigates notions of "quality teaching" and forming a "quality teacher". The chapter also holds up to the light the concept of a standard as a measure against which others can be judged, and the basis on which a standard assumes and accretes authority and credibility, and explores the extent to which teachers serve standards or vice versa. The study focuses on Australia's Graduate Level standards in particular. The chapter builds on an existing Springer book chapter, (Buchanan et al. in Teacher education policy and practice: Evidence of impact, impact of evidence, Springer, Singapore, pp. 115–128, 2017), which critiqued standards and standardisation. In particular, the chapter will include a discussion of recent research on Teaching Performance Assessments, which are linked to the Standards, and the impact these are having and are likely to have on teaching and on the profession, including initial teacher education providers.

Introduction

Quality teaching is a longstanding quest of the profession (Dinham, 2013). This chapter discusses the language and literatures of teacher standards, their implementation and application, and teacher quality. While the starting point for this discussion is Australia's Standards (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2014), these will be compared with a selection of similar documents internationally, and with quality teaching and learning frameworks (such as Bloom's (Revised) Taxonomy (Anderson, Krathwohl & Bloom, 2001), and The Quality Teaching Framework (NSW DET, 2008)) as well as Deweyan, Freirean and other notions of liberalism and learner emancipation. The chapter compares and subjects the Standards to such frameworks and ideologies, as part of a benchmarking exercise.

The teaching body to whom the Standards apply differs from a (comprehensive, school) student body. Members of the teaching profession are autonomous adults,

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and an academic elite. They have met entry requirements to secure and maintain their place in pre-service preparation for the profession, and having subsequently demonstrated their worth in the eyes of peers through securing employment in, in some fields, an over-supplied market (Weldon, 2015). Arguably, those existing entry requirements and market pressures constitute standards, in the absence of which, aspirant teachers will fail to find employment. Teachers are also a self-selecting minority, with talents and/or a calling presumably commensurate with teaching. They are beholden, by virtue of receiving payment, and ethical obligations to their students and the community, to attaining and upholding the highest possible professional standards. Practising teachers should, therefore, demonstrate some features of independence and initiative discussed later in this chapter. Nonetheless, teachers, and beginners especially, are learners, who can benefit from the wisdom of more experienced peers. The chapter will, in part, explore the contribution of Standards to the pedagogical goal of teacher autonomy.

The Standards do not primarily define teaching quality. They constitute essentially a framework of assessable outcomes, akin to a "you must be this tall to ride" sign at an amusement park. They are aspirational measures of teacher professional expertise, knowledge, learning, development and "readiness". Their intent and application, therefore, arguably needs to accommodate the learning status of all teachers, particularly beginners, and support their development accordingly—both to the point of, and beyond, the standards and the levels of competence they describe. Their function and raison d'être is, surely, pedagogical and educational—learning-related. It is worth keeping in mind that height is but one measure one's readiness for an amusement ride, so might standards tend to focus on outward, visible, features.

This chapter seeks to address policymakers in educational jurisdictions in Australia and beyond, as they develop, explicate and illustrate, interpret, implement and evaluate the contribution of standards to beginning teachers and the profession more broadly. Consistent with an outcomes-based approach to learning and teaching, a demonstrable improvement in teachers' professional prowess should become evident as the standards are implemented. The chapter aims to supplement standards-related literature, which is as yet relatively inchoate, setting the scene for more informed discussion of the Australian and other standards, acknowledging their complex operational contexts.

Conceptual Framework, Data Sources and Analysis

This chapter examines the value, contribution, impact and limitations of applying generic standards to the teaching profession. It investigates the extent to which and ways in which the AITSL (2014) Standards: encompass and align, or not, with those attributes commonly deemed desirable in teachers, and how they apply and meet their own standards, in their relationship with, and in service to, diverse beginning teachers-as-learners. The chapter also proposes to deconstruct and problematise notions of standardised quality teaching, in the context of its varied audiences and purposes,

and possible impacts of standardisation on teacher excellence, morale and status. In essence, the chapter investigates the extent to which and the ways in which (the) standards meet the learning needs of beginning teachers, in the same way that teachers are presumed to accommodate the learning needs of their charges. The chapter asks to what extent and how the Standards exemplify and model effective, responsive teaching.

Data Collection and Analysis

Beyond the premise that the Standards constitute, in part, a teaching and learning document for beginning teachers, a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) underpins this chapter, allowing findings from the literature—the data source for this chapter—to inform and guide theory. The chapter begins with a document analysis of the Graduate Standards, and then compares these with some other standards documents, and with some teaching and learning frameworks. The chapter adopts thematic analysis, a process which, "starts when the analyst begins to notice, and look for, patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2008, p. 86) and proceeds in iterative fashion as themes assume, change or lose definition—all subjective processes, I concede.

Findings

Critiques of Standards

Alegounarias (2017) identifies both threats and possibilities in the imposition of standards. (The) standards need to be of a high standard (Sinnema, Meyer, & Aitken, 2017), and are, themselves, accountable. Sinnema et al. (2017) highlight two shortcomings with regard to standards: their decoupling of theory and practice, and their tendency to promote reductionism. The latter critique could be seen as an avatar of the former. As Sinnema et al. point out (p. 11), "teachers become compelled to 'perform' with the purpose of demonstrating standards of practice that are observable and measurable, but narrow and shallow in their interpretation of effectiveness". Edwards (2011), by contrast, as part of a cry for greater power distribution and expertise recognition in the workplace, defines practices as "knowledge-laden and emotionally freighted sites of purposeful and expert activity" (p. 33). She calls for "working horizontally" (p. 35) across "boundary zones" (p. 36), as part of what Wang (2019) refers to as "symbiotic learning" (p. 1164).

The underlying risk here is that the Standards will shape teaching in their own image, constricting it to a series of observable behaviours (p. 11), and promoting a "teaching-as-telling" mentality. Sinnema et al. propose a different model, arising

from six inquiries, drawing on five resource sets. The six inquiries comprise: prioritising what is to be learnt; choosing teaching strategies; enacting the strategies; ascertaining their impact; choosing and enacting professional learning priorities; and system-critique. These align with the essentials of most Teaching Professional Assessments, to be discussed in Chap. 8. Sinnema et al.'s five resource sets comprise educational professional knowledge; interpersonal, intrapersonal and technical competencies; dispositions such as risk-tolerance, agency and discernment; ethical dealings; and commitment to social justice. These are difficult to measure; as inquiries, they ongo.

Standards are nested in broader sets of education and teacher reforms, which are, themselves, open to critique. Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, and Manning (2001, p. 3) dismiss much educational reform, including standardisation, as "karaoke curriculum", in the literal sense of the Japanese term, "empty box". According to Derrington and Campbell (2018) "A policy mandate focused on rigid compliance overlooks the influence and values of expert and locally sensitive school leaders, and might inhibit reaching the policy's intended achievement targets" (p. 259). Standards, Teaching Professional Assessments and the like should exist and operate to extend teachers—to educate (to educate, to reiterate a point made in the previous chapter) them. There is a risk, though, that they may have a contrary, constraining effect.

Drawing on the work of Giroux, Krise (2016, p. 29) refers to a process of "the commercialization of higher education, punitive evaluation schemes, and deskilling of teachers accountable for reducing great educators to compliant workers and technocrats while distributing more wealth to corporations". While commercialisation is of considerably greater concern in the US, the situation there offers lessons to Australian and other jurisdictions. "Teacher evaluation forms standardize the teacher, student and work" (Krise, 2016, p. 28). They "ignore the fact that teaching is an 'endeavor whose results are impossible to predict because they are subject to the vicissitudes of subjectivity and the unconscious, these ways of teaching are excluded'" (Taubman, 2009, p. 124). Cochran-Smith (2006) warns that "a narrow interpretation of higher standards-and one that is lurking beneath the surface of the discourse that heralds the paradigm shift in teacher education from 'inputs to outputs'-threatens the idea of teaching for change" (p. 27). In short, while all education should effect sensible change, that is, (positive) change which can be sensed, noticed and reported on, standards may have the effect of mitigating professional change.

Floden, Richmond, and Andrews (2017) make a couple of calls in their editorial that I'd like to examine. Firstly, "The standards reflect a trend of several decades and highlight a push for deeper student understanding of key concepts and of the foundations of disciplinary knowledge" (p. 236). I'm not entirely convinced that a set of standards can help here. Also, the focus on disciplinary knowledge is perhaps at odds with other approaches to curriculum, such as transdisciplinarity, problem-solving and project-based learning (see Chap. 6). Naturally enough, disciplinary knowledge will be acquired thereby, but it should arguably not be an end in itself. Secondly, "if teachers themselves persuasively articulate the rationale for…more challenging standards, parents may recognize that meeting the new standards will put their children on the path to success in the rapidly changing workplace" (p. 237).

I'm not persuaded that all teachers will want to extol the virtues of standards, and I wonder if "static" standards might be at odds with a rapidly changing workplace. It may be a question of terminology, however. If "standards" in Floden et al.'s quote above is replaced with "goals and aspirations", I'm more comfortable. Actually, I'm less comfortable—which is a better place to be.

Muñiz-Rodríguez, Alonso, Muñiz-Rodríguez, and Valcke (2017) point out a common confusion between standards and competencies. Standards, they explain "build on a comprehensive competence framework by also providing benchmark information on effective practice" (p. 385). Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2007) outline three steps in devising competencies and standards: decide what is to be measured (that is, what constitutes "good teaching"), and develop a set of related competencies; decide how to measure these competencies, that is, what counts as evidence, and: devise benchmarks equating to successful meeting of the standards, in other words "how good is good enough"? (p. 6).

The Language of and Around (the) Standards

"Education" derives from the Latin "educare", "to lead out". This begs the question of leading out from what to what. Plausibly, education leads out from a place of relative dependence to one of autonomy, equipping a learner with the tools for independent learning and thinking. Standards serve the purposes of accreditation and credentialing. Etymologically, these words proceed from the Latin for "belief", "trust" or "confidence". The origins of "standard" appear less clear, but seem to be linked with "standing" in the sense of "status" (Collins English Dictionary, 1999). The Online Etymology Dictionary (n.d.) denotes standard as an "'authoritative or recognized exemplar of quality or correctness' (late 15c.)". Its use in terms of "threshold" or "minimal standard" is apparently more recent. Perhaps significantly, as an adjective or modifier, "standard" has acquired somewhat pejorative connotations, possibly because of its association with "minimal". The word "quality" as a modifier is yet more elusive, and seems to preside upon tacitly agreed upon sets of characteristics. It is the foremost of McKee's (2006) five words to avoid in advertising.

A brief digression.

> Standard deviation a quantity expressing by how much the members of a group differ from the mean value for the group.

This caught my eye when I was looking up "standard". Static (in the sense of immobile) and stationary derive from the same etymological root as standard. For parents, I have a message. Your child is unlikely to tell you this, but I'm going to throw caution to the wind. Your child is not standard. You may have already suspected. Don't be alarmed at this, but celebrate (with) your children. Different is good. It

stands for resistance to (The horror! The horror![1]) of timeless uniformity and its attendant "external guiding hand" of accreditation (Harvey, 2007, p. 214). Deviation is a yet more enticing and subversive term than difference.

The AITSL Standards (2014) are as follows:

1. Know students and how they learn
2. Know the content and how to teach it
3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning
4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments
5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
6. Engage in professional learning
7. Engage professionally with colleagues parents/carers and the community (AITSL, 2017).

They operate under three domains: professional knowledge (of content and of students; standards 1 and 2, above), professional practice (planning, implementation and assessment, feedback and reporting of learning; standards 3, 4 and 5) and teacher engagement (with colleagues parents and others; standards 6 and 7). They also operate at four levels:

- Graduate level. This must be demonstrated in order for a student to graduate from their Initial Teacher Education course.
- Proficient. This is a requirement for registration as a teacher, and is to be accomplished within three years of graduating. Casual teachers (known by various names in different jurisdictions, such as supply, or relief teachers) have a longer period, five years, in which to gather evidence and demonstrate proficient status. Some non-permanent teachers have shared concerns about this, with difficulty in getting their school to support them to attend requisite in-service courses, some of which attract fees (Burke, Aubusson, Schuck, Buchanan, & Prescott, 2015).
- Highly accomplished.
- Lead level.

Progression to the last two levels is discretionary on the part of teachers, and only necessary for the purposes of promotion. The Standards are supplemented with a growing bank of resources and illustrative examples. Each of the standards has elements (I keep going to call them sub-standards?), comprising a total of 37.

Analysing the "outcome verbs" of the AITSL Standards is complicated. The verb "demonstrate" predominates in the Graduate Standards, with 21 occurrences. The to-be-demonstrated, however, tends to operate at the level of knowledge and understanding, the two lowest of Bloom's strata (Anderson et al., 2001). "Know" or "knowledge" occur 19 times in the Graduate Standards, and "understand" or "understanding" appear in 20 instances.

The word "quality" appears four times in the Standards, but never at Graduate level. "Application" is explicit in four of the Graduate Standards (2.5, 5.3, 6.3 and

[1] Conrad (1899, part 111, p. 62).

7.1), and "analysis" is implicit in some, but not specified at Graduate level. "Evaluation" occurs in two Graduate standards. Standard 4, in its overarching form, requires teachers to "create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments", but nowhere does "create", the highest level of Bloom's revised Taxonomy, occur specifically in the Graduate Standards. This might be explained by the positioning of these higher-order outcomes in the subsequent Standard levels. Nevertheless, this arguably underestimates or understates the complexity of teaching, and (see Standard 1, "Know students and how they learn") the capacities and capabilities that beginning teachers—the "students" of the Standards—bring to work. Creativity in the Standards does not specifically include engaging students in their learning. Coincidentally, and perhaps ironically, "creativity" is an attribute often ascribed to effective teachers; a Google Scholar search (2016) identified approximately 87,000 related articles in 2016 to date. Creative thinking is embedded in one of the seven Australian Curriculum General Capabilities (ACARA, 2016).

"Organise" occurs twice in Graduate Standards (with regard to arranging content into effective sequences, 2.2; and classroom activities, 4.2), as do "apply" (peer and supervisor feedback, 5.4; ethical conduct, 7.1), and "describe" (strategies to involve parents/carers, 3.7; strategies to support student wellbeing, 4.4). For the purposes of this analysis, "describe" is interpreted as "understand". Other outcomes are set (learning goals, 3.1); plan (lesson sequences, 3.2; include (teaching strategies, 3.3); identify (inclusive, engaging strategies, 4.1, student assessment data, 5,4); seek (peer and supervisor feedback, 6.3) and demonstrate capacity (to organise activities, 4.2, to interpret student assessment data, 5.4).

While verbs such as "describe" and "identify" correspond to Bloom's lower order thought processes, some of the matters to be known, described and identified are themselves complex. Standard 5.1, for instance, requires knowledge and understanding of "strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities", necessitating considerable powers of analysis, evaluation, insight and more. As reported elsewhere in this book, classrooms have become more diverse in recent decades, a joyous, but demanding, change in teachers' workplaces. Mills and Goos (2017, p. 647) report that, among other limitations, "a standardised notion of classroom readiness being articulated through the particular recommendations being taken up by government will also not adequately prepare pre-service teachers for the diversity of experiences they are likely to face". They describe associated approaches as "self-defeating" (p. 648). Moreover, some beginning teachers report exposure to the most difficult, extreme student behavioural problems, particularly, as often transpires, if they are relief teachers (Schuck et al., 2012). Bamberry (2011, p. 49) describes casual teachers as being "as disposable as the next tissue out of the box".

In some instances, such deployment of beginning teachers might be virtually impossible to avoid at school level; in such cases, system-level responses might assist. Where they operate, smaller classes, release from face to face teaching and mentoring have been welcomed by beginning teachers (Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, Varadharajan, & Burke, 2018). If, however, teachers are required to accommodate the full range of abilities, should the Standards also tolerate a range of

abilities, including the presumably emerging abilities, of beginning teachers? Exacerbating this, it is the schools which experience the most complex and widespread needs that will experience the most difficulty in sheltering new teachers from these difficulties, and, which are most likely to employ beginning teachers, as well as newly promoted senior staff, arguably compounding the paucity and quality of support that they can provide (Schuck et al., 2016a). This "experience deficit" or "expertise/problem quotient" intensifies the (neophyte?) executive's complexities in addressing students' and beginning teachers' needs. Related high staff turnover inevitably undermines community confidence and fuels cynicism, while perpetuating the associated problems.

Other foci of Standard knowledge, such as legal requirements, are arguably less complex, merely requiring compliance, but the backdrop of the development of such legislation is complex. Nowhere is there an invitation to question the legislation. Standard 6.1 is self-referential, requiring graduates to "demonstrate an understanding of the role of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional needs" (AITSL, 2014:16), and does not overtly invite critique. Standard 4.4 does not invite teachers to describe strategies for *teacher* wellbeing.

International Comparisons

Space here permits but brief reference to a small, illustrative sample of teacher standards documents. Some of these operate alongside codes of ethics, or prescriptions regarding personal standing (e.g. Education Council of New Zealand, 2015a), or discrete standards for teaching exceptional children (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Learning 2012), or principles (UNESCO and Education International, 2019). The UNESCO and Education International principles, for example, include reference to education as a universal human right; universal high-quality education and teaching; ethical commitment; government obligations to support teachers, as outlined below.

The USA's National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2014) establishes five propositions concerning: teacher commitment, knowledge, management and monitoring of student learning, systematic thinking and learning, and professional community membership. These underpin the Board's 25 discipline-based areas of certification. State-based regimes also operate in the USA, such as California's Performance Assessment for Californian Teachers (PACT, n.d.) with its associated Teaching Performance Assessment entailing planning, implementing, assessing and evaluating pedagogy.

The Education Council of New Zealand (2015b) outlines five standards concerning content and pedagogical knowledge, contextual factors, planning and use of evidence. England's Department for Education (2013) prescribes eight teaching standards, including student expectations, needs and outcomes, content and curriculum knowledge, organisation and assessment of learning, and behaviour management. The Irish Teaching Council (2012) calls teachers to professional:

values and relationships; integrity; conduct; practice; development and collegiality/collaboration. In Canada, accreditation is undertaken provincially. The Ontario College of Teachers (2016) proffers five standards of practice, pertaining to: commitment to students and learning, professional knowledge and practice, leadership of learning communities and ongoing professional learning. Similarly, standards operate in, for example, British Columbia (Ministry of Education, 2012) and Québec (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2001). Another standards document has been produced for use within The Commonwealth (2014) of Nations. Standards have also been proposed for Indonesia (Jalal et al., 2009), and other ASEAN nations (see Vesamavibool et al., 2015).

One apparent feature distinguishing the Scottish Government (2009) Standard for Chartered Teacher from many other national systems is its greater development-stage reliance on consultation with the profession (Forde et al., 2016; Menter, Mahoney, & Hextall, 2011; Watson & Fox, 2014). It is premised on four capacities; for students to become: "successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society" (Scottish Government, 2004). It might do this in part by enhancing these capacities in teachers? The Scottish Standard addresses four clusters of abilities. These are the extent and quality of a candidate's professional: values and personal commitments; knowledge and understanding; skills and abilities; and actions. Berg, Carver and Mangin (2014:211) note that "previous efforts to create professional standards have demonstrated that there are distinct advantages to engaging a wide range of stakeholders in dialogue"—that is, professional standards of, by and for the profession—apologies to Abraham Lincoln.

UNESCO and Education International (2019) have developed 10 standards, under the three domains. They are paraphrased here (p. 6).

> Teacher knowledge: of student learning, and of the associated necessary support and development needs; of content and related methodologies; of related research, including of assessment.
> Teaching practice: planning and preparation to support student learning; a contextually suitable range of teaching approaches; safe, constructive organisation of learning activities; diagnostic assessment of student learning.
> Teaching relationships: productive interaction with colleagues; communication with parents and the community, including reporting; professional development.

The AITSL Standards are among the more comprehensive and detailed of those cited above. While such rigour has virtue, it also bears implications for entry requirements into teacher education, and for pre-service and early career teacher education (Buchanan & Schuck, 2016).

Quality Teaching Frameworks and Models

As Zammit et al. (2007:iii) explain, "much hope is placed on quality teaching and school leadership for the future of Australian students, citizens and workers". No framework captures the contextual complexity of the pedagogical (p)act or contract between the learner and teacher, the to-be-learnt, and ultimately, the learner's impact on the world. The NSW DET (2003:6) concedes that it is "difficult to isolate the independent effects of any one specific teaching technique or learning skill"; moreover "no single instructional strategy is consistently successful" (Zammit et al., 2007:v). Patterns emerge, however. On the premise that some circumstances, teacher attributes and approaches are more efficacious than others in effecting "positive" learning outcomes, it is worth exploring the comparative effectiveness of such approaches, attributes, environments and the like, with contextual checks in mind. What follows is a necessarily brief overview of some major contributions to thinking about quality teaching and learning.

Quality teaching can be assessed vicariously through student learning outcomes, or via professional attributes (Zammit et al., 2007). Both measures are problematic, however. A *learning* outcome (that is, value-adding) is difficult to isolate from students' starting points, and from affordances and impediments operating within and beyond classrooms. Quality teacher attributes resist delineation, other than by the somewhat circular definition of those qualities that precipitate quality student learning outcomes. Schools can tackle external (community and broader) learning impediments, but only at a cost of staff time, energy and attention. Such measures might also be met with community resistance.

The quest for quality teaching is longstanding, deriving from the traditions of, for example, Confucius and critical thinking (Kim, 2003), Ancient Greece and Socratic methods (Stenning et al., 2016) and Indigenous traditions. The NSW Department of Education (n.d.) lists eight Australian Indigenous ways of learning, implicating teaching: story, maps, deconstructing/reconstructing, the non-linear, non-verbal, symbols and images, community links, and Country (comprising land, water and skies).

One aspect common to Dewey and Freire is education for autonomy and agency, premised on social responsibility, including, if not foregrounding, social responsibilities *of* (not merely to) the disadvantaged and oppressed. Freire (1970:54) decries an education which merely apprentices outsiders into conformist, mainstream ways of doing and being.

> no pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption.

"The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lourde, 1984, p. 110) that sort of thing.

Dewey links freedom with (inter)personal responsibility, which he sees as, "the sole *ultimate* guarantee of social order" (Boydston, 1978, p. 392, emphasis in

original). He outlines two necessary conditions for freedom (Westbrook, 1991, p. 165):

> the freedom of an agent who is merely released from direct external instructions is formal and empty. If he [sic] is without resources of personal skill, without control of the tools of achievement, he must inevitably lend himself to carrying out the directions and ideas of others.

Bandura (1982) positioned emancipation as self-efficacy and human agency—the reality and perception of being able to make a difference, while Maslow (1950) speaks of maximising human potential through self-actualisation.

Barnes (1989) proposed active learning, characterised by purpose and relevance; reflective, negotiated and critically evaluated learning goals and methods; acknowledgement of complexity and links to immediate and broader contexts. Another popular approach is student-centred learning (Greener, 2015), incorporating, among others, project- and problem-based learning. O'Neill and McMahon (2005:27) describe student-centred learning as a "slightly overused term" which "can mean different things to different people". While "student-centred learning" is perhaps axiomatic, in that the learner will be, by definition, the locus of the learning, the term appears to embody and embrace teacher understanding of learning from the learner's perspective. In a tertiary context, Biggs and Tang (2011:20) see this as "what the student does and how that relates to teaching", or, more simply, how students learn. Barnett (1997) discerns three domains of criticality: critical reason (propositions, ideas, or theories); critical reflection (one's thoughts, feelings, assumptions, prejudices, blind spots and causes and implications thereof) and critical action "on" the world resulting from new knowledge.

The "Quality Teaching Framework" (NSW DET Professional and Curriculum Directorate, 2003:5) invokes three elements of quality teaching, which: "is fundamentally based on promoting high levels of intellectual quality … is soundly based on promoting a quality learning environment", and "develops and makes explicit to students the significance of their work" (emphases in original). Intellectual quality here typifies higher-order thinking and deep understanding, and presumes (co-)construction of knowledge. A quality learning environment comprises the relationships between and among students and teachers, student engagement, high expectations of students and (definition-resistant) authenticity. Significance entails making learning meaningful for students, and summoning their prior knowledge of the world beyond the classroom. Arguably, this is a joint responsibility of curriculum and teachers. A related challenge is that of effecting engagement without compromising quality or rigour. More micro-specific scaffolds also exist for organising learning, such as the "5 es": engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration and evaluation (Bybee et al., 2006:2).

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is "that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is *uniquely* the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding" (Shulman, 1987:8, emphasis added). PCK brings together knowledge of the subject to be taught, and of teaching and learning tailored to individual students. Cochrane (1991) describes it thus:

> What teachers know about teaching, such as preinstructional strategies, the use of concrete examples and manipulatives, formative testing, use of questions, design of curriculum and assignments, and assessment of student performance, comprises pedagogical knowledge. Pedagogical content knowledge is a type of knowledge unique to teachers; it concerns the manner in which teachers relate their pedagogical knowledge to their subject matter knowledge in the school context, for the teaching of specific students.

Taking PCK further, Koehler et al. (2011:149) explain that.

> teachers can use creativity to rethink and re-imagine how the demands of the twenty-first century are changing the boundaries of content knowledge (CK) (what they teach) from rigid disciplinary boundaries to cross- and inter-disciplinary thinking. Likewise, creativity plays a role in teachers' use of pedagogical knowledge (PK) (how they teach), by helping them adapt to the new demands of going beyond rote test-based learning towards higher-order thinking skills. Finally, and most importantly teachers' creativity is also critical to understanding how teachers can adapt, reuse, and repurpose new technology for use in classrooms (technology knowledge).

Marton and Säljö discern deep and surface learning, "distinctive qualitative differences in how students grasped or comprehended ideas and principles" (1976:4). Determining the depth of understanding is primarily the domain of assessment. Part of a teacher's (or standard's) role may be to counter learner predilection for minimalist, surface, test-passing engagement. Koehler et al. (2011:146) refer to "deep-play", integrating three elements: "pedagogy for key twenty-first century learning skills"; "content that cuts across disciplines with trans-disciplinary cognitive tools", and use of "technology by the creative repurposing of tools for pedagogical purposes" (p. 147), while Papert (2002) invokes "hard fun". Koehler et al. add that such approaches aim to "develop the kinds of deep situated knowledge that is an essential characteristic of mastery" (p 158). Notwithstanding Koehler et al.'s (2011:149) observations above, "21st Century skills" remain rather ill-defined.

As Koehler et al. (2011) explain, technology is not typically designed for pedagogical ends, and requires repurposing by educators; "thoughtful pedagogical uses of technology require the development of a complex, situated form of knowledge" or Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge, TPCK (Mishra & Koehler, 2006:1017) or Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge, TPACK (Koehler et al., 2011). Mishra and Koehler (2006:1017) observe "the complex rules of, and interplay among, three main components of learning environments: content, pedagogy, and technology".

Drawing on TPACK's premises, Hunter (2015:52–57) proposes High Possibility Classrooms, featuring five concepts: theory, or student-centred, theory-driven practice; creativity, through hands-on activities to capture students' imagination; public learning, enabled through digital technologies; life preparation—imbuing students with autonomy and agency, by giving them voice in the real world; and contextual accommodations, such as leveraging students' personal device use, and permitting exploration time. These aim to "provide children with an experience of learning that is both important and relevant to their differently lived social futures" (3).

One theme common to many of the above frameworks is the centrality of links or relationships—between teacher and learners, teacher and peers, among learners,

between learners and knowledge, among and across bodies of knowledge, and with media/technologies, and between learners and the(ir) world. A further link, between learners and themselves, that is, their hearts and minds, is also implicit. It is in mining these multiple veins of potentially rich discovery that teaching and learning flourish. Moreover, the digital twenty-first century technologies afford, indeed impose, greater borderlessness on learning, eliminating or diminishing frontiers between knowledge, learners and audiences for student learning (Schuck, Kearney, & Burden, 2016b). If anything, standards may jeopardise such borderlessness. Recent decades have also witnessed a "helix of complexity", proliferating demands and expectations, and associated accountability, substantially complicating teachers' work (Zammit et al., 2007), with implications for recruitment and preparation (Buchanan & Schuck, 2016).

I trust that for those previously unconvinced, the complexity of teaching has raised its head in the above section.

Policy, Research and Practice Implications

This section examines some affordances and limitations, necessities and paradoxes, of standardising teaching and teachers. Standards offer security—perhaps in dual guises of security blanket and security guard. Standards can serve both to protect and intimidate. The profession's gatekeepers and its neophytes might "call for security"! for different reasons. Ultimately, standards prescribe what teachers can and can't, should and shouldn't, do. As such, they constitute a control device; control can afford security. Nevertheless, Biesta (2015, p. 84) notes that professionalisation initiatives typically "do not enhance teacher professionalism or good education, but constitute a threat to the strive for good education and meaningful professional conduct". The Standards are arguably tasked with treading a fine line between dual securities; metaphorically, they "have a foot in (each of) two canoes". As a Chinese proverb, having a foot in two canoes has negative connotations, suggesting divided loyalties or duplicity. Native American traditions depict this more positively, as the ability to operate biculturally, in, say, both traditional and western cultures (McBride, 2009). The North American image in particular suggests difficulty, especially for the newcomer—but perhaps stability once the technique is learnt. How and to what extent can, should and do the Standards fulfil the arguably competing roles of critical friend, or "friendly police officer", sometimes admonishing, sometimes supporting? A critical friend is.

> a trusted person, who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critique of a person's work as a friend. A critical friend takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward. The friend is an advocate for the success of that work (Costa & Kallick 1993:50).

A teacher, a mentor (or a set of standards) *works in the service of another's goals.* Herein the Standards can stand tall—their messages are not exclusively soothing. They offer a view—someone's view—to outsiders and insiders about what good teachers look like. They might also help career-seekers to determine their readiness for teaching. Nevertheless, within a quest to "relinquish control to gain influence" (Senese, 2002:51) standards might also operate supportively, as they and teachers collaboratively "make changes and seek evidence that the changes did indeed represent improvement" (Russell, 2002:4). In this, the responsibilities of teachers towards their students are also placed on the Standards, in their responsibility to educate.

The above also presumes that the mentee or teacher-learner may contribute to negotiated goals. While this may be systemically impossible, it may be productive, albeit risky, for teacher standards and their implementation to consider the autonomy and professionalism of the people whose goals they serve. Another analogy may be of use here. Increasingly, education, particularly tertiary education, is shaped and driven by student feedback and opinion. This is analogous with a chef, cooking meat precisely to the diner's taste. By definition, teachers presumably know better than learners what is optimal pedagogically. Their role resembles that of a dietician. Whereas a chef might not dare question diners' caprices, a dietician may deliver unpalatable news. If not, this might be for one or both of two reasons. Either the client requires no regime change, rendering the dietician superfluous and fraudulent; or perhaps the dietician shrinks from offering unpopular advice, thereby making no difference, other than relieving the client of money. For a teacher, contentment with in-difference is unconscionable. Student feedback is discussed in further detail in Chap. 9.

Jordan (2004) identifies two important components of teaching: "scaffolding learning and co-constructing understandings" (p 31). Inasmuch as the Standards provide scaffolding for learning as part of negotiated meanings, they serve a valuable pedagogical purpose. Ultimately, though, they may constrain more than they liberate, and they are likely to privilege compliance over criticality. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978:86) implies problem-solving "in collaboration with more capable peers". Teaching presents no shortage of problems begging solutions. The standards and their implementation might be called on to assume the mantle of an (en)abler peer. Moreover, with their graduated levels, particularly "Highly accomplished" and "Lead" (AITSL, 2014), the Standards operate on presumption of assistance from more experienced colleagues within educational "communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 2002:109). However, such communities appear scarce school-wise; education is sometimes characterised as a profession that eats, rather than feeds, its young (Schuck et al., 2012:93). The profession at times also fails to recall and apply its pedagogical knowledge to its newcomers (Buchanan, 2012). While these dynamics are beyond the scope of the Standards to rectify, Barnett (1997) advocates pedagogy that acts on the world. The Standards' world is teaching, teachers, learning and learners.

Do the Standards meet their own standards? Standard 1 requires teachers to "know students and how they learn". This prompts the question as to how well the Standards' creators demonstrate knowledge of the full range of teachers in their various contexts,

of the professional body they are designed to serve—and how its members learn. Moreover, does this Standard tend to pathologise both learners and teachers, and position teachers as technicists (Zeichner, 2013)? To what extent do the Standards see learning from the teacher-as-learner's perspective, if this can be seen as a proxy for student-centred learning? Furthermore, this standard arguably depersonalises teaching and learning. Knowing *your* students is probably implicit in this Standard. Ultimately, teachers are required here to understand learning and the conditions under which it happens optimally. But personalising it might make it more appealing. The United States' National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2019) outlines the following five propositions, the first of which might effect personalising the teacher-student relationship:

Teachers are committed to students and their learning;
Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach these to students;
Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning;
Teachers think systematically and learn from their experience;
Teachers are members of learning communities.

The board claims that the propositions were devised by teachers.

The above discussion bears implications for a more human-centred implementation of the Standards, and how this might shape that implementation in schools. The Standards' stance as assessment criteria begs the question as to (how) standards are taught to, and modelled for, beginning and pre-service teachers. Relationships, discourse and dialogue are central to teaching and learning. Therefore ongoing interrogation—and intra-rogation? (Buchanan, 2008)—may help determine how such learning is best achieved. After Schuck (2008:209), teachers, and standards, their authors and implementers, need to ask themselves and one another, "what counts as evidence"?—a very real problem for teachers seeking to demonstrate attainment of standards. To what extent do the standards create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments (Standard 4)?

The Standards are essentially an assessment feedback instrument; this begs the question, what do teachers (and children) do with feedback? Visscher and Coe (2003) identified three responses from teachers to feedback: instrumental (leading to more or less immediate changes in their teaching); conceptual, which influences beliefs but not action and convincing, which refers to feedback that confirms the teacher's existing views. My own view is that if one's beliefs change, behaviours tend to follow. How might the Standards optimise the value of the feedback they generate?

How well do the standards serve teacher goals? If teachers' quest is to develop effective learners, the Standards' task is arguably to produce effective teachers-as-learners. Student learning outcomes might provide one accountability measure for standards—but this is complex, given the myriad variables influencing learning, and other problems inherent in basic skills testing (Johnston, 2016; Thompson & Harbaugh, 2013). The Standards might also be adjudged against teacher attraction and retention levels; similarly, though, multiple influences affect teacher attraction/attrition (Buchanan et al., 2013).

In particular, the standards reference diversity—among learners and among teaching/learning approaches. Six of the elements refer to a range of dis/abilities, or Indigenous or EAL/D (English as an additional language or dialect) learners (Brovelli, 2019). Some might criticise this as a deficit framework—a discussion that could be pursued elsewhere. Another five refer to a range of, for example, resources, strategies for teaching and reporting. This necessary range acknowledges and serves as a further reminder, for those in need of reminding, that "*teaching is unforgivingly* [and un unapologetically] *complex*" (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 4, emphasis in original). Or as Mayer et al.'s "threefold amen" (2017, p. 16): "Teaching is complex. Students are complex. Education is complex". The regrettable irony, though, is that the Standards, and so many other exoskeletons being built around teaching, might be more likely to constrict and constrain it.

In closing, drawing on some of the abovementioned educational leader-researchers, standards can abet creating quality learning environments, creatively and engagingly enriching and deepening students' and teachers' collaborative learning; connecting learners with one another and the world; and raising students and teachers, through agency, self-efficacy and self-actualisation, to their optimal selves. In short, standards can serve, in principle, to emancipate, not emaciate, teaching and learning.

In Chap. 5, I referred in passing to the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008). The Declaration has recently been superseded by the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration (Education Council, 2019). The second of the Melbourne goals, that of "active and informed citizens" has been modified, and, in my view, mollified, to read "active and informed members of the community"[2]. "Citizenship" strikes me as more edgy. It is more likely to find itself "in the face of" governments. I understand and value the importance of understanding one's place in community. Belonging is an important human need, and can serve to promote coherence and harmony, within limits. For me, though the revision from citizenship to community membership also evokes images of conforming, not rocking the boat. I'm unsure of the reasons for the change. But it seems that calls for standardisation are echoing down several corridors at once. Perhaps the difference is who gets to tell me where I do and don't belong. At the risk of unleashing my inner cynic, I believe it is in governments' interest to have an electorate that conforms to standards, one in which compliance overrides complainants; knowing the boundaries, not transgressing them. In Chap. 10, I will touch on the widening power differential between the individual and the state.

More broadly, however, standards can serve to constrain the profession. The profession I entered was a fertile field of creativity. It now bears more resemblance to a replicating virus; the grand ideas of one individual, or one committee, being imitated by all. I would criticise it as being too teacher-centred in its approach, except that it is driven largely by non-teachers.

[2] An example of desiderata, or desert errata, I wonder.

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Chapter 8
Teaching Professional Assessment and Ongoing Professional Development

This chapter focuses on the Teaching Professional Assessment, the newly introduced capstone assessment task for all graduating pre-service teachers in Australia, and the nexus between pre-service and in-service. The chapter considers the backwash effect of the TPA in pre-service teacher education. It also considers the nature of in-service teacher professional development. The chapter reports on the potential of, and weaknesses of, the TPA, emerging from preliminary research, and will propose suggestions for modification accordingly. It discusses the TPA and TPD in the context of an issue central to the teaching profession: assessment.

Introduction

Alongside basic skills testing, another aspect of quality teaching, deriving from concerns over falling student attainment levels in Australia has seen the emergence of a culminating Teacher Professional Assessment as a condition of graduation, as introduced in Chap. 2. If it is to justify its cost, a teaching professional assessment instrument is charged with denying ineffective teachers entry into the workforce, while not excluding effective teachers. In so doing, it needs to demonstrate sufficient precision to discern effective from ineffective teachers. It also operates under numerous contextual constraints and variables, and is typically judged by someone at a distance from the teaching in question. In a US context, Conrad and Stone (2015) claim that teacher educators are "caught in the crossfire" of the edTPA (the US equivalent of the TPA) debate.

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Teacher Professional Assessments (TPAs)

TPAs typically assess four phases of a "teaching cycle": Planning, teaching, assessment and evaluation (2006) with regard to *the impact of that teaching on student learning*. In Australia, these elements are aligned with the AITSL (2017) Professional Standards, discussed in the previous chapter. In my sloughs of dark despond, I sometimes ask myself, is the TPA just NAPLAN for teachers? As an industry, though, I believe that if I and others in teacher education criticise these too roundly, we do so at our peril: "How dare they ask us, at the end of two or four years with our pre-service teachers, for evidence of their ability to organise, articulate, assess the impact of and reflectively analyse, their teaching. How very dare they"? If we as a profession decry such a test too shrilly, we might deserve the odium that we attract. To the extent that TPA sheds light on and evaluates the abovementioned elements of teaching, we would do well to support it, at least cautiously and conditionally.

There are numerous fragilities inherent in the operation of the TPA. In particular, there are serious problems with the edTPA as administered in many parts of the USA, and I see these as lessons to be learned locally. I mentioned somewhat cynically previously that Australia tends to wait in the wings until a scheme has failed overseas, and then we adopt it. I earnestly hope that this will not be the case with many aspects of the edTPA. Greenblatt (2015, p. 103) quips that TPA stands for "Taking Power Away[1]", and this may well apply to the situation in the US more than Australia—for the moment—more about that later. Morey (2001) observes that "in a time where the emphasis of education is on the need for quality teachers to improve student achievement, teacher education is experiencing challenges that will not strengthen teacher preparation but diminish it" (p. 310).

While there are weaknesses inherent in a TPA, I believe some of these have been overstated, and may need challenging. I will work my way through some of them here.

The TPA encourages "teaching to the test", and a narrowing of the ITE curriculum (Greenblatt, 2015). The "test of the test" here is whether it is sufficient to the purpose at hand. Yeh (2001) speaks of "tests worth teaching to". As an example, I believe that it is reasonable to teach a driving test, as it mimics, as closely as possible, a real-life circumstance. That said, a driving test is probably necessary but insufficient, in that it addresses minimum requirements. Moreover, it is highly controlled and contained. Its high-stakes nature rewards caution. Some years after gaining my driver's licence, I undertook an advanced skill driving course, on a dirt paddock. It was somewhat surreal having a uniformed police officer in the passenger seat, saying, "jam on the brakes and put the car into a skid", but it taught me how to avoid overcorrecting in such circumstances. I'm not sure what this says about my driving, but the knowledge has proven handy on several occasions since. Yeh (2001) argues that "if one accepts the premise that tests drive curriculum and instruction, perhaps the easiest way to reform instruction and improve educational quality is to construct better tests" (p. 12).

[1] She is silent on "Teach for America".

A TPA dumbs down teaching. Inevitably, it does—or at least it establishes a more contained and structured teaching/learning experience than what will be encountered out there in the real world of learnerdom. This is so for any entry-level assessment or hurdle task. This is linked to the discussion point above, concerning the quality of the test itself. The metaphor of training wheels on a bicycle comes to mind. Training wheels are inelegant, but they are intended as a transition strategy, one that will assist the rider to ride independently, and to lend confidence in so doing. At the risk of another personal learning anecdote, I recently took some lessons in surfing. In lesson one, we placed our boards on the sand, and practised standing upon them. You may have witnessed beginners on the beach doing this.[2] As with bicycle training wheels, the stand-ups on our boards on the sand lacked elegance or the capacity to impress, but they were a transition strategy, as is so much of teaching and learning. Engineering such transition practices should come naturally to us teachers. I could raise other examples. I presume you wouldn't visit the local swimming pool and puncture a young child's floaties (flotation devices) and tell them and their parents, "that's not how you swim". I'm sure such behaviour would be discouraged. I hope none of the examples above belittles the TPA. A word of caution, however. I referred above to the TPA establishing a "contained" teaching experience—which means that the experience might also be constrained. It is worth keeping in mind that if the teaching is con(s)t(r)ained, so, probably, is the learning. To maximise the effectiveness of teaching, the beginner would hope to progress beyond these tentative steps, into more innovative, exploratory and scary territory.

It is possible that pre-service professional experience programmes more broadly are too sheltered. Another driving analogy may be of use here. Very few learner drivers die or kill. The situation is highly contained, with stringent degrees of supervision, and little latitude. This circumstance changes dramatically, sometimes tragically, once beginner drivers attain their licence, however. Strategies have been implemented locally in recent years to gradually release the reins (pardon the mixed metaphor) for novice drivers, such as reduced alcohol levels, passenger numbers and curfews, and this seems to be having some effect. There may be similarities with teaching—minus the deaths—in setting out to contain the demands placed on beginning teachers. This is not universally the case in teaching, however. The teaching profession often throws beginners into the most difficult and complex of situations. It is little wonder that some of them crash and burn, with consequences for bystanders who happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time as well, just as it is with car accidents. And I'm not sure that we are making our best efforts yet to bridge this gap for beginning teachers. The "gradation" of teaching responsibilities, in terms of complexity, and innovation, probably needs the application of further thought and wisdom. One way of positioning the TPA might be as a set of threshold concepts or skills. The threshold metaphor suggests basic level skills that support the learner into greater expertise—much as basic literacy and numeracy might. The purpose of training wheels is not to improve one's expertise in using training wheels. In my

[2]I fell off and had to be rescued several times—I don't like to talk about it.

defence, I can now stand up quite competently on a surfboard on the sand—I rarely need rescuing. But this is hardly an end point.

TPAs divorce theory from practice (Clayton, 2016). As with the two points above, this has implications for the design of a TPA. It is a criticism that may cost us in the teacher education profession. Some have accused us of doing that very same thing—divorcing theory from practice—for much of the pre-service teacher's experience. We as teacher educators may need to remind ourselves that teaching *is* also practice (as well as theory)—just as medicine is practice and doctors are practitioners. Professional experience offers a lens through which to de-camouflage and interrogate theory. One response may be to position the TPA as action research. It bears numerous similarities. As I wrote recently (Buchanan, 2018), action research is context-responsive (an example of situated learning); collaborative (democratic); critically reflexive/reflective (it "questions the answers" (Buchanan, 2007)); evidence-informed; action-oriented and improvement-aimed (LaBoskey, 2004). McNiff and Whitehead (2011) refer to it as "living theory". Efron and David (2013, p. 7) use the terms: constructivist, situational, practical, systematic and cyclical to describe action research. Action research entails (Baumfield, Hall & Wall, 2013, pp. 5–6) intention (agency and impetus); process: (tools (and their use) and analysis) and audience (professional voice and a critical community). I would add that it's self-actualising, in that it helps the person or organisation grow or morph into its best or a better self. It is a way of "changing schools" (McAteer, 2013), changing teachers and changing learners. Change is what we're about in this profession. There are other ways of positioning this process, such as design-based research (Brown, 1992; Collins, 1990), participatory action research (e.g. Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982), activity systems analysis (Engeström, Miettinen, & Punamäki, 1999) or cultural-historical activity theory (Cole, 1996, after Vygotsky), which examines and compares thoughts/theory and actions/practice. The simple elegance of action research might be most appropriate, though, for someone largely examining their own behaviour and its effects in a new environment.

TPAs are high-stakes (Derrington & Campbell, 2018; Snyder, 2009). In Chap. 5, I asserted that unpleasant procedures shouldn't deter us from undertaking them, provided there is credible evidence that there are attendant benefits in the procedure, even if it may sound old-fashioned to adopt a "toughen'em up" line of argument. Within and beyond the medical realm, life delivers unpleasant circumstances and hurdles, against which it is probably worthwhile to develop a certain resilience. But as I also mentioned previously, high-stakes assessment tasks tend to shape the curriculum in their own image. They may also contort and corrupt the practices they are designed to support. In this case, a strict TPA might risk distorting the findings, such as pre-service teachers falsifying their school students' summative test scores. High-stakes, "high wire" tasks can also stifle innovation and experimentation, the lifeblood of teaching, by making candidates hyper-cautious and risk-averse. As such, there is a risk that TPAs can present a distorted, dumbed-down view of what teaching is, both to the new teacher and to an uninformed public. Building a degree-of-difficulty reward or affirmation into the assessment of TPAs may be needed if we are to encourage risk-taking and daring.

A TPA is difficult to assess (Biesta, 2009). There are some very real risks here, I believe. In particular it is judged by an outsider, perhaps one with limited knowledge of the subject area, and, almost certainly, with very limited knowledge of the circumstances under which the TPA took place. I will write further about this later, in the context of the USA's edTPA, but for the moment, I will say that we should not abandon the TPA because assessment thereof is difficult—but we need to take that difficulty into account. Biesta (p. 35) asks "whether we are indeed measuring what we value, or whether we are just measuring what we can easily measure and thus end up valuing what we (can) measure".

A TPA is inauthentic. One challenge is to make a TPA "authentic", and to take it beyond the scope of many university assignments, which may reward a hypothetical discussion or articulation of teaching, rather than its real-world enactment, and analytical reflection thereon. Authenticity may prove difficult to guarantee, however. Videoing has been one commonly adopted approach. Its value lies in embedding authentic information, as a means of verifying and triangulating the claims made by the teacher regarding their teaching and its effects. The authenticity of a video may be oversimplified, in a "camera-doesn't-lie" way, though. People's behaviour changes when they know they are being filmed—at least for a period. Rutherford, Conway, and Murphy (2015, p. 325) dismiss such showpiece behaviours as "dressage". In any case, at the risk of another mixed metaphor, 20 min of video footage is a mere snapshot in the work-life of a teacher, even one on professional experience. The video footage is partial in both senses of the word—the chosen footage deliberately excludes what precedes and follows it, and, in the absence of a 360-degree camera, most likely overlooks some classroom interaction; moreover, judgements made thereon by outsiders will be made summarily. More broadly, professional experience can suffer from inauthenticity in any case, as pre-service teachers might fright from risky options.

A TPA risks loss of academic freedom (Wahl, 2017). I believe that academic freedom extends to the type of research that we undertake, within the bounds of ethics, and reporting the findings without fear or favour. I am to be convinced that it extends to our preparation of pre-service teachers in the absence of any transparent demonstration of our impact. And I'm unsure as to why we would want to avoid doing so—why we wouldn't want our students to demonstrate what they can do, and to support them as best we can, for their sake, and that of the profession and, most centrally, the children they will teach. As teachers, surely it's instinctive for us to offer opportunities to our students to demonstrate their abilities and their learning. Nevertheless, if the TPA contributes to a reductionist teaching-as-telling, or teaching-as-mimicking exercise, this offends and misrepresents our profession in ways we need to challenge.

Extending from the above, I believe there are more fundamental, and justifiable, cautions to be sounded regarding a TPA. I believe it can reinforce widely-held misconceptions about teaching and its complexity.

A TPA can tend towards superficiality. It is skills-based, and reliant on more easily observable data. This can play into the popular notions that "anyone can teach" and that one learns to teach just by simply "watching and copying". This copycatting

can operate at the level of the individual teacher, or of jurisdictions and nations replicating the surface elements of teaching approaches they observe internationally, and parachuting these practices into a new context, without due regard for the cultural and other conditions.

The TPA may privilege and reward teacher-centred tendencies. Unless otherwise instructed, pre-service teachers who use video footage for their TPA may tend to video themselves talking, and equate that to teaching. The viewer (and, probably, the teacher, in the absence of questioning, concept checking and the like) gains little insight into the extent to which, and how, the learners are sense-making—or, if they're exercising their critical thinking, perhaps nonsense-making. For all we know, the teacher and learners may speak a different language, literally or figuratively. Theoretically, the room could be empty but for the "teacher". This could be remedied by asking teachers to record a classroom discussion, or a concept checking process. One limitation with the latter is that it might not last more than a few minutes. Videoing a group of students responding to a task may be useful, but will need contextual explanation (which will hopefully be found in the first part of a TPA—where preparation and outcomes are explained). Moreover, sound quality is likely to be compromised in a roomful of groups discussing.

A further risk I can descry is the possibility of standardising TPA instruments nationally or beyond. Such a move would overlook important contextual issues, and would damp innovation. There is an associated risk of ratcheting up of each institution's TPA and its rigour.

To take the above scenario a few steps further, what if the same TPA instrument were to be deployed nationally, and marked externally, with universities ranked according to their pass rate, My School-style? As I asserted elsewhere in the book, unpleasantness per se does not offer strong grounds to abandon a practice such as a TPA. But the capacity for distortion, smothering of innovation and responsiveness to contextual matters warrant attention. As an example, in the TPA currently operating at my institution, our pre-service teachers' students can perform poorly on a summative assessment task without jeopardising the PST's chances of passing the TPA. On the one hand, this could be viewed as lacking rigour; "failing, yet passing" the TPA. The PST merely needs to outline in a convincing fashion how they would remedy this shortcoming in future—arguably a regression to theoretical, evidence-free discussion. It might be difficult to assert that all the PST's students were "having a bad day" on the day of the summative assessment task—by definition, something failed to launch regarding the teaching and associated learning. On the other hand, offering latitude with regard to summative test results accounts for factors that may be beyond the PST's control—school and community effects as referred to earlier. And it *is* possible that an incident has affected many or all the students that day. Further in defence of tolerating poor summative test results, this wouldn't be the first instance in which mistakes have been shown to be among the most valuable of teaching aids—*in the hands of a learner/teacher capable of making sense and acting on them—and given scope to do so.* As a further example of the propensity for high-stakes tests to distort, I've sometimes mused that if ever I'm tortured, I'll simply offer my torturers the names of people I don't like. You know who you are.

Given the brevity of most professional experiences, it is difficult to discern change among learners, beyond, perhaps, the acquisition and recall of new facts. This arguably adds another TPA-related risk; that it will reinforce in the minds of beginning teachers, and the public, that the quintessence of education is the transfer of factual knowledge, ascertained through quizzes, rather than the more slow-cooked development of attitudes, values, appreciation, application, synthesis and critique. The aforementioned superficial initial constructs of what constitutes teaching may prove very difficult to shift if they become entrenched in teachers' worldviews, particularly if such views are encouraged by parents, eager for their children to "do well" (perhaps, rather than to "be educated"), again, as measured by basic skills tests. Reagan, Schram, McCurdy, Chang, and Evans (2016) outline three main concerns with regard to the implementation of the PACT and the edTPA in the US:

> professionalisation versus local control—the standardization of the test, and indifference to difference in classrooms;
> marginalising versus privileging—of stakeholders, and of processes, through attendant prescribed and proscribed ways of doing and being, and little tolerance of risk-taking and experimentation;
> formative versus summative assessment—the high-stakes nature of the test, and loss of opportunity for greater, deeper diagnosis.

With the above fragilities in mind, I believe we need to guard jealously our (teacher, and teacher educator) ownership of the TPA. The process needs to be owned, conceptualised and driven by experienced teachers. In the US, an unknown assessor can override the decisions of multiple university lecturers, cooperating/supervising classroom teachers and tertiary advisors, based on one assessment task and 20 min of video footage, inevitably devoid of some contextual data. As discussed above, this, in turn, makes it difficult to account for obstacles to learning that are beyond the teacher's control, such as school culture, community affordances and impediments and the like, or to demonstrate substantive learning, beyond repetition of facts. A counter-argument might posit that proximity of assessment may provide no guarantee of objectivity. In Flanders, evaluation is undertaken typically by the school principal. Tuytens and Devos (2018) note that principals are hesitant to declare a teacher unsatisfactory, being reluctant to embark on a difficult and lengthy process. It may be the convoluted nature of this process, rather than objectivity per se, that is the protagonist in this case.

Moreover, the US edTPA records student progress in learning over only 3–5 lessons. This is most likely too compressed a period for meaningful, observable change to occur. This puts in question the worth of pre-and post-tests. The graduating teacher is graded (and compared with other beginning teachers) on their students' achievement, rather than on the difference they have made to their students' (observable) learning. In other words, beginning teachers are "scored" largely according to their students' ability and support base. I might have fewer concerns about the TPA were it not camouflaged against a backdrop of disconcerting trends for teacher

education more broadly. Mills and Goos (2017) outline three: an obsession with standardization, which operates in the context of refusing to take note: from the literature, and from practitioners.

Like much, if not all, that is in education, I believe the operation of a TPA is good *in the hands of a capable teacher*. This is one more reason not to relinquish it from the teaching/teacher education profession. Shulman (1986, p. 13) contended that teacher examinations "must be defined and controlled by members of the profession, not by legislators or laypersons". In the US, where the TPA equivalent is administered by a commercial entity, Pearson, Madeloni, and Gorlewski (2013) observe that the edTPA "narrows the possibilities of teaching and learning, distracts us (teacher educators) from critical multicultural education, is an invitation for corporate encroachment, and restricts academic freedom" (Madeloni & Gorlewski, 2013, p. 18). A constraining of curriculum also constitutes constraint of academic freedom, for the school students involved. The TPA needs to retain, and, where possible, enhance, features that focus on student learning, rather than students' raw achievement.

Failing a TPA is decidedly high-stakes in nature. The circumstances of a TPA cannot be replicated, and undertaking a subsequent TPA would be inconvenient and costly for the pre-service teacher. At the end of the day, though, *teaching* is high stakes, so we may have little choice but to live alongside a high stakes entry hurdle.

A dilemma arises as to how to proceed if a pre-service teacher is deemed to pass the professional experience and fails the TPA or vice versa. In most cases, pre-service teachers are likely to privilege the evidence that "passed" them, and use this as leverage against the unfavourable result. If the TPA is assessed externally, this does raise questions about its accuracy, as opposed to judgements made by the cooperating teacher, and other insiders. Administering aspects of the TPA is also problematic, but probably not insurmountable. These include videoing, where this operates.

Perhaps most fundamentally, a TPA is typically assessed away from the school where it took place. As such, it is assessed removed of its context, by someone who may have little understanding of contextual issues. This means that assessments and comparisons are made without knowledge of such variables, and how they can assist or inhibit learning outcomes. Such variables include levels of support and cooperation from supervising teachers, students and the school more broadly.

In Australia, teacher education providers have been instructed to moderate their TPA with one or more other institutions. My reluctance with this is more than mere cover story to avoid discomfort, as I see it. The circumstances under which TPAs take place are so varied, that meaningful moderation is problematic even within a teacher education institution, much less between them. Charteris and Dargusch (2018) refer to the site-specific "practice architectures", those "features…that enable and/or constrain practice" at any school where a TPA takes place (p. 354). Similarly, Schatzki (2002) speaks of the importance of "the site of the social", that is, of unique, site-specific norms of practice. Tuytens and Devos (2016) assert that "teacher evaluation does not take place in a vacuum, but should be embedded in the school context to be efficient" (p. 8). To "school context" I would add community and global contexts', and to "efficient", I might add "effective" and/or "humane". Moreover, even within

schools, classes and their interactions with teachers function idiosyncratically; the same conclusions cannot be drawn from all classes in any school. Please forgive another surfing analogy, but there are days when I can stand up relatively easily, on several waves, and days when I fail to do so at all. I blame the conditions. But you don't need to be a surfer to know: no surf, no surfing. And, as a beginner, I'm not going to take on big waves. Or reefs, or rocks. Sometimes days are sharks. Or other bities or stingies. It's in Australia. Practice teaching offers no guarantee of not encountering classroom equivalents of these.

More ominously, I see moderation as the thin edge of a wedge which might take us down a path towards the edTPA as it operates in much of the USA, highly devoid of its contexts (Reagan et al., 2016). I also see this as leading to one or both of two outcomes. The first is standardisation of TPA instruments, to the detriment of local contexts, and probably entailing a loss of flexibility and openness to change. Secondly, as introduced above, and as with curricula and standards, comparisons could lead to ratchetting up of each institution's TPA in terms of its difficulty; "my TPA's stiffer than yours".

In particular, moderating across subject and content areas strikes me as problematic. If, for example, TPAs in senior science and in art are to be moderated, it would seem logical and fair that each moderator is familiar with both science and art teaching methods and content areas. Such people might be difficult to find. Moderation, if it is to be rigorous, should apply credibly across age groups, subject areas and site contexts.

Informing the TPA

Sinnema, Meyer, and Aitken (2017, pp. 17–18) outline their Teaching for Better Learning model, which encompasses six inquiries (and/or, possibly "pursuits"?) focusing on: learning; teaching; strategies; enactment (of strategies); impact; professional learning and the education system. These equate roughly to the typical TPA model of planning, delivery, assessment and reflection. These may well be helpful, particularly for slightly more experienced teachers, as they plan, deliver and assess the effects of their teaching. It may also be useful for classroom teachers supervising a TPA. Behind Sinnema et al.'s inquiries lie five resources (p. 17): education's corpus of knowledge (without which, teachers only have their own knowledge and experience to draw on); (inter-?)cultural, technical and other competencies; dispositions such as fallibility and agency; ethical principles with regard to, inter alia, students, the profession and society; and commitment to social justice. From this, Sinnema et al. derive six standards, concerning defensible decisions on teaching; and on learning; regard for the most efficacious teaching strategies; regard for impact on learning; priorities for professional development and regard for contextual educational system and policies (p. 15).

As asserted above, it seems reasonable that an entry hurdle into teaching will be a somewhat slimmed-down, simplified requirement, consistent with education's and

teachers' quest to render all things sufficiently simple for the learner to comprehend. If learning to juggle, one is unlikely to begin with sharp or fiery objects.[3] This bears similarity to most entry-level learning—I wasn't asked to perform a handbrake turn or control a skid to obtain my driver's licence. And I could return to my conductor analogy, referred to in an earlier chapter—my outsider's "understanding" was very shallow. As with all teaching/learning, the complexity of the parts, or the process, are broken down as much as possible, in order to be sensible to the learner, with a view to orchestrating the multiple aspects of teaching subsequently—but this goal of orchestration may need to be made explicit to beginning teachers. The risk here is that this simplified undertaking becomes the "billboard" or the public face, or end point of teaching. As with much good teaching and learning, the scaffolding is dismantled once the building has taken shape. The analogy is limited, however, as a building tends to be static, as opposed to the dynamic and evolving nature of learning and teaching.

The importance of calling the learner and teacher to greater and riskier things is well established. Goe, Holdheide, and Miller (2013, p. 50) point out how important it is to "nurture an educational climate in which evaluation is not seen as punitive and that teachers are highly invested in the process". Returning to LaBoskey (2004), evaluation needs to be improvement- or development-oriented, rather than punitive. Further, it should provide "a lever for *system* improvement" (Sinnema, Meyer, & Aitken, 2017, p. 21, emphasis added).

Evaluation is likely to be more fruitious in a context of trust and respect (Lejonberg, Elstad, & Christophersen, 2018). Lejonberg et al. considered two interrelated factors in teachers being willing to be evaluated. The first is the regard, or respect, held for the evaluating colleague by the evaluatee. The second is the perceived motivation or rationale for the evaluation, and of the evaluator—which are matters of trust. If the perception is that the evaluation is improvement-oriented rather than punitive, and the evaluator is to be trusted, the teacher is likely to be more accepting of the process, and, more importantly, to perform better, to consider advice more fully, and to be more experimental. Tuytens and Devos (2016) refer to a school's shared vision, and underscore the need to "guard the enactment of this vision" (p. 16). I might add a slight caveat here. I would encourage space for minority views and dissent, at least around the edges of this shared vision, which will help the vision to be informed, responsive and vibrant.

More broadly and fundamentally, the professional experience, as all teaching and learning, stands or falls on the strength of associated interpersonal relationships, particularly between cooperating or supervising teacher, pre-service teacher and university staff. If teaching pivots on relationship, so does supervision of professional practice; "the primary challenge is establishing a shared understanding between university supervisor and mentor teacher in regard to developing teacher candidates' instructional skills" (Chizhik, Chizhik, Close, & Gallego, 2017, p. 29). They contend that "the strength of the supervision model depends on the strength of this triad community" (p. 29). Chizhik et al. (2017) developed an approach to pre-service

[3] If nothing else, the book has now given you a handy tip.

teacher supervision known by the acronym SMILE, Shared Mentoring in Instructional Learning Environments, whose threefold aims are to "(a) build a culture of critical reflection within authentic classroom experiences, (b) build a community of collaboration and learning, and (c) build repertoires of practice through shared mentoring" (p. 33). They found that, through shared understanding by all stakeholders, these three outcomes of the approach were achieved. They assert that "the student-teaching experience must pay careful attention to building communities that engage all members in productive negotiation of meanings associated with their practice" (p. 31).

The role of teacher mentors is, as is the case with all teachers, multifaceted. In their review of the literature, Clarke, Triggs, and Nielsen (2014) identified 11 modes of mentor-teacher participation. These comprise "providers of feedback, gatekeepers of the profession, modellers of practice, supporters of reflection, gleaners of knowledge, purveyors of context, convenors of relation, agent of socialisation, advocates of the practical, abiders of change, and [they still find time to be] teachers of children" (p. 163). As with training wheels and other intermediary teaching/learning strategies, a TPA should contribute to building the candidate's confidence in teaching. As Cochran-Smith et al. (2018, p. 48) note, teacher education "is a complicated exercise with many moving parts", as well as multiple bosses; "its challengers, and boundary-crossers vie for power". These apply to the assessment of pre-service teachers.

A Further Word on Assessment

At the heart of TPA, TPD, student and teacher performance lies assessment. Assessment shares all the joys and problems of all research, regarding the reliability and validity of what it purports to demonstrate. Brookhart and Nitko (2019) define validity as "the soundness of your interpretations and uses of students' assessment results" (p. 38). "Soundness" is, perhaps appropriately, a slippery term here. Joppe (2000, p. 1) defines reliability as "the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation" of what is being measured. Confidence in reliability is established by multiple tests. Crudely, validity and reliability refer to the right answers, to the right questions.

I am sometimes dismayed at how flawed our judgement, or assessment capacities are, as a species. As with teaching, trust in "the system" elsewhere is crucial. If there is a profession that shares with teaching a presumed capacity for discernment or judgement, it is the legal profession. The number of court cases that are overturned by higher courts challenges the faith expected of me in the judicial system. Similarly, arguments against the death penalty could give the impression that everyone on death row is most likely innocent. Interviewing prison inmates might yield similar results. The members of another profession where judgement is central, referees and umpires, sometimes get it wrong, too. So I'm advised. There have been some spectacular failures, also, of late, regarding predictions of voter intentions. Recent polls in Australia

failed to foresee that the Federal Government would retain power in the 2019 elections. Better-known recent international examples include poll predictions for the US 2016 election of President Trump, and Britain's referendum on EU membership the same year. In each case, there were only two realistic outcomes, and the polls backed the wrong horse each time. How do we get it wrong so consistently? Other academics reading this will recognise the dismay of receiving one highly favourable and one highly unfavourable review of a journal article submission, or of a student's doctoral thesis. Our assessment of economies, and implications for future trends, also appear to be highly imprecise. If student assessment is wrong, then our perception of the crisis is wrong; it is either more, or less, dire than we perceive it to be.

And, of course, judgements change with context and through time. I'm reminded of things that may have had different legal status in previous times, such as adultery, sexual consent more broadly and crimes relating to lèse-majesté. Some or all of these remain illegal elsewhere, as does blasphemy in Australia. At the time of writing, abortion laws are being hotly contested in some jurisdictions. In Australia, abortion remained illegal in the state of New South Wales alone until hotly-fought legislative changes in 2019. The foundations of our judgements, as well as the judgements themselves, are open to question. The death penalty, too, is being resurrected in some jurisdictions, but is no longer executed in others. Imprecision in judgements can have serious outcomes.

Assessment, particularly if it is called upon to be predictive, is complex. DeLuca, LaPointe-McEwan, and Luhanga (2016) discerned eight aspects of assessment from their study of policy documents internationally. These include purposes processes, fairness, ethics and measurement theory (p. 261). The documents they examined contained up to 16 constituent elements. Wyatt-Smith and Gunn (2009) examine teacher assessment practice through four lenses: knowledge conceptions; constructive alignment of pedagogy and assessment; teacher judgements; and curriculum literacies.

While this isn't a book about assessment, I make a twofold call related to this. Teachers, too, get it wrong with assessment—whatever "wrong" might mean in a context of assessing matters of advanced synthesis, application, multidisciplinarity and/or aesthetics. Teacher education institutions can take the lead here and provide more, and better, opportunities for pre-service teachers to exercise their discrimination in assessing—their own work, each other's, and their students'. Such opportunities to further hone these skills should be made available through peer and externally led opportunities for practising teachers. Observations, and, particularly, the conversations that precede and follow the observations, richly inform teaching practice, for the observer and the observe; part of the purpose of peer teaching observations is for the observer to keep in mind implications for their own teaching (Schuck, Aubusson, & Buchanan, 2008). Secondly, given that teachers are already adept, as part of their professional toolkit, at assessment and discernment, we should all allow them more latitude to exercise their associated expertise in making professional judgements in their daily and longer-term work. This will presumably afford them more practice in discernment. Suffice it to say that assessment is a skill that is, or should be, recognised as the preserve of teachers, but this is not always the case.

Assessment needs to match the chosen learning objectives, and must work in the service of students' learning (Brookhart & Nitko, 2019). In this context, they define reliability as "the degree to which students' results remain consistent over replications of an assessment procedure" (p. 66). Again, this can be a slippery concept—Brookhart and Nitko offer examples of giving an identical assessment task later, with no intervening teaching (or, presumably, any feedback from the initial test). But this presumes neither any learning from another source, any forgetting in the meantime, or any test-rehearsal effects. Such a practice possibly also offends the ethical principles below. An alternative means is consistency in assessment by multiple markers—which, in my experience, is a relatively rare achievement, in the absence of collaboration and shared reasoning among markers, following an initial assessment, which arguably distorts the process. Is inter-rater reliability simply dressed-up consensus, which might be dressed-up coercion? Biesta (2014, p. 137) contends that in education, "capacity for judgement is not to be understood as a skill or competence, but rather as a quality that characterizes the whole educational professional". His comments do not restrict themselves to assessment of students' work, but apply to the capacity for professional, autonomous decision-making on the part of teachers. As Edwards, Lunt, and Stamou (2010, p. 29) point out, "practitioners need to be able to make judgements and respond without being trammelled by rigid occupational procedures". Teachers' capacities to make sound judgements are not without blemish, but their existing related expertise needs to be acknowledged. Biesta proceeds to explain the above in terms of "a process that will help teachers become educationally wise" (p. 137).

In recent research I undertook with a small group of my students (n = 19) they ranked the following, in increasing order of difficulty:

> Planning learning sequences;
> Supporting their students' learning;
> Using research to inform their teaching and;
> Assessing their students' learning, and cater for a diverse range of students (Buchanan, Harb, & Fitzgerald, accepted). Similar differences exist in delivery and assessment confidence levels (Charteris & Dargusch, 2018). This should perhaps be unsurprising. Designing a something is arguably easier and less consequential than testing it. I sometimes think architects get the easy part of the deal. All they have to do is draw something. The builders have to build it and "make it work" (thereby testing it). I would be happy to design a plane if you're happy to test it.

How closely do marks, grades, rankings or comments correspond to "the reality of achievement"? What data were compiled, how, and how appropriate or otherwise are those processes? I'm not convinced that we can ever be certain. We can but "report on" the evidence, much of which will be subjective, particularly for more important, higher-order learning. Multiple forms of evidence that are consistent are likely to raise our confidence in their accuracy—for better or for worse—prior to the last Australian federal election, the polls were consistent and unequivocal, and in error.

Moreover, assessment is an exercise in social justice, and, as such, needs to adhere to ethical principles, in terms of minimising harm and maximising good, and the use, including the publication and any other subsequent uses, of data.

Ongoing Teacher Professional Development

This section will touch on some principles of teacher professional development (TPD). TPD does not necessarily adopt what is known by the profession about motivating and directing learners: clear relevance and purpose, choice, autonomy(-orientation). Simmie, de Paor, Liston, and O'Shea (2017), in their critical literature review, dismiss much early-career TPD as mere socialisation into established workplace norms.

As with teachers, the responsibilities of school leadership are "increasingly complex and demanding" (Brandon et al., 2018, p. 1). Brandon et al. proceed to observe "the intensification of [educational leaders'] work, general turnover in their ranks, and a steady parade of external pressures" (p. 2).

In a Canadian context, Brandon, Hollweck, Donlevy, and Whalen (2018) assert that instructional leadership operates most effectively under the following circumstances: a democratic approach; career-long fostering of teacher growth alongside insistence on quality teaching—which Brandon et al. refer to as the "paradox of growth oriented supervision and evaluation"; acceptance of multiple pathways; and embedding policies in instructional leadership. Edwards, Daniels, Gallagher, Leadbetter, and Warmington (2009) call for a recognition of distributed expertise in teacher professional development. Recognition of distributed expertise is an intellectual and intercultural exercise, as players take part in a "very complex struggle over ideas and territory" (Gunter, 2007, p. 5). At its best, distributed expertise accords worth to previously unconsidered perspectives and approaches, and, by extension, to those who hold them. Tuytens and Devos (2016) noted the intrinsic motivation of their participant teachers, who "illustrated their willingness to continuously improve their practice, whether this was expected of them by the evaluator or not" (p. 22).

Teacher development, as part of the teaching condition more broadly, should energise, rather than enervate, teachers. Day (2017, pp. 105–107) summarises features common to what is viewed as effective TPD. Such initiatives tend to be practical and practice-related; social/interactive; reflection- and improvement-oriented; sustained rather than one-off.

Brandon et al. (2018) outline three persistent obstacles to effective teacher professional development, concerning: management (including the proliferation of responsibilities, which may serve to extinguish one's passion for teaching and learning, and the tyranny of the urgent over the important; complexity (deriving from interpersonal and intellectual demands) and learning (applying effective teaching/learning techniques to the professional development of teachers). Brandon et al. contend that effective supervision should embody three characteristics. It should feature

variety (some might say learner-centredness); a defensible evidence-base and improvement-oriented instructional support.

Hallinger's (2003) three categories for effective professional development are strikingly similar to good classroom practice: Defining a mission and communicating goals; management of the instructional programme; promoting a climate conducive to learning. The main aspect Robinson (2011) adds to this mix is strategic resourcing. Pedder (2006) outlines four characteristics at organisational level that are characteristic of positive teacher change: involvement by teachers in decision-making; a vision that is clearly communicated; professional development support and enabling teachers to network effectively.

Conclusions and Ways Forward

> Pedagogue, teach thyself? (Buchanan, 2006, p. 134[4])

I will refer briefly here to the German tradition of Bildung, which might be loosely translated as "self-cultivation". Bauer (2003, p. 212) defines Bildung as "creative, critical and transformative processes which change the relationship of self and the world in conjunction with a changing social and material environment". This only makes sense in a context of freedom in decision-making; imposed decisions, at school level or beyond, are likely to frustrate this process. Self-cultivating schools might be a lofty and worthy aspiration.

Principals remain educators at heart, and retain responsibilities for leadership in this regard (Derrington & Campbell, 2018). It makes sense to lend them the time to use and model those skills as much and as well as possible. The employment of a school manager, to attend to budgetary and other issues, may assist in this regard. Derrington and Campbell's (2018) participants, 14 principals, reported the time-consuming nature of evaluating all their teachers, which impacted negatively on their personal and family lives. As with teachers, the responsibilities of school leadership are "increasingly complex and demanding". Brandon et al. (2018) proceed to observe "the intensification of their work, general turnover in their ranks, and a steady parade of external pressures". An important part of leadership, both within-school and beyond-school, is building an ecology of trust and confidence, in a context of practices and expectations that can sustain staff. Fostering growth and ensuring high standards strike me at first glance as paradoxical. They may be complementary, however, if "high standards" is taken to mean "high expectations", with the trust and faith inherent in that.

I wrote earlier in this chapter about overcorrecting when the car goes into a skid. I wonder if overcorrecting is a default position we assume whenever anything becomes scary and we feel a loss of control. I wonder if basic skills testing, for students and for teachers, is an example of such overcorrecting, so to speak.

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[4] With apologies to St Luke (4:23).

The teaching profession should be better at teaching its own members than any other profession. Snyder (2009) contends that "just as the purpose of teaching children is to intentionally shape and support their growth and development, so the purpose of teaching teachers is to intentionally shape and support their professional growth and development" (pp. 10–11).

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Chapter 9
Student Evaluation as a Driver of Education Delivery

Abstract Student evaluation data exert significant influence on the shaping and delivery of education at tertiary level. While such information is of some use for the academics concerned, it bears considerable shortcomings. This position chapter, focusing on pre-service Teacher Education, critically analyses literature on student evaluation and its effects on quality teaching, learning and teachers. Student evaluation arguably fails many tests applied to data collection, analysis and dissemination. Student evaluations can inhibit the innovation and change they ostensibly promote. They have the propensity to increase risk-aversion on the part of teachers, and to displace collaboration with competition. The chapter proposes supplementary means of evaluating teaching, potentially to (re)kindle renewal of teachers and practice. The chapter deals with key concepts of student satisfaction, teacher evaluation, teacher quality and the complexity of teaching.

Introduction

Dedicated, reflective educators strive to understand and enhance the quality of their teaching. One approach for assessing the quality of such teaching (or of "teacher performance") is through collection of student satisfaction data. There are compelling reasons to collect such data, to "close the loop" of teaching improvement (Naidu, Kinash, & Fleming, 2014) by obtaining, responding to and applying student feedback. But teacher evaluation processes may precipitate a number of unintended consequences. This chapter sets out to interrogate student evaluation of teachers in a tertiary context, in part, by applying what is known about research, pedagogy, assessment, feedback, ethics and outcomes, to such processes. It explores some of the limitations of current approaches, before proceeding to propose some alternatives. Specifically, it examines some of the risks associated with making public the satisfaction scores furnished by tertiary students on their lecturers.

This chapter focuses mainly on teacher education, where student feedback surveys have routinely been conducted for many years. It looks at how these are contributing to the shaping of teaching and learning; and some associated potential pitfalls. In doing so, it examines the commonly held notion among non-educators that everyone is an

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expert in education, as we're all experienced it. The chapter sets out some alternative and supplementary means of assessing the quality of teaching and learning more comprehensively. The chapter deals with key concepts of student satisfaction, teacher evaluation, teacher quality and the complexity of teaching. This has implications beyond teacher education, for the evaluation of all teaching and learning.

Methodology and Methods

This chapter comprises a critical review of the literature associated with student feedback in tertiary contexts, and discusses implications for policy and practice. Consistent with a critical literature review, this chapter seeks to interrogate apparent assumptions about the de/merits, potential and limitations of student evaluation processes and practices. Terms for the process of eliciting and providing evaluative satisfaction on teachers by students include "student evaluation", "student satisfaction" and "student evaluative feedback". "Student evaluation" will be the term primarily used here. While the chapter focuses on teacher education, it has implications for teaching more broadly. It is argued here that Teacher Education, the preparation of schoolteachers, presents opportunities atypical of most university education, in terms of leveraging the expertise of, and value-adding to, staff and students.

Most search terms used here were determined prior to the commencement of the analysis (see Moher et al., 2015), but the process left itself open to the inclusion of supplementary terms. The approach intertwined the first two of Glass, McGaw, and Smith's (1981) processes: collection and coding of articles. These two procedures were embedded in a process of defining of the problem, and critical review (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). Effect sizes of publications were not calculated (Glass et al., 1981), but recent publications were privileged for inclusion in the study, to capture current developments and thinking. Search terms included student feedback; student evaluations; student satisfaction/ratings; teacher evaluation; tertiary and critical literature review.

A critical examination was also undertaken of publicly available information on some universities' student feedback processes and philosophies, for illustrative purposes. The data were used to inform articulations of the arguments mounted regarding student evaluations, and to conceptualise and synthesise possible alternative approaches which might be more benevolent and generative in nature, without sacrificing research rigour.

While attempts have been made to question my own assumptions (such as through critical readings of drafts of this paper by colleagues), it is conceded here that bias cannot be eliminated from the paper; I was content to (capture and) release the research imaginary, or imagination (Hart, 2018) and interface it with my own. The chapter will, accordingly, be subjected to further critique by others, and will hopefully provoke discussion. In the interests of disclosure, I declare here that I typically score "reasonably well"—insofar as I am able to infer what that means—in the satisfaction surveys that my students furnish on my teaching. I do not believe that my mistrust

about student evaluations is driven by bitterness or envy. I can't rule out, however, that bitterness and envy (or hubris) might be by-products of student evaluations. In short, for me, this one's personal. I do believe, though, that too much has been invested student evaluations, and particularly in comparative mean scores furnished by students, as arguably arbitrary arbiters of quality teaching. Bower and Thomas (2013). speak of de-testing and de-grading education. To this, I would add de-meaning lecturer performance by students.

Results and Discussion

Following a brief explanation of some of the related terms, this section will outline some of the purposes to which student evaluations are applied. It will then discuss the form of associated survey instruments, and possible corresponding limitations and potential explanations for such weaknesses. This will be followed by an examination of the outcomes of such evaluations, which may not coincide with their intended purposes. The section will then proceed to discuss institutional faith in such procedures and the resulting data. Finally, it will set out for consideration some alternative or supplementary means of adjudging teacher quality.

Teachers, like all workers and learners, need to continuously improve, renew and refresh their work through innovation and experimentation. For teachers, student satisfaction ratings are one way of driving this, in their capacity to precipitate discussions among staff, and between staff and students. However, it may be difficult for teachers to demonstrate their new learning in response to these, or to determine what counts as improvement. As Benton and Cashin (n.y.) lament, "there is no agreed upon definition of 'effective teaching', or any single, all-embracing criterion" (p. 3), much less unit of measure. Similarly, "quality" is an elusive concept or construct. Sadler (cited in Tai, Ajjawi, Boud, Dawson, & Panadero, 2017), frames quality as follows: "something I do not know how to define, but I recognize it when I see it".

Unsurprisingly, Blömeke and Olsen (2019) identified the following as contributors to instructional quality: pre-service and in-service education (which, in turn, is presumably "of high quality"), experience teaching the same grade or subject, and self-efficacy. How well or otherwise students identify these characteristics is open to question.

Marozzi (2012, p. 1272) defines student satisfaction as a function of "the difference between student perception of service quality and what the student expects". This is a rather nebulous, abstruse, quantity on which to found the hope of teacher improvement—a point noted by Marozzi. What satisfies one student will dissatisfy another in the same or another cohort; expectations might be ill-informed, unrealistic and unrelated or counter to optimal learning in context.

Student Evaluations—Their Function

Data from student evaluation of teachers can be channelled to a number of worthy ends. Spooren, Brockx, & Mortelmans (2013) discern three: improving the quality of teaching; staff appraisal and institutional accountability. They add, however, that these three ends may be mutually at odds. Student satisfaction surveys presumably operate as a device to challenge and change teacher practice. Student satisfaction feedback is at times held up as among the main, if not the sole, way of measuring and improving teaching and learning, particularly in tertiary contexts (e.g. Naidu, Kinash, & Fleming, 2014; Spooren et al., 2013). There exist few justifications or explanations, however, of how conforming to student ideals improves pedagogy. The main measure of such "improvement" appears to be higher student evaluation Likert Scale ratings—from a new cohort of neophyte adjudicators.

Reliance on student evaluations is particularly problematic in the context of Teacher Education. It is reasonable to assume that Teacher Educators know more about their field, education, than do their students. Hattie (2016, p. 37) asserts that good feedback to a learner embodies three questions: where is the student (in this case, the teacher) going? How is the student(/teacher) going? And, where to next? Students are not generally well-positioned to answer these questions on the part of their teachers—although teacher education students likely become better equipped than most during their incumbency.

Determining what constitutes excellence in teaching is also a complex task. Hattie (2003, p. 5) discerns five elements of excellence in teachers; their ability to (1) discern essential representations of their subject; (2) guide learning through classroom interactions; (3) monitor learning and provide feedback; (4) attend to affective attributes and (5) influence student outcomes. Students, particularly those outside teacher education, are unlikely to comprehensively grasp such issues. By definition, students cannot typically comment authoritatively on representations of a subject they are studying. Items two to four above, while all important contributors to good teaching and learning, might be more likely to elicit "what I like" rather than "what I need". While item five, influencing student outcomes, is arguably self-definitional or undefined, students will likely garner impressions of its success or otherwise.

Whether or not student evaluation is positioned as research (or mere accountability showpiece/show pony) the data should bespeak validity and reliability. Alderman, Towers, and Bannah (2012) assert that most Australian surveys lack such attributes. Alderman et al. also raise concerns about inappropriate use of data. Other researchers (e.g. Naidu, Kinash, & Fleming, 2014; Parsons & Rees, 2014) report that low response rates, of around 30%, further compromise reliability and validity. Moreover, there is little evidence that the sample of responding students is random. For example, offering incentives—sometimes substantial, such as a chance to win a $1000 credit card—for furnishing survey responses, has unknown impacts on the make-up of the response cohort. Spooren et al. (2013) question the validity of student evaluation data on several grounds, including inconsistency of variables across institutions and through time. They assert that the literature has addressed and invalidated many of the

above concerns, but provide no further details on how it has demonstratively done so. Similarly, Stupans, McGuren, and Babey (2015) appear to defend unquestioningly the validity of student evaluation measures, without offering a corresponding rationale. By contrast, Uttl, White, and Gonzalez (2017) dismiss numerous claims made of student feedback surveys in their meta-analysis of previous studies, on the basis of methodological problems or unjustified assertions, and undertook their own extensive statistical meta-analysis of approximately 100 previous studies, according to five criteria. These included studies' focus on statistical associations between student evaluation scores and learning, and measures of actual learning, as opposed to student perceptions of their learning. They found that correlations between student feedback scores and the extent of student learning were very low in larger sample sizes, and that, once the variable of prior achievement/learning was removed, the correlation was near zero. They found that prior student interest in the subject was a stronger predictor of feedback results. To the extent that these findings are true, student evaluations are little more than costly and elaborate window dressing, used to promote a university's brand.

Given the multiple variables influencing perceptions of teacher quality and student satisfaction (Yang, Bercenic-Gerber, & Mino, 2013), achieving confidence of reliability is problematic. Macfadyen, Dawson, Prest, and Gašević (2015) claim that respondent bias mediated by gender, age and grade should not invalidate student evaluation findings. While they call on a long tradition of research establishing the reliability and validity of student evaluations, they do not explain this further, or discuss what (high or poor) quality teaching means. Uttl, White, and Gonzalez (2017) conclude that "the entire notion that we could measure professors' teaching effectiveness by simple ways such as asking students to answer a few questions about their perceptions of their course experiences, instructors' knowledge, and the like seems unrealistic". While online data collection has obvious advantages of ease, convenience and consumables over the former pen-and-paper mode, reliability might be compromised by lower response rates. Moreover, traditional paper-based responses collected data from each student "as a unit", so correlations could be made between Likert scale responses and student comments. Where data are aggregated prior to dissemination, this is no longer possible.

Not only does current teacher evaluation fall short of some of the benchmarks of research, but crucially, it fails some tests of ethics. Even if teacher evaluation is not positioned as research, as a workplace practice, it must nevertheless adhere to ethical principles. Arguably, it fails to meet a number of such baselines, in terms of benefit versus harm, seeking informed consent from those on whom data are collected, or advising respondents as to the intended audiences and purposes of the resulting data.

While expertise and experience accrete to a teaching staff with time (Blömeke & Olsen, 2019), universities continue to take counsel from their students, a cohort whose inexperience is annually refreshed. Moreover, while student evaluation may have worth in the first iteration of a new course, after several offerings, it might be rare for students to furnish a truly new, previously unconsidered suggestion. Similar proportions of students may furnish similar responses over time. As such, students deliver to teachers the same lesson on multiple occasions. Acting on a "minority

report" from student evaluations may serve to dissatisfy the majority of students who were content with existing arrangements. Student evaluations naturally have a contribution to make to the pedagogy conversation, but they arguably reveal as much about the "trends in the attitudes" (University of Wollongong, 2017) of the student cohort as they do about the teaching staff qualities or shortcomings.

Student Evaluations—Their Form

The quality of data collection instruments is crucial to the reliability of related data. Student evaluation surveys tend to comprise a series of Likert Scale questions, such as "overall, I am satisfied by the teaching of this staff member". These are typically supplemented by open-ended questions, eliciting, for example, views on what was satisfactory in the subject or the teaching, what might be improved and how.

Weaknesses inhere to the survey instruments themselves. Illustrative examples include.

- Double-barrelled questions, for example, about "timely and constructive" feedback.
- Asking students about the alignment of content and stated outcomes, with little assurance that students can call to memory the stated outcomes at the time of responding.
- An unexplained distinction in some surveys between "course questions" and "teacher questions" which appears to presume that the teacher does not mediate the delivery of content, and which fails to discern whether the instructor also devised the course content. In some surveys, "course" sections contain explicit questions about teachers.
- Questions that elicit vague if not misleading responses, such as "reasonable" workload, gathering no advice on whether "unreasonable" workload over- or underwhelms the respondent. The institutional inference is likely to be the former, pressuring teachers to jettison workload and challenge.

Such survey instrument deficiencies are regrettable in the tertiary sector, which positions and prides itself as the embodiment of research.

A further identified weakness of student evaluation surveys is their deployment at the completion of a teaching period (Goldhaber, 2015). While there exist valid reasons for this, such as assuaging student fears of teacher reprisals, it relegates implementation to subsequent deliveries, after the responding cohort and teacher/s have parted. One policy response to this has been mid-term surveys. These might provide just-in-time teachable moments for staff, but the student recommendations might chafe against pre-set curricular objectives, sometimes externally imposed, by industry or government. Moreover, owing to internal and external pressures, universities are becoming increasingly sclerotic, and averse to change, nullifying any aspiration to within-semester agility or responsiveness. Such surveys may also serve to

position students as passive receptors, witnesses or mere arbiters of teacher input, discounting their own contributions or encumbrances to the learning contract (Yorke, 2013).

Other issues further compound the use of students' evaluation data. These include the reductive nature of mean Likert Scale scores, typical of student evaluation surveys. While Likert Scales afford ease of response to students, and possibly raise response rates accordingly, they also generate an arguably over-simplistic comparison of means by those who view them. In particular, any third person who reads or compares such figures does so devoid of their context, but is likely to make associated judgements summarily. Release of such mean data to students or others, in universities where this happens, can be highly demoralising for teaching staff, and corrosive of cohesion and collaboration (Buchanan, 2011; Wang, Hall, & Rahimi, 2015). It is not possible to unsee such results. Once seen and known to a third person, such scores cannot help but influence and prejudice attitudes towards a reported-on teacher.

Anonymity in student evaluations is a two-edged sword, further abstracting the data from their context. While there are compelling reasons for anonymity, to inspire frank responses, anonymous evaluation from students "depersonalizes the individual relationship between teachers and their students" (Spooren et al., 2013, p. 600). Anonymity may also abet acts of reprisal or sabotage on the part of disgruntled students. Moreover, no confident correlation can be established between measures of a student's satisfaction, and demographics such as gender, age or grade attained, unless such data are elicited. Staff are unable to correlate responses with (their perceptions of) a student's known attributes and personality. Arguably, a teacher's responsibilities include harnessing and driving their students' motivation. Nevertheless, to compare teachers on this basis appears invalid, given different subjects taught, as well as shifting sands of student motivation, self-efficacy and agency, and the difficulty in controlling the socioeconomic and other circumstances mediating these. Tucker (2014) found that only a very small minority from among more than 30,000 student respondents abused their anonymity by furnishing comments deemed offensive (0.04%, 13 responses) or unprofessional (0.15%, 46 responses) by a randomly appointed individual; it is possible that respondents remain doubtful about their anonymity in online interactions. Stewart (2015) found that while praise is often directed at a teacher, criticism tends to be more obliquely levelled at the teaching. While this is arguably to students' credit, in terms of understanding the effect that harmful comments might have on a teacher, is regrettable to disaggregate teaching and teacher.

The constancy of student satisfaction views is also instructive. Berk (2007) notes that recollections of graduates for the four years following graduation remain relatively stable. To the extent that this is so, it is probably disappointing. It appears that workplace experiences (and/or graduates themselves?) offer little opportunity to hold up pre-service experiences to a new light, rendering the experiences more, or less, pertinent than previously reckoned.

Possible Explanations for Weaknesses in Student Evaluation Data

It is difficult to identify and isolate teacher-effect (Darling-Hammond, 2015). Contrary to claims made by Hattie (2003), that the teacher accounts for about 30% of student achievement outcomes, The American Statistical Association (2014) found that teacher effectiveness accounted for only between one and 14% of student variability as measured by test scores. While the teacher is both important and relevant, the remaining, non-teacher, contributions of 70% (or 86–99% (American Statistical Association, 2014)) are crucial variables.

In an attempt to isolate variables, comparisons of student feedback data across sites have been undertaken. Wilkins, Balakrishnan, and Huisman (2012) observe that branch campuses at times struggle to attract students or staff of the same calibre (however defined) as their corresponding "main campus". Moreover, branch campuses may suffer from economy of scale, failing to provide the same range and quality of services, such as library facilities, as their central campuses. And yet, Wilkins et al. found that satisfaction scores were consistent between central and branch campus students, and indeed with responses internationally to student satisfaction surveys. Such international consistency is also cause for concern, if student evaluation is intended to be discriminatory. McElvaney, Morris, Arambewela, and Wood (2012) discerned that students at rural universities furnished higher satisfaction levels than their metropolitan counterparts, and tentatively posited that reduced class size and campus population may be critical factors, particularly for first-year students, who may seek greater assistance in adjusting to university life. This underscores the problem of variables, some unknown, unknowable or uncontrollable, partly through respondent anonymity. Moreover, "parallel campuses" are unknown to most students providing survey results, so no informed comparison is possible on their part. Of necessity, each cohort is commenting on its one, lived reality.

Having the same teacher teach the same subject to two or more randomly assigned, similarly sized groups of students would appear to remove most variables. Anecdotally, though, lecturers report variations in student evaluation scores generated by such groups, calling into question the reliability of such scores, or at least invoking the complexity of contributing factors. In a school context, Sporte, Stevens, Healey, Jiang, and Hart (2013) report widespread teacher disconsolation regarding evaluation scores that vary markedly from year to year. Such variables make comparative interpretation—and "improvement"—risky to undertake and to evaluate.

Outcomes of Student Evaluations

Several researchers report unintended consequences of evaluation regimes, in terms of teacher behaviour, among other outcomes (Ballou & Springer, 2015; Goldhaber, 2015), perhaps emanating from the high-stakes nature of such evaluations. In a

context of school teaching, Hanushek (2009) estimated that eliminating the poorest-performing teachers could raise students' lifetime earnings, but does not specify: how this increase in earnings might occur—surely only the elimination of the poorest-paying jobs would increase average earnings?; or how "poorest-performing" might be determined, other than through improvement in student performance. Goldhaber (2007, p. 765), on the other hand, asserts that replacing a current teacher testing regime with a more stringent one, might rid the profession of fewer than 0.5% of the lowest-performing teachers, while excluding seven per cent of teachers deemed effective. Whether students are better judges of teaching quality than currently available tests remains unsubstantiated. As mentioned above, it is difficult to isolate teacher input from the mix.

Student evaluations may not precipitate their intended innovations. Interviewing 32 recipients of teaching awards, Walder (2015) noted six "fields" or areas of resistance to innovation: teaching staff; technology; students; the institution; assessment and discipline. As part of the "discipline" field, Walder's respondents noted student evaluation of teaching as one impediment. This form of resistance may also affect Walder's student, teacher and institution fields, above. The respondents cited numerous associated problems, including poorly worded, generic surveys, student malice, linking of results to promotion and additional student workload that a pedagogical innovation might implicate. In Australia, the linking of survey results to a government Learning and Teaching Fund support mechanism (Alderman, Towers, & Bannah, 2012) is also problematic. If students learn of this circumstance, it would be advantageous to game the system by scoring their teachers and their learning highly, in the hope of enhancing their university's funding (and reputation) regardless of their actual views.

Perhaps most fundamentally, there appears to be little if any empirical evidence that student evaluation surveys achieve their main purpose—improving teaching. This, after garnering student opinion at great expense—fiscal and emotional—and time, over decades. Rothstein (2012, p. 36) observes that "there has been an explosion of research on statistical measures of teacher effectiveness, but this research has yielded remarkably little insight into the design of better approaches to teacher evaluation". Similarly, Wieman and Gilbert (2017) assert that current course evaluation data shed little light on teaching practice and its improvement. They contend, nevertheless, that effective teaching practices "achieve substantially better student learning and other outcomes", without explaining how, or defining the terms. Uttl, White, and Gonzalez (2017, p. 2) report that "well established findings in cognitive psychology and intelligence literature suggest that any substantive correlations between SET [student evaluation of teachers] and learning are likely to be a fluke or an artifact rather than due to students' ability to accurately assess instructor…teaching effectiveness". Marsh and Hocevar (1991) found no difference in student ratings of the same staff over a period of 13 years. For whatever reason/s, the staff concerned could not—or would not— "improve", at least in the view of their transient student cohorts. I concede here that my own student evaluation scores have plateaued similarly over a period of some years, which, despite my claim to place little stock in such things, manages to be somewhat demoralising and bewildering—I believe I have learnt to

be a better teacher in that time. More broadly "LEU [Learner Experience of Unit] survey results are stable over time" (Macquarie University, 2015), putting in question the value of semester-ly evaluation—a point noted by Macquarie. By definition, therefore, student satisfaction ratings appear to fall short of providing a comprehensive view of teacher quality. Current methods of teacher appraisal can be highly morale-sapping, corrosive and constrictive, a metaphorical infarction afflicting the community of practice they are meant to serve (Buchanan, 2011).

Teacher evaluation regimes can produce other unintended behavioural changes. One such outcome or casualty of teacher evaluations is the subduction of collaboration by competition. Corporate sharing of resources, knowledge and ideas is highly energising, and vital to educational innovation and renewal, so its erosion presents a sharp-toothed challenge to the profession and its members. This is particularly so if managers or the students themselves are privy to mean satisfaction scores, and make inevitable comparisons.

Competition is not unhealthy per se. But surely the teaching profession is more akin to a sporting team, than a scrabble of competing athletes. Moreover, teaching is an enabling profession; it aims to nurture those it serves to grow into their potential selves. Intense, constant, high-stakes competition appears anything but enabling. In their case study of the effects of teacher evaluation, Bradford and Braaton (2018) discerned that "limited opportunities for sense-making about what counts as 'good' teaching foreclosed on teacher learning contributing to teacher demoralization" (p. 49). (See also Blömeke & Olsen, 2019 on support and self-efficacy.) If the essence of teaching entails affirming the achievements and progress of learners, then the profession and its members might unite to apply such affirmation peer-wise. Teachers, and teacher educators, should reasonably surpass any other profession in their capacity to do this.

A preoccupation with student satisfaction might also be harmful to pedagogical innovation and experimentation, and its necessary tolerance of errors. In a teacher education context, a failed pedagogical experiment, such as a new assessment task, might be (reasonably) viewed dimly by inexperienced pre-service teachers observing a presumed expert.

It is ironic, then, that a mechanism ostensibly engineered to leverage change, militates against change in practice, in at least two ways: through instilling fear of failure on the part of teachers, thereby discouraging innovation; and by privileging competition over collaboration, thereby thwarting the cross-pollination of ideas. The process does indeed change teacher behaviour, but not necessarily for the better. Harris and Herrington (2015) ask if such procedures, while ridding the profession of some "poorly performing" teachers, "sap the creativity and motivation of our best teachers" (p. 72).

Institutional Faith in Student Evaluations

Despite the limitations outlined above, robust faith in student evaluation surveys appears persistent, as evidenced in some of the literature. Stein, Spiller, Terry, and Harris (2013, p. 892) describe the administration of student evaluation surveys as "normative behaviour"—perhaps with a sense of mischief?

Benton and Cashin (n.y.) assert no substantial proven link between grades attained by students and the evaluation ratings they furnish; that is, no evidence of a "grade-trade" operating between teacher and students. Such a claim may be open to question. Benton and Cashin also note that students of highly rated teachers perform better in exams, which appears to suggest an association between high student grades and ratings. This also opens up the circular argument that effective, quality teachers are those who produce good (exam) results in their students. Francis et al. (2019) report that more highly qualified teachers are perhaps deployed to more classes of more able students. This might explain some of the link between "quality" teachers and high-performing students, in schools if not at university. Moreover, students' starting points and life circumstances might not have been considered as part of the equation (Uttl, White, & Gonzales, 2017). If the exams are set (and/or marked) by the teachers themselves, this raises questions about the dependability of the data. Also, it would stand to reason that those students who perform well in an external exam would be grateful to their teachers, and would rate them accordingly. In short, there appear to be numerous uncertainties in decoupling grades from ratings. Some institutions invite students to complete evaluations before final grades are disclosed, perhaps in an attempt to counter this influence. Nevertheless, by the end of a semester, students have at least an inkling of their grade or mark.

Benton and Cashin (n.y.) also assert that student ratings of teachers do not constitute popularity contests. This implies that those teachers rated more highly are no more popular than their more lowly rated colleagues, by whatever means "popular" might be defined.

Stein et al. (2013) are suspicious of some academics' fears concerning student evaluations and their trustworthiness. They assert that students have many years' experience of observing teachers on which to base their judgments; this is what Lortie (1975, p. 61) referred to disparagingly as the "apprenticeship of observation" of teaching.

How, then and by whom might teacher effectiveness and excellence be appraised more productively? The following section deals mainly with two related aspects. It focuses foremost on encapsulating the multidimensionality of teaching in teacher evaluation; it also examines well-being and learnership of the profession and its members.

Alternative or Supplementary Measures to Student Evaluations

The multidimensionality of teaching and learning, the "intensive and complex work" that is teaching (Sullivan & Morrison, 2014) appears difficult to capture for many teacher satisfaction surveys. Goldhaber (2015, p. 91) concludes, "the bottom line is that errors *are an inevitable part of any system of teacher classification*" (emphasis in original). Alderman, Towers, and Bannah (2012) recommend a multidimensional approach to teacher evaluation. Warren (2016) proposes that students can contribute to evaluations in numerous ways, including through suggestion boxes, shadowing, focus groups and analysis of work samples (p. 35). Marozzi (2012) claims that student satisfaction itself is not directly measurable, given its multifaceted nature, and proposes a socialisation index, itself multifaceted, as a more accessible statistical proxy for student satisfaction. Disentangling mediating factors such as ability, effort, environment and others affecting teachers and learners is likely to remain difficult, and may serve little purpose. Nevertheless, a meta-pedagogy, raising awareness of such phenomena and their influence among learners and teachers, may bear fruit. Barnes and Cross (2018) refer to "policy and policy-making as complex, messy, and shaped by critical relationship between power and knowledge".

As intimated earlier, "teaching quality" is an elusive concept, other than via the somewhat circular test of "that which effects (equally elusive) learning quality and student satisfaction". Several multidimensional models have been developed, and an examination of the factors routinely attributed to student satisfaction may be of some use. Henard and Leprince-Ringuet (n.y.) cite Taylor's (2003) 13 enablers of quality teaching and learning:

> teacher education engagement locally and globally, engagement with peers and colleagues, equity and pathways, leadership, engagement with learners, entrepreneurship, designing for learning, teaching for learning, assessing for learning, evaluation of teaching and learning, reflective practice and professional development, personal management, and management of teaching and learning.

Berk (2007) argues that too much stock has been invested in student rating evaluations, and cites 13 sources of information on teacher quality, themselves open to the vicissitudes of student whim and other subjectivities. These are (p. 15) ratings from students; peers; external experts; alumni; administrators, as well as; videos; teaching awards; student interviews; teaching scholarship (as evidenced by peer-reviewed publications and conference papers); learning outcome measures and teacher portfolios (which tend to be an amalgam of the other sources). Berk adopts an existing definition of competency: "an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation" (p. 12) without delineating "superior performance" in the context of teaching. Curiously, Berk appears to assume that student ratings are the "real" measure of a teacher, as he discusses self-ratings: "Superior teachers provide more accurate self-ratings than mediocre or putrid teachers" (p. 23). "Accurate" here is presumably measured according to student ratings. This also raises questions as to the construction (how and by whom) of teacher superiority, mediocrity or putrescence. The above

two models illustrate some of the complexity that is teaching. If all aspects thereof were to be adopted by any one teacher or faculty, the evaluation of teacher quality might be crushed under its own weight. Nevertheless, combinations of elements thereof might serve to triangulate existing teaching quality data.

Assessment instruments for completion by instructors have also been proposed. Wieman and Gilbert (2017) propose a rubric including categories such as course information provided, assessment and resources. They caution against ascribing learning improvements exclusively to particular pedagogical approaches. Walter, Henderson, Beach and Williams (2016) proposed a Postsecondary Instructional Practices Survey. It comprises five factors: student–student interactions; content delivery factors; formative assessment; student-content engagement and summative assessment. While it commendably reduces measurable elements to five, some of these, such as "content delivery factors" are broad and nebulous. Walter et al. warn of the limitations associated with self-reporting.

Spooren et al. (2013, p. 624) recommend a multifaceted, "more holistic approach that stimulates teachers to be reflective practitioners concerning their teaching, instead of merely taking note of the next SET report". They argue (2013, p. 623) that "consultative feedback should consist of more than simply interpreting the results and providing advice for teaching improvement". They refer to eight strategies deriving from their reading of the literature:

> (a) active involvement of teachers in the learning process, (b) use of multiple sources of information, (c) interaction with peers, (d) sufficient time for dialogue and interaction, (e) use of teacher self-ratings, (f) use of high-quality feedback information, (g) examination of concepts of teaching, and (h) setting of improvement goals.

Regarding self-assessment, Yiend et al. (2014, pp. 478, 479) observe that "lecturers are encouraged to translate abstract concepts into concrete representations for their students though the use of specific teaching techniques…Should lecturers not apply the approach to themselves when, as teachers, they are inherently 'students of pedagogy'"? Students and lecturers have in common that they are observers of teaching, ideally critically so. Logically, academics in education faculties should be most adept in this regard, presumably having been hired for their associated field expertise, often honed by many years' reflective and research-informed experience. Marozzi (2012, p. 1272) proposes "to optimize students' experience at university by treating them as partners from enrolment to graduation". This might work most effectively with students of Education, particularly as graduation approaches. As suggested by Warren (2016) above, pre-service teachers might be invited to offer feedback in interviews or focus groups, to the teacher concerned and/or to a nominated and trusted colleague. The exercise is likely to inform and challenge pre-service teachers' own views. Nevertheless, it is arguably a rather high-stakes strategy, given the messages that may need to be conveyed to peers. Current competitive regimes, however, might be yet more likely to extinguish partnership even among colleagues.

There appears to be broad consensus that student evaluation data per se, provide insufficient evidence on the quality of teachers, teaching and learning. Smithson,

Birks, Harrison, Sid Nair, and Hitchins (2015) found using statistical means problematic, and proposed instead reporting on the percentage of respondents who are satisfied or dissatisfied. Goldring et al. (2015) and Jiang, Sporte, and Luppescu (2015) contend that classroom observations may offer a more whole-some (albeit a more labour-intensive) appraisal of teacher quality.

One outcome attributed to effective teachers is their ability to diminish the gap between high-achieving students and those deemed at risk (Goldhaber, Lavery, & Theobold, 2015; Ingersoll, 2007). Might this be applied to a system designed to improve teaching? Granted, there are critical differences between a learner's right (and the compulsion on children) to learn, and a teacher's choice to teach in return for a salary. Yet it appears that the education profession routinely fails to apply its corporate knowledge about teaching and learning to its own members (Buchanan & Schuck, 2016). Blömeke and Olsen (2019) identify four elements of instructional quality: a supportive environment, cognitive engagement, clear instruction and classroom management (p. 171). If these are important preconditions for learning, how might they be applied to teachers-as-learners (Adon, Moskal, Stein, & Golding, 2015; Wong & Moni, 2014)? How might support and engagement be enlivened for academics? If superior teaching embraces collaboration and academic risk-taking, perhaps as proxies for instruction and management, (how) might such ventures be let loose among teachers, including teacher educators? And how might they serve as assessment *for* learning (Pokorny, 2016)?

The benefits of formative peer observation have been noted, and include the development of a "local evaluative enhancement culture" (Yiend, Weller, & Kinchin, 2014, p. 465) as well as benefits accruing to both the observer and the observed staff member (Schuck, Aubusson, & Buchanan, 2008). Yiend et al. also note, however, that peer observations can serve to entrench institutional norms, approaches and values. Yiend et al. implemented observations by peers and developmental officers, and observed that development officers offered more constructive criticism than did peers, who tended to restrict their comments to praise. Yiend et al. suggest multiple forms of data, and identified five elements of observation: description; positive reflection; critical reflection; applying reflection (to the *observer's* practice) and misconception. It is perhaps regrettable that peers shrank from offering criticism, and part of the response may be in encouraging and educating staff to be more incisive and critical, and culturing a more risk-friendly context for this.

There is likely to be a difference between what satisfies and what sustains, educationally speaking. While students are increasingly positioning themselves as customers (Woodall, Hiller, & Resnick, 2012), Buchanan (2017) likens the role of a teacher more to that of a dietician than that of a chef. While a chef might be beholden to a diner's whims, a dietician may be charged with delivering unpalatable news at times. That being the case, student satisfaction data may be misleading in two senses of the word; such data might not provide the most accurate view of the quality of learning, and they may well mislead the profession, to take it in directions that are pedagogically subprime.

In a school context, Darling-Hammond (2010) holds education systems accountable for enhancing teacher quality, and calls for, "a transformation in the ways

in which our education system *attracts, prepares, supports, and develops expert teachers* who can teach in more powerful ways" (p. 2, emphasis added). McCormack et al. (2017, p. 599) advocate communities of practice that are at once "individually sustaining places and collectively sustainable spaces…characterised by connection through professional and social relationships, engagement through purposeful collaborative reflective inquiry, ownership through shared commitment to each other, [limited?] safety based on multiple trusts and permissions, and holistic facilitation". Current means of capturing student evaluations transgress so many of the above social and professional songlines[1] (Molyneaux & Vitebsky, 2001). Martinez, Taut, and Schaaf (2016, p. 17) refer to "buy-in from key stakeholders" in the process of teacher improvement. Generating motivation, or buy-in is part of the natural order of learner improvement. Why would it not be instinctive to teacher improvement?

Clearly, student feedback drives and shapes education as delivered in tertiary contexts. Uttl et al. (2017) assert that student feedback regimes are responsible for inflating of grades and reduction in assigned workload. Staff "teach to the test" set by students (in collusion with university administrators).

Publishing student feedback is a form of shaming. Much punishment involves a degree of shaming. Shaming is a form of ensuring compliance, conformity standardisation. So the EFS tends to stsndardise the profession. It is likely to be toxic to the innovation and experimentation essential to good teaching.

Even if correlation of satisfaction with learning—we can only say with confidence that it's a correlation of satisfaction with achievement. Not surprisingly students who do well tend to like their teachers. Also, who determines who has done well—those same teachers who are being evaluated, presumably.

Conclusions

Spooren et al. (2013) contend that the various purposes for which student evaluation is used, render its use "fragile" (p. 599). Their criticisms include data interpretation, student anonymity and, at times, retrospectivity of data (see also Goldhaber, 2015). They enumerate (p. 622) four negative functions of student evaluation on teaching staff: "tame, blame, reframe, shame". Whether this is wilful or compulsive, the outcomes for the profession are identical.

None of this is to pluck (teacher education) students from the improvement equation. Indeed, their participation in teaching and learning improvement—their own and others'—is vital. But in this they are apprentices. Moreover, it is reasonable to assert that some teachers value add to their students more effectively than others, and that their practice, its outcomes and the links between these, merit investigation.

[1] A metaphor of the Australian Indigenous songline has been used here to portray the means by which Aboriginal peoples learn and know how to navigate another People's land and seas in safety and without causing spiritual offence.

Nor is this intended to remove satisfaction surveys from the jumble. They probably correspond to behavioural c/omissions in classrooms. Embedding surveys in a broader suite of measures, such as outlined above, and in a context of a constructive community of practice (Wenger, 1998), may provide the best, if not the only, means of validating such scores. Biggs and Tang (2007) assert that central to understanding quality teaching and learning is understanding what students do. It may sound arrogant, but the most pressing quest may be to teach (Teacher Education) students how to complete evaluation forms. They are likely to need help in understanding the multidimensionality of teaching and learning, of what they themselves bring to the teaching–learning (p)act or contract (Buchanan, 2017), about the kind of learners and teachers they are and want to be, and about how their teacher has helped them or impeded them accordingly. An improved understanding of this on students' part will improve the quality of the evaluative feedback they provide. It will also permit the attachment of greater weight to final year (Teacher Education) students' evaluative responses than to those of their early-year counterparts, on the plausible premise that the latter have grown in their ability to discern quality teaching and learning during their incumbency. And it will contribute to the evidence of value-adding with which the teacher education programme equips its students.

It may be that the proposed alternatives fare little better, other than by providing a more humane, respectful and generative way of improving teaching. Possibly, quality teaching resists quantification, and remains in the realm of opinion, albeit educated opinion. Nevertheless, these more comprehensive and permissive approaches promise greater potential to enrich and nourish the profession. Ultimately, teacher improvement constitutes teacher learning; it stands to reason that the profession might apply what it knows about learning to its own members.

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Chapter 10
Digital Devices, Online Learning and All That: How They Are Shaping Education

Mobile devices can arguably deliver for and deliver from (worthwhile) learning. This discursive chapter examines current literature regarding the problems and prospects with regard to the use of mobile devices in classrooms, and arguments for and against their use at school, and the kinds of uses they are being, and might be, put to. The chapter also discusses the contribution of digital technologies to conforming and potentially constraining teachers. The chapter will also reprise in brief a discussion of student behaviour more generally, and the respect accorded, or not, to teachers, from students and parents. The chapter explores this in light of recent home-schooling, necessitated by covid-19, and the newfound respect this has garnered for teachers from parents.

> Declaim *vb* 3 to protest (against) loudly and publicly
>
> HarperCollins (1999), p. 408

Admission

> There's an interesting world out there, beyond me[1].

Snapshot 1: I've sometimes mused about writing an updated Gulliver's Travels narrative (Swift, 1726). In this tale, Gulliver chances upon an island where everyone is a town crier. For younger readers, a town crier was someone who wandered around town (towns were smaller back in the day), and yelled out information, just using her or his voice.[2] On Gulliver's host island, *everyone* wanders around with a megaphone,

[1]Beyond oneself. I'm not suggesting that I'm the only boring thing in the universe. Just that the internet doesn't have to be all about me.

[2]Not only were there no electronic devices, but many people couldn't read. (Think back to the Devanagari script in Chap. 6, or any script you haven't been able to make sense of). They had to rely on the town crier's "truths"; fact-checking was difficult. The town crier, in turn, relied,

J. Buchanan, *Challenging the Deprofessionalisation of Teaching and Teachers*,
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just yelling things they've heard or imagined. I'd call this land "Mega-phony-a". Welcome to the world of social media.

Snapshot 2: It's a rich, bountiful time to be a teacher, and a learner, with much to be embraced in the new, digital world. Bagchi, Narula, and Sengupta (2019) refer to earlier times as the "dark days of disconnect". The scope for connecting with other learners, with experts in the field, and with audiences for our learning, would have been unimaginable even in recent times, just as recollections of the world just a couple of decades ago seem dim, with letter-writing, putting hard copies of photos in an album and the like.

Young people can't conceive that a world without the internet could possibly have any virtues to it. That, I believe, is part of the problem. They are unable to unimagine the internet, which is likely to make them less sensible to its influences—on them and from them.

I concede that I am a techno-sceptic. That sounds more respectable than techno-imbecile. Accordingly, my views on the digital world may tend towards the reactionary. At times when I see four school students in the same uniform (just to clarify, they're each wearing a separate-but-identical uniform, not sharing the one uniform[3]), on the train sitting next to one another, ignoring each other and staring into their phones, I wonder if we are less connected (to those "closest" to us) and more tethered than ever. Are we just staring at, or looking for, Narcissus-like, our own image in those shiny devices[4]? I will devote some of this chapter to interrogating my misgivings about the potential contributions and influences of the online world, within (or encircling and besieging?) the learning world. In particular, I will explore implications for teaching and learning, teachers and learners. I also have to concede that I like to feel in control—which is perhaps what led me into teaching. The online world removes that structure, support and security from my life, and from my teaching. As such, it can be a great servant to the cause of education and educators; it can also be a wilful and restive tyrant, over teaching and beyond.

The Online World, Learning and the School

I opened Chap. 6 with some information—perhaps more than you required—about Devanagari script and the Sanskrit language. I accessed all that information without

probably, on one single source, possibly government-controlled or -influenced. Town criers weren't necessarily government employees, though. They might be paid by the community, with food, after harvest (Wikipedia, 2019a). Accordingly, there may have been competing vested interests in what s/he announced or didn't. Also, apparently there were many female town criers. I didn't know.

[3]That would be weird. I'm just illustrating that they're not mutual strangers.

[4]It's possible, of course, that the students are doing their homework, or other reading. But if they're texting others, only to text each other when they're with those others, that strikes me as counterintuitive.

leaving my desk. Hardly remarkable these days, but apart from the possible weight-gain and cardiovascular implications, this is a marvellous global, technological development in my lifetime. As with access to literacy and education, I hope I never take for granted the freedom I have to access, and to share, information and opinion, as well as the attendant responsibilities. I also wish to remain vigilant and insistent with regard to safeguarding those rights, freedoms and responsibilities. The information in the second footnote on the previous page reminds me of the value of access to information, and the verification of information. However, as it is with literacy, so it is with digital information; in the absence of (UN Declaration 1's) reason and conscience, information is, at best, worthless, and at worst, highly dangerous. This applies, too, to people. Think Pol Pot.

Darvin (2018) adopts a British Columbia Ministry of Education definition of digital literacy: "the interest, attitude and ability of individuals to appropriately use digital technology and communication tools to access, manage, integrate, analyze and evaluate information, construct new knowledge, create and communicate with others" (p. 181). Darvin notes the threefold personal attributes: interest, attitude and ability (central to most learning), and the multifaceted skills involved in negotiating with digital technologies and their content. In one sense, though, the skills involved, apart from the technical navigational know-how, are not vastly different from those regarding interacting with any text: accessing, managing, integrating, analysing and evaluating information, constructing new knowledge, creating and communicating with others (see definition above, and, perhaps, Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson, Krathwohl, & Bloom 2001)). One main difference is the highly public nature of online misjudgement, with attendant consequences. There is at least one slippery term in the British Columbia Ministry of Education definition above: appropriate. Another major difference is the absence of a filtering process for much online information, requiring greater vigilance and scepticism of us as "consumers", particularly given the overwhelming volume of alleged information available. In coming to terms with understanding the dynamics of digital literacy in schools, Spiteri and Rundgren (p. 1) identify four contributors: knowledge, attitudes and skills, knowledge and attitudes on the part of the teacher, and a school's culture.

Of course, there are some truly innovative, "opening-up" practices occurring in schools. Burden, Kearney, Schuck, and Hall (2019) devised a continuum of digital technologies, from "sustaining" which embody minor changes, to "innovative", disruptive technology use. Their systematic literature review drew upon four criteria: convincing evidence based on rigorous methodology; evidence-based learner benefits; identification of pedagogical strategies and interventions; and evidence of innovation. Of the 57 papers reviewed, however, they identified only three that met the criteria for radical, disruptive practice.

Digital and other assistive technologies have also opened opportunities for learners with disabilities (Maher & Young, 2017; Ravneberg & Söderström, 2017), although there appears to be a disconnect between optimal use of assistive technologies and actual classroom use, where such technologies remain underused (Bouck, 2016; Bouck & Flanagan, 2016), and a lack of wider consultation to ascertain the needs and capacities of learners with disabilities (Young, 2018). In another development,

the ubiquity of digital devices and online access has occurred rapidly, overtaking the extension of other, physically reliant, services to disadvantaged communities, such as clean water and sewered/septic toilets, no doubt helping learners elsewhere—if they can outlive the ambient health challenges, and presuming they have sufficient literacy capacities to access content—it's a tangled web.

But the accessibility and affordability of information raise two problems: what to focus on or ignore, and how to drive and navigate clearly, with blizzards of information constantly bombarding the windscreen; what Purcell et al. (2012) refer to our "information-saturated digital lives". In the classroom, mobile devices are making teaching so much easier, but just as they're fattening up my arteries and me, as I confessed above, are they at the same time rendering us cognitively fat and clogged? With those potential biases and blind spots in mind, I'd like to explore briefly the online world as a platform for sharing ideas, ideologies, knowledge, opinions, propaganda and the like, and how we might respond. Along the way, I will also look at some ways of decoding texts.

In preparing myself for coping with the vast amounts of information I'm faced with, I find Freebody and Luke's (1990) four resources model for reading and viewing a useful guide for online (and other) text interactions. Their four ways of interacting with text are

> Code breaker. 'How do I crack this code?'
> Meaning maker. 'What does this text mean to me?'
> Text pragmatist. 'What do I do with this text?'
> Critical analyst. 'What does this text do to me?'

It might oversimplify to offer associated examples with regard to a particular model, but I'll offer an illustrative example with regard to Roman numerals:

- Code-breaking might entail learning that i in Roman numerals equates to one (of something—"how many what"? as my maths teachers used to say), and that v equates to five somethings.
- Meaning-making might involve learning the "grammar" of Roman numerals, i.e. that vi does not equate to iv, and it is not simply a matter of aggregating clusters of numerals.
- The text pragmatist might use the grammatical knowledge to "calculate"/translate into Hindu-Arabic numerals, or to read and/or infer higher, more complex Roman numerals.
- Critical analysis might be more elusive here. It might include speculating that v derives from an upheld hand with four fingers together and the thumb apart from them in a v shape, to help buyers and sellers with no common language to communicate numbers for prices, weights, lengths, numbers of items and the like. You "double" (or mirror image) the v symbol to make x for 10. The letters l (L) and c are also easily formed by hand gestures (x, d and m are the only Roman

numerals that would probably require both hands), suggesting why those letters may have been chosen[5];

considering the absence of zero in Roman numerals and the limiting implications of this; contemplating why we adopted a different system;
asking why we still use Roman numerals in some instances;
experimenting with some arithmetic operations using Roman numerals, and comparing its in/efficiencies with the Hindu-Arabic system we use;
asking "what's Hindu-Arabic, anyway"?

Code-breaking and meaning-making are prerequisites for Freebody and Luke's other two processes. Text pragmatist and critical analyst roles come into play in more interesting ways with more complex knowledge encounters, such as what I do in response to knowledge of genocide or gender fluidity, or what those knowledges do to me, my being and doing (in a way that knowledge of Roman numerals per se is less inclined to do). I also mention this partly to differentiate between basic and more advanced skills, and fields of knowledge.

Another possibly fruitful measure for engaging with texts is one that colleagues of mine saw handwritten on the wall of a Bhutanese university. (I'm paraphrasing here from the accounts I received.) The ACID test: what do I agree with?; what confuses, confronts or challenges me, or needs clarifying?; what is interesting?; what do I disagree with? Naturally, each of these questions implicates asking why.

The above two frameworks will serve as backdrops to my thinking as I critically examine (my reactions to) online contributions to (school) learning.

Online Accessibility and the Complexity of Teaching

This section is, I believe, uncontroversial. Technological advances have added to the complexity of teachers' work. Kelentrić, Helland and Arstorp (2018) have developed a Professional Digital Competence Framework for teachers, with seven components (p. 3):

subjects and basic skills, which concerns itself with the expansion of subject areas through digital content and access;
school in society, which deals with broader societal uses of technologies, and overcoming the "digital divide";
ethics, focusing on school values, legal matters and students' digital discernment;

[5]For those interested in such things, in Arabic numerals, five looks like our zero, another easy hand gesture involving, implicitly, all five fingers on one hand. From there if you raise three of your fingers in an arc, leaving your index finger and thumb touching (do this with your left hand), you might see where our symbol for 6 arose. I'm aware there's a race-hate gesture similar to this, so perhaps don't try the gesture on the bus. If you look at the Arabic numbers for 1, 2 and 3, (١, ٢ and ٣) and rotate them anti-clockwise, you might also see where our numbers 1–3 come from. (Arabic Word a Day, n.d.).

pedagogy and didactics, which broadly corresponds to Koehler and Mishra's technological, pedagogical and content knowledge;
leadership of learning processes—understanding and managing the changing digital world, with a view to increasing student inclusivity;
interaction and communication, maximising the communication capacities of digital technologies and;
change and development, which cultivates digital competence with regard to context and with a view to lifelong, adaptable learning (pp. 4–10).

Kelentrić et al. explain how each, in context, might be appropriated in one's teaching. Each is outlined in terms of associated knowledge, skills and competence. They are linked to Norway's Directorate for Education and Training's (2013) "five skills" of learning, namely reading, writing, oral skills, numeracy and digital skills.

The European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (Redecker, 2017, p. 8) comprises a total of 22 digital competencies within six areas in digital literacy education: professional engagement (organisational communication; professional collaboration; reflective practice and digital continuous professional development (van Valkenberg, 2017)); digital resources (selecting, creating and modifying, and managing, protecting and sharing such resources); teaching and learning (teaching, guidance, collaborative learning and self-regulated learning); assessment (strategies, analysing evidence, and feedback and planning); empowering learners (accessibility and inclusion, differentiation and personalisation, and actively engaging learners) and facilitating learners' digital competence (information and media literacy; digital content creation; digital problem solving; digital collaboration and communication; and responsible use).

The UK's Education and Training Foundation (2019) outlines 20 elements of digital technology use for teachers, under seven headings: planning; approaches; supporting learners' employability skills; subject and industry-specific teaching; assessment and feedback; accessibility and inclusion; and self-development. These operate at three levels, for the beginning, developing and leading teacher.

While each of the above frameworks' embodied strategies also constitutes appropriate responses to any text, the dynamic, volatile nature of digital technologies makes this a complex burden for teachers. And the "wisdom of the elders" sometimes fails us in such instances.

Having questioned the wisdom of the elders, I'm going to refer to another framework, arguably an example of global eldership, which, I believe, may also have some resonances with digital learning, or any interactive, collaborative, student-centred learning approaches. I'm not proposing it as an alternative to the frameworks outlined above, or others that have been tailored to the digital world, but mention it here for your consideration and organisation of (digital) learning; the eight Aboriginal ways of learning. These comprise (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2019) with some interpretations of my own:

narrative (learning supported by story);

learning maps (learning supported through goal/destination-setting, navigating and making learning processes visible);
non-verbal (learning supported by the visual and the hands-on, the practical);
symbols and images (learning supported through metaphor and the like);
land links (learning supported through observation in a practical, local context);
non-linear (a learning approach supported by transdisciplinarity, and lateral thinking); deconstruction/reconstruction (learning supported through critical and conceptual analysis, synthesis, and scaffolding) and;
community links (learning supported by the resources of the (online) community, and communicated to community). As I stated above, these were not designed with the digital world in mind, and have almost certainly been influenced by educational practices imposed on Australia from the west. Some are a neater fit than others. Nevertheless, they may serve as another means of de/constructing (digital) teaching and learning.

Child protection is another element that assumes greater proportions[6] with online access and content. As with all education, it should be autonomy-oriented. There is little to be gained[7] in micro-managing and micro-chipping our young. In response to sexual content in advertising, (advertising executive) Todd Sampson warned that it is impractical for parents (and those who act *in loco parentis*) to child-proof the world; better to world-proof the child (Lill, 2013). I don't entirely accept that line. It absolves the (advertising and online) world of responsibility—the village raises the child, that sort of thing. In any case, it should be a matter of gradual release and exposure, depending on age of the child and other factors.

Digital devices have also increased the intensity of teachers' work, from relentless emails—which I concede are common to most jobs—to flipped learning, colonising students' and teachers' erstwhile free time, to a phone call from a displeased student to a parent, who then parachutes in to the school to complain about a teacher (Fyfe & Cook, 2019). A teaching colleague, who preferred to remain unidentified, confided, "a parent named and shamed me on Facebook…The police eventually became involved".

Our efforts to protect young people from the internet might not be welcomed by them, but self-protective behaviours are nonetheless needed. Credibility is of the essence here. Numbers of young people appear to be rejecting their elders' advice on illicit drugs, and the same may be true with regard to online media education. Breakstone, McGrew, Smith, Ortega and Wineburg (2018) contend that providing checklists for students on website appropriacy may have little value. They suggest, rather, to encourage uses of the web's own resources to analyse sites, by searching elsewhere online about the website's authorship and purpose. Of course, these evaluative websites are, themselves, prone to the same biases as the original website under investigation. Checking and checklists in combination may be of some use

[6] I'm not talking weight-gain here.

[7] Or here.

here—with checklists serving as a scaffold until students internalise the best ways of putting a website to the test, as part of their repertoire of critical literacy skills.

The Importance of the Medium

Koehler and Mishra's (e.g. 2009) work onTPACK (the amalgam of technological, pedagogical and content knowledge) has become widely known. Its evolution from Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) with the inclusion of "technological" is interesting. For some time we have spoken of audience and purpose with regard to the production and consumption of texts—I'll treat "pedagogy" as a text here. PCK corresponds to audience and purpose, and TPACK could be seen as addressing the issues of audience, purpose and medium—medium being the means of delivery, and/or perhaps the text type—both of which have associated conventions that might be adhered to, or broken, inadvertently—or deliberately, particularly by those more adept at the genre and medium.[8] The online world, part of the T part of TPACK—has not really changed purposes of texts, but it has vastly changed—broadened[9]—potential audiences.

"Technology-enhanced education" is at times viewed as axiomatic or tautological, and, therefore, under-problematised. Bayne (2015, p. 5) argues that technology-enhanced learning "has been adopted as an apparently useful, inoffensive and descriptive shorthand for what is in fact a complex and often problematic constellation of social, technological and educational change". Similarly, Selwyn (2011) makes a case for pessimism, and (2008), calls for educational research to deal with classroom realities, "the state of the actual" (p. 83), rather than with idealised possibilities. It is possible that it is academically culturally unfashionable to express any doubts or misgivings with regard to advances in educational technology. We tend to rejoice in and celebrate the delightful digital disruption, including, implicitly, (highly) disruptive unemployment and underemployment, perhaps from the relative safety of our ivory crenellations; I sometimes think that "academic culture" programmes us not to appear reactionary. To what extent and in what ways are digital technologies disruptive to (what kinds of) learning, and what might we do in response to that?

One might expect that the proliferation of information availability would have inexorably led to an explosion of deep thinking. But so far, that has not been the case.[10] In one sense, why should that surprise? Prior to the internet, some people bought and read encyclopaedias, newspapers or magazines. The newspapers were/are variably reputable. Some bought porn. Discussing the potential harm (or benefits) from pornography for viewers and participants is beyond the scope of this chapter.

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[8]Like my wildlishy clever use of "admission" as the first sub-heading for this chapter, to convey both "confession" and "entry/introduction". Wouldn't want you to have missed it.

[9]Still not talking weight-gain.

[10]I heard that once, but can't now seem to find a reference for it. Apologies and acknowledgements to whoever said it.

Suffice it to say, though, that porn (or, for that matter, cats) are unlikely to precipitate an upwelling of deep thought. Is it possible that the proliferation of knowledge has devalued the currency—have information and knowledge become affordable, or just cheap?

I'm not advocating a return to inaccessibility to information, either through limited technology, or censorship. But we need to retain sight of the worth of intelligence (in both senses of the word). We might even care to commit some more important bits to memory, rather than keeping it all in our pocket? Patmanthara and Hidayat (2018, p. 1) refer to "accelerated development" with regard to the advancement of information and communication technologies. In some ways, though, might the affective, ethical, and even in some cases, intellectual components of online access bear more resemblance to "arrested development"?

More broadly, have we entered a period of the Second Great Forgettery? The First Forgettery arguably arose from the invention of writing. Commitment to memory assumed a certain redundancy. Of course, almost all would agree that the benefits of writing far outweigh[11] and overcompensate for any associated lapses of memory. So it might be with the digital world-in-our-pockets. But there *are* losses. Like the car, the digital world has offered much, and demanded much.

The above raises the question of what do we pursue online. And, for that matter, what do we pursue and hold dear in our learning? If the online world is a vehicle ("carriage service"), where does it take us? Darvin (2018, p. 187) discerned six different uses for online devices:

1. Identity representation: e.g. taking selfies, constructing a Facebook profile
2. Artistic expression: e.g. posting pictures on Instagram, publishing fan fiction stories online
3. Facilitation of social relations: e.g. chatting with friends on Snapchat
4. Consumption and production of knowledge: e.g. reading news online, preparing PowerPoint for science class
5. Exchange of goods and services: e.g. ordering books on Amazon
6. Entertainment: e.g. playing Minecraft, watching a movie on Netflix.

I found it interesting to rank the above list in terms of decreasing apparent scholarliness. Scan back over and order them if you like before looking at my list. And if you want, ignore my ranking and skip to the next section.

For me, the only one that is convincingly scholarly is item 4. Next in line for me would be 5, depending on the goods or services exchanged. Then, slightly less convincingly again, might, be 2, again, depending on the nature of the "art". Similarly, 3 depends on the quality of the exchange. In second-last place for me would be 6—but I concede that entertainment can be educative. In the last place is 1.

You can always search the terms that are "trending" with Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube or Facebook, and contemplate the worth of the topics that trend at any given moment. I find that the imaged nature of Instagram offers a particularly good,

[11] Still not talking waistlines.

quick overview. In one recent Twitter trending search, I was momentarily heartened to discover we were discussing wolves, until I realised… I accept, though, that the "trending search" exercise can leave me with a feeling of superiority, which is as unhealthy as it is self-deceptive—it can reinforce my assumptions that the topics I'm interested in are somehow more scholarly than the topics that interest the masses. Who is to say that discussions of Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club somehow have less merit than discussions of *canis lupis* (Wikipedia, 2019b—I had to check its Linnaean taxonomy), or, for that matter, cats? That said, the trending nature of such topics is problematic in itself. Topics tend to trend in and out, leaving, it seems, little trace of their former presence, or time for sustained discussion, while we scramble in a peloton to the next trending topic that catches our eye. (Do we tend to be one-eyed in such things? Just thinking aloud here.) Is it possible that many users are "learning virtually nothing" in their online encounters, and who is to say so? The "trending" search might be an interesting in-school exercise in critical media analysis. Some trends may be not suitable for school, however—which perhaps proves a point.

I concede that the battlelines I've drawn in response to Darvin's (2018) six uses, above, are arbitrary if not misplaced. I have to concede, comparing my topmost and bottommost items, 1 and 4, above, (news vs. selfies and Facebook profiles), that 1 can also produce and help us to consume, new knowledge—Facebook is put to a number of scholarly purposes, and some might reasonably object to my relegating it to the back of the classroom. In any case, my ranking isn't set in stone, and might change on any reviewing. My main reason for sharing it was to provide you with something (almost certainly) to disagree with. In some ways, Facebook has "gone against the trend" of the internet. There was a time when individuals could only use the internet to access "official" information, from organisations, commercial enterprises and the like. More recently, the masses have stormed the internet, and "virtually anyone" can have their say online. Facebook, however, began more as a platform for individuals, and has now been adopted by many organisations. This perceived gatecrashing by the "heavies[12]" (organisations) and the oldies, has perhaps contributed to making Facebook unattractive for increasing numbers of younger people.

The tidal flows of this new knowledge, to me, though, appear frivolous, ephemeral and insubstantial—inch-deep-mile wide—rather than providing intellectual nourishment, or pushing me towards a better self. One yardstick for me in the ranking exercise was the extent to which the activity offers me the capacity to learn, about the world around, before, and after me, and nurtures my interest in doing so.

The exercise above of ranking Darvin's online purposes raised a few dilemmas for me:

- I affirm group work and collaboration in the classroom and workplace, but am sceptical of online chatting;
- I affirm student-centred learning, but am cynical about self-centred online footprints;

[12]Still not weight gain here.

- I affirm (schools as places of) producing, not just consuming, knowledge, but am suspicious of such processes online, and associated triviality;
- I affirm democratic, open access to information, but am dubious about how this operates online;
- More broadly, I affirm democracy, but savour control if not power. And tidy predictability.

I'm not convinced that my dilemmas above are necessarily hypocritical.

- Collaboration versus chatter: I think this is a distinction I and most teachers have drawn since time immemorial. To the extent that the web encourages the former, (co-labour-ation), over the latter ("chatter"), it is virtuous.
- I see a virtue in tailoring the learning to resonate optimally with my learners, in such a way that begs a response from them, but that is different from giving them each a megaphone.
- Regarding producing, not just consuming, knowledge, I want my students to realise that even when they use the web to produce and disseminate knowledge, they are, nonetheless, internet consumers, with all of the associated necessary precautions. Because of or despite this, they should not lose sight of the potential impact—on themselves and others—of what they produce. As consumers, and consumer/producers, I want them to develop a certain "sense and sensibility", to quote Jane Austen (1811), and to use their numbers to push back against online wrongs. Attending to this will help overcome a "digital divide" (Somekh, 2007) wherein some students not only have less access to the digital world than others, but are less adept than their peers at engaging critically with technology, either as consumers or producers and composers. The current Covid-19 pandemic, with its rapid transition to distance learning, will bring into sharp focus those above and below the high tide mark, or bathtub ring, demarcating the digitally privileged, and digitally-denied or -deprived.

Non-school and School Online Behaviours

Researchers, including Darvin (2018), are at times disparaging of a mismatch between home and school online use, criticising the latter. Hague and Payton (2010) observe.

> The use of technology [that young people] experience in schools often bears little relevance to the ways in which they are communicating and discovering information outside of school…Young people's own knowledge, ideas and values are not reflected in the education system and school learning can have little or no bearing on their lives, concerns, interests and perceived or aspirant futures. (p. 11).

Similarly, Connolly and McGuinness (2018) assert that "meaningful digital literacy education should encompass a broad suite of skills reflecting young people's social

and cultural engagement in a networked society, their self-expression, identity formation and participation in an online world" (p. 77).

I have some misgivings about these emphases. I think students' leisure and school reading and television viewing might be different, and I believe we might need a similar tolerance with regard to online interaction and consumption. As an education profession, I would like to see, insofar as we're able, to colonise, harness and "tailor the diet of" the online world to the needs and ends of healthy pedagogy and scholarship, rather than allowing other purposes to (mixed-metaphor alert) hijack or derail these more sound and worthy educational, scholarly purposes. And, of course, we'll never achieve total agreement on what constitutes the scholarly, worthy and noble, or the frivolous or obscene. This, too, is fodder for enriching thought and conversation.

The online world is all *about* me, but not all about *me*, if that distinction makes sense. Is Connolly and McGuinness's vision a little like Gulliver's town criers? I'm not sure if school online use is obliged to reflect young people's non-scholastic online engagement. I believe it might serve us better if it challenges and shapes existing non-school practices and views, as is the case with most education. Similarly, might (digital) education shape and direct, rather than reflecting, young people's self-expression, identity formation and their online participation? Might it not also temper this with the capacity for the web to inform, in-form them ("from Latin *informare* 'to shape, give form to..'", Online Etymology Dictionary, 2019)? In short, I want students to be discerning, thinking online consumers. Gillen and Kucirkova (2018, p. 834) call for "bidirectional connections between children's learning with technologies at home and in school". I would hope to leverage such a practice to help scholarly practices infiltrate and colonise the homes where such use is not already instinctive—a presumptive premise, I concede. Nevertheless, I would welcome a tidal flow in that direction, with domestic internet use becoming increasingly scholarly.

A comparison with the distinction between home and school reading might be drawn. With school-aged extended family members, I sometimes despair at the disparity between the joy they derive from reading (to my mind) quite sophisticated texts, and the drudgery of reading aloud a school reader multiple times (for those families with the wherewithal to undertake this with their child/ren). The propensity to immunise children against reading for life concerns me; I would welcome school mimicking some non-school reading practices. This might not apply to the online world, however. Many children may need to be hooked into reading; few will need enticement into the virtual world.

A free internet, naturally enough, cannot filter the "information" fed into it. As such, it offers an equal platform to those against, as to those in favour of, infant vaccination, and to those who accept or deny the evidentiary science of climate change, or who want to affirm obesity[13]—a rejection of authoritative knowledge, or *destruktion* (Heidegger, 1962). It also offers equal time to those who wish to help or to harm. It has provided a sandpit, perhaps a cesspit, for sexism, racism, homophobia, bullying and other strains of dehumanising. It has led to a deskilling in driving and navigating, and, arguably, human interaction. It may also have led to a

[13]There. I've said it.

diminution in concentration spans, although the evidence is mixed. Ironically, more longitudinal research might be needed to dis/confirm this. Purcell et al. (2012) lament that undertaking research for "today's students…has shifted from a relatively slow process of intellectual curiosity and discovery to a fast-paced, short-term exercise aimed at locating just enough information to complete an assignment". For some students, however, minimalism may always have been the preference, I concede. Purcell et al.'s 2067 teacher respondents only accorded moderate ratings to their students' research abilities.

We in academia are arguably partly to blame for some of these ills. Postmodernism, with its "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard, 1933) has, perhaps, thus established its own narrative. Lyotard observes that his definition above comprises "simplifying to the extreme". I think that most of us would say that some knowledge is more worthy of the pursuit than others, even if we differ as to what this might be, and would educate our children accordingly. I'm not presuming to dismiss postmodernism so summarily here; just exercising my incredulity prerogative.

Here are some of the commonly-cited impacts of the online world that I see as being antithetical to education as a search for truths (with apologies to George Orwell (1949)):

- Fake news (war is peace?). If education is a search for truth/s, then the propensity for the internet, and the camera, to lie, is corrosive to knowledge, and to trust. Through another form of fakery, others, through their social media pages, may appear to be enjoying a grander slice of fun, fame, fortune and fair looks than we do. This may be contributing to increases in depression.
- Compliance and meek submission (freedom is slavery?). Filling in and submitting forms online; suffering price increases *in the time it takes to purchase the product online* ("that fare is no longer available"). You can't reason with the internet. Or with unseen online trolls; there are now few options to seek asylum from bullying, for students or staff (Fyfe & Cook, 2019).
- Echo chambers (ignorance is strength?). This one compounds the first. We are comforted by the assurance that our truths are truer than others' truths. Education and educators have a responsibility to confront each of these. The above three are probably all examples of Orwell's "alternative facts".

Less drastically, the online world also poses challenges to conventional English (Newspeak?). As a lover of words, I'm sometimes disappointed by what I see as ugly thumb-English online. I note in passing that Orwell's Newspeak "was designed not to extend but to *diminish* the range of thought" (p. 287, emphasis in original).

These I do not wish to see replicated in schools.

Regarding conventional English, I do accept the dictates of audience, purpose, changing times, and, in this case, medium. Indeed, it may be helpful for young people to become more adept at adjusting registers according to the circumstances.

On the one hand, the online world promises a connected democracy in which all voices can be heard equally—a standpoint for agency, self-efficacy and personal significance—and a platform for us, the little people. The reality for some young

people, however, more closely resembles an anarchic world, a pathogenic Typhoid Mary bearing a contagion of isolation, alienation, depression and powerlessness, thwarting our quest to be interesting; alongside a virus of righteous indignation (Orwell's hate sessions?). An image that comes to mind from reading some online chat groups, is that of dogs snarling and barking at one another through the safety of a fence. An unattractive image. Added to these are privacy concerns with regard to online activity. It seems Big Brother really *is* watching.[14]

Once upon a time the main purpose of the internet was to access "authoritative" or "official" information. Nowadays, @BoredSatdyNight or @NyuShooz gets the same online megaphone as do, say, UNESCO or NASA. Of course, both of these organisations are fallible and open to bias, as are all others, but they are likely to have undertaken more extensive and rigorous research and fact-checking than have BoredSatdyNight or NyuShooz before airing their knowledge. It is probably as unhelpful as it is ill-informed to hark back to a golden era when most information on the internet was reviewed in some way before publication. Purity, too, carries with it concerns. But the implications of the free-for-all for critical digital literacy do raise concerns.

According to Anderson and Jiang (2018), 45% of teenagers report being on their devices "almost constantly"—not something I want school to emulate. McCoy (2016) surveyed 625 students in 26 states in the US. He found that students used digital devices for off-task purposes on average 11.43 times in a school day in 2015, a slight increase from 10.93 since 2013. The students spent 20.1% of their class time—about a day a week—in off-task pursuits on devices such as their phones. Might we need to challenge this proliferation of "phony learning"? As with online child protection issues, we may have relinquished our responsibilities of eldership here.

If it's now the *global* village that is raising the child, I find that a little disquieting.

Pre-service preparation appears to be wanting with regard to the online world and school. Gudmundsdottir and Hatlevik (2018) undertook a nationwide survey of 356 newly qualified teachers in Norway, who reported low levels of satisfaction with regard to the quality and contribution of their pre-service digital education experiences, in terms of their preparation for in-service expectations. Similarly, Ranieri, Bruni, and Kupiainen (2018, p. 152) report that even recently, pre-service teachers have received "inadequate or even no training" in such areas. And we can't rely on the leadership of young people in this regard. Jones, Ramanau, Cross, and Healing (2010), for example, suggest digital natives are not necessarily able to use digital technologies in a knowledgeable or critical way.

At the time of writing, the tide seems to be turning against the use of mobile devices in schools locally. They have recently been banned in New South Wales primary schools, and are soon to be banned in all government schools in the Australian state of Victoria. For some of the reasons I outlined above, I sympathise with the thinking behind this move. But a total ban is unlikely to assist young people growing into independent, responsible mobile device users. Moreover, at the time of writing, covid-19, and associated transfer to online learning, has had a side-effect of garnering

[14] I'm all for inclusive language, but "Big Sibling" doesn't do it for me.

new respect for teachers from many parents; recent parental homework has included an investigation into the intricacies of teachers' work. While there is little scholarly literature on the topic to date, and no long-term data, Burgess and Sievertsen (2020) report that "home schooling will surely produce some inspirational moments, some angry moments, some fun moments and some frustrated moments". They continue, "it's hard to help your child learn something that you may not understand yourself". This includes subject matter, use/s of technologies and pedagogy itself. Burgess and Sievertsen make the broader point that home-based learning will unmask differences in education capital, and differentially affect progress in children's learning accordingly. Parents might like, or not like, to be reminded that teachers devote their attention to 25 or so learners at a time.

Conclusions: Where to from Here?

This is a genie-bottle-battle we will not win. Unseeing the internet is an impossibility, and undesirable in any event. Digital penetration has not sought my consent, informed or otherwise. My consent hasn't been sought. There may be enough of us, though, if we all heave[15] together, to ever so slightly sway the course of the online. This raises a question as to what counts as useful knowledge—online and in the classroom.

In Chap. 6, I referred to the kind of adults we want our young to become, and how we nourish them into that kind of preferred personhood, presuming that we have preferences concerning the kind of adults we produce. In the same way, what kind of internet citizens do we want our young people to become, and how might we apprentice them to autonomy accordingly? And how do we gain their trust and confidence in our leadership, while asking them to be instinctively untrusting? Moreover, how do we prove ourselves worthy of our freedoms? Gillett-Swan and Sergeant (2017) speak of participatory rights. To this, I would want to affirm, even foreground, participatory responsibilities. As teachers we can help children find their critical voice, critical eyes, critical ears. And to subject everything to the smell test.

The power differential between the individual and the state is widening with alarming alacrity. The Chinese Social Credit System (Orgad & Reijers, 2019) offers one example of this. This is not solely, but largely, a product of new technologies, being applied to identify aberrant behaviour and remediate it in numerous jurisdictions worldwide. Terrorists, too, have greatly abetted governments in their endeavours to restrict our freedoms here, as has Covid-19. In Australia and elsewhere we've temporarily surrendered, albeit temporarily, our rights to freedom of assembly, and of movement. There are almost certainly some good outcomes deriving from state-based powers—increased solution of crimes and the sense of security that this delivers for most of us. Lurking in the shadows of this, however, is a requirement for us to trust that the state won't use such powers for their own ends and against citizen autonomy. Scott (1999, p. 273) asserted that.

[15]Not weight-loss.

> authoritarian high-modernist development schemes replace thick, complex, quasi-autonomous social orders (and natural orders too) with thin, simplified, mechanical orders that function badly, even for the limited purposes for which they are designed. Such thin simplifications, if they survive at all, do so by virtue of their unacknowledged dependence on improvised 'order' outside the scheme.

Robbed of its exoskeleton, such a system has little structural (or any) integrity. In response, Scott (p. 276) observed that "forms of civic courage that have their origin in a calculated distrust of authority are valuable democratic resources" (p. 276). Things have deteriorated since then. The terrorists (I can't be sure—I haven't spoken with them) probably didn't have as their main aim to restrict everyone's freedoms in the ways that this has come about. Similarly, governments may not have intended to restrict our freedoms per se. But these restrictions could serve as convenient unanticipated and opportunistic consequences in each case. For these reasons, too, learners might need to be taught and shown how to develop an instinctive vigilance and provisional mistrust of authorities and their powers. Teachers with little freedom of movement will not serve as good models here. In short, are we going to trust the Government to fix this?

As I asserted at the outset the chapter, there's an interesting world out there, beyond me (please also refer to attached footnote). That world should prompt me to reflect on my behaviour, rather than on my image, metaphorical or literal. I should work with that world to become more self-aware, not more self-absorbed. To the extent that the online world connects me to the real world, it serves a highly useful, healthy, educative, enabling, connecting, liberating, even entertaining purpose. To the extent that it absorbs and preoccupies me with myself, and shrinks me into myself, it serves to be unhelpful, unhealthy, unlearnful.

At the end of the day, the online world will not be unseen and unknown again, unless or until something "superior" supersedes[16] it. The online world presents an all-you-can-eat buffet whereof we can overindulge, or consume exclusively unhealthy (or illicit) fare. As intimated above, the self-service buffet also gives voice to those whose motives are self-serving. If so, the key—as with most thigs, you'll notice I say—lies with education. The best we can hope for is to leverage online content to highlight the best of wisdom, science and humanity our human race has on offer, rather miring in human dysfunction. This includes exploring how other (young) people are using online technologies to improve the world, and wondering at how we might support, join or lead such movements, and to loose the philanthropist within; to look at and for evidence of selflessness and generosity; to apply our capacities to critically review all content, digital and other. I will write on some of these aspects in more detail in the final section.

Like so much that is discussed in this book, this internet thingy is good in the hands of a good teacher. As Pinar (2019, p. xiii) points out, despite their affordances, "devices cannot perform for us-or our students-the often intellectually and psychologically demanding labor of academic study". Critical digital literacy for students usually means evaluating authenticity, audience, purpose and the like. Critical digital

[16] Which literally means "sits on".

literacy for teachers involves evaluating the pedagogical contributions of any devices, platforms, apps and the like in use, and preparing our students to do likewise. Few, other than teachers, might be adept at doing this. While there are digital natives, I'm not sure there are any pedagogical natives. And even digital natives don't appear to be born with digital discernment and critical literacy—it must be learnt.

Hobbs and Coiro (2019, p. 401) aspire to.

> advance the digital literacy competencies of educators, create opportunities for them to reflect on their motivations for using digital media, make collaborative inquiry a substantive component of the hands-on learning experience, and create opportunities to put teacherss and learners (not machines) at the center of attention.

This chapter has made several references to Orwell's *1984*. Ball (2003) describes performativity as "a new mode of state regulation" (p. 215). Darling-Hammond (2010) calls for a reversal of the accountability gaze, with teachers and schools holding politicians and policymakers to accountability. I trust that the final section of this book will offer some hope in this regard.

This final paragraph is as relevant to the basic skills chapter as it is here. I place it here as a section conclusion; I want to draw attention to this important point before looking at hope, in the remaining two chapters. Increasingly, it appears to be emerging that the "typical terrorist" is not your downtrodden ignoramus—if ignoramus is taken to mean an illiterate know-nothing goatherd. Increasingly, it appears that terrorism is the preserve of the "educated" (I use the term cautiously) middle class. How can it be that we have invested so in education—in educating people—with such an outcome? How have we created more Pol Pots? How can it be that they throw their education back in our faces, along with, in some cases, ball bearings, nails and other nasties packed in bombs? Biesta (2009) speaks of education's "*ultimate* values" (p. ?, emphasis in original)—that is, its fundamental aims and purposes. Those of us who claim to be truly educated, that is, armed with empathic understanding, and the capacity to see contributions from others' perspectives, and consequences of our own, are charged with a heavy burden. In that sense, education is not free.

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Part III
Playing our Professional Part

This part explores ways forward to reclaim the profession for those who profess it—teachers. Chapter 11 eyes possible futures, while Chap. 12 sets out some possible courses of action to bring about preferred futures for the profession and the generation, and the planet, it serves.

Chapter 11
Conclusion: Which Future? A Note of Hope?

This chapter explores current and potential developments in education that have the potential to invigorate it, and teachers, and to revolutionise the world. It examines these current trends in terms of the futures they may create or contribute to. It touches on some of the dangers—and benefits—of an educated and informed, articulate and fired up caucus of young learners. The chapter then showcases some of the creative and innovative practices evident in education today. The chapter concludes with an exhortation for teachers to reassert their professionalism, as those who know teaching, and their students, best.

> Acclaim *vb* 1 to acknowledge publicly the excellence of
>
> 2 to salute with cheering etc.; applaud.
>
> 4 *n* an enthusiastic approval, expression of enthusiasm etc.
>
> HarperCollins (1999), p. 9

Introduction

> A journey of a thousand *li*[1] begins with one step…

Attributed to Laozi (4th Century BCE?)

> …in the right (or wrong) direction. (My impudent addition.)

As I understand it, a better translation than "with one step" of the proverb above is "under one's feet". This begs the questions, then, in which direction are our feet pointing, or, in which direction are we stepping? McNiff and Whitehead (2011, p. 22) refer to "trying to live in the direction of [our] educational values".

[1] A *li* is a distance of about 500 m, so I'm informed.

J. Buchanan, *Challenging the Deprofessionalisation of Teaching and Teachers*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-8538-8_11

In Chap. 10, I pointed out that the power gap between the individual and the state is widening. Do we risk sliding towards the fascist, communist or religious extremes we've spent much of our time and energy, and so many lives, combatting? One thing common to all three groups—fascism, communism and religious extremism—is conformity—a very limited set of prescribed ways of being. Call it compliance if you will. Or obedience. I'm not suggesting we're close to aping such extremes. But if our feet aren't firmly and demonstrably heading and treading away from such extremes of power and subservience, we may need to reconsider and recalibrate. New technologies will facilitate the extremists' work.

Returning to the quote in Chap. 1 attributed to Degas, about painting only becoming difficult once you know how, it's easy to be an armchair critic (of teaching, or of accountability measures, curriculum design, etc.). I hope to avoid flopping into a comfortable beanbag of superior self-righteousness. Naturally enough, we all tend to seek certainty—particularly if we are new to something—but that certainty shouldn't be allowed to constrain or blinker us any longer than is necessary. That is the essence of teaching, and being open to learning; a gradual removal or at least questioning of some of the things we've been certain about, the crutches, scaffolds, training wheels and flotation devices that have "held us up", perhaps in several senses of the expression. Is it possible that our chosen supports may eventually slow our progress, and/or hold us against our will?

Beyond Competence?

Chapter 2 outlined some attributes seen as desirable in twenty-first-century teachers. I'll now look a little more broadly at attributes of inspiring teachers. The Centre for British Teachers (Sammons, Kington, Lindorff-Vijayendran, & Ortega, 2014) asked a sample of practising teachers what makes for an inspiring teacher. Their responses are as follows:

- Having and transmitting enthusiasm
- Cultivating positive relationships with students
- Being flexible and adapting their practice
- Making learning purposeful and relevant for students
- Promoting a safe and stimulating classroom environment [not *too* safe, I would add?]
- Establishing clear and positive classroom management
- Being reflective about their own practice and developing collaboratively
- Bringing innovation to the classroom.

Many teachers, I believe, juggle the above eight items routinely and apparently seamlessly—the banality of teacher excellence, perhaps?. Possibly bearing this out, Devine, Fahie, and McGillicuddy (2013, p. 83) deem the following characteristics to qualify a teacher merely as "good": "passion, reflection, planning, love for children

and the social and moral dimension". Good teachers inspire unceasingly—they are great! I suspect that many parents have gazed at the kaleidoscope of teacherly qualities from within as they have set out to help their children learn at home during covid-19, and have come to appreciate that they were previously unconsciously unskilled in the complexities and demands, emotional and intellectual, of teaching and learning.

Legions of dedicated, competent teachers are, therefore, inspirational. Moreover, many of the above attributes require supportive habitat. Sammons et al.'s respondents noted that "several aspects, such as job satisfaction, external policy agendas, school ethos and support, substantially affect their ability to inspire their students and learning community" (p. 13). Some teachers, then, might be yet more inspiring, given inspirational support. Similarly, inspiration is difficult to quantify. As Ryan (2001) observes, not everything that counts is countable.

For McGuey and Moore (2016) it's (inter)personal; inspiration lies in listening, showing respect, and developing trustful relationships. Similarly, Ryan (2001) couches inspirational teachers in terms of what and who they create: powerful curriculum, powerful thinkers, enterprise, awe, wonder, spirituality, wisdom. Boyd, Hymer and Lockney (2015) set out inspirational teaching as a series of dichotomies including autonomy over compliance, and collaboration before competition. Each of these (e.g. collaboration, autonomy) has something to say to those who support the work of teachers; "inspiring teachers" has a delightful double meaning to it—teachers who are inspirational, and the process of inspiring teachers. Van der Heijden, Geldus, Beijaard, and Popeijus (2015, p. 681) couch this interaction in terms of transformation, that is, teachers acting as change agents. In summary, they nominate the following characteristics: "lifelong learning (being eager to learn and reflective), [so-called] mastery (giving guidance, being accessible, positive, committed, trustful and self-assured), entrepreneurship (being innovative and feeling responsible) and collaboration (being collegial)". Bain (2004) gathered data from 63 exemplary tertiary educators, and outlined four important things that they know (pp. 26–32): knowledge is constructed, rather than received; learners' mental models change slowly; questioning is crucial; caring is central to effective teaching. Willingham (2009) referred to the fragility of student curiosity, with attendant implications for teaching. He also emphasises some of the interpersonal, pastoral—and managerial?—aspects of teaching, among them, praising effort over ability; helping students develop a certain tolerance of their own failures; and conveying confidence in students (pp. 183–186).

Buskist, Sikorski, Buckley and Saville (2013) ponder, "If only we knew exactly what makes a master [*sic*] teacher", and proceed to provide some answers: "the teachers of the new millen[n]ium would be dynamic classroom teachers who model scholarship, seek the company of their students, and teach life's most essential lessons". They continue, "Students of this new breed of teacher would experience the unadulterated joys of learning, and our culture would flourish. The cycle would be self-perpetuating as these students become the master teachers of tomorrow" (p. 27). They then acknowledge, "with regret, we report that there is no such protocol or chemistry available that magically turns ordinary teachers into master teachers". It may be, then, that all the aforementioned accountability measures achieve little. Perhaps as teachers and external support agents, we can do little more than providing

the most favourable conditions—the plant has to do its own growing. I believe there is considerable evidence that the prevailing conditions, basic skills testing, standardisation and the like, are suboptimal for teachers and learners. What we perhaps need to ask, then, at least as much as what kinds of results we are producing, is what kinds of schools are we helping to produce?

Teachers do their above remarkable—and everyday—work in a context of increasing uncertainty; "whether we like it or not, education is caught up in the turbulence of exponential change the outcomes of which are beyond prediction", (Davies & Edwards, 2001, p. 107). They proceed to explain that school needs to provide its students with "dispositions, skills, understandings and values". Does it not stand to reason, then, that the profession, and all of us, might provision teachers with similarly, through professional development, through challenging prevailing cultures where necessary and the like? With the probable exception of understandings, Davies and Edwards' "essential provisions for students" are difficult to assess.

What might inspiring management look like?

Personal musing

Proceeding from the above, I will now pursue what kinds of schools we might want to propagate. The United Nations' (n.d.) Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) provide an interesting projection for a future world. I've occasionally asked my preservice teacher students which SDG they would nominate if they had to choose but one. I'd encourage you to consult the list, and perhaps select one of your own, before looking at the one (actually, the half-one) that I chose.

I didn't select the education goal. I chose:

Decent work (8a)

Imagine if every aspect,

of every person's work,

were decent?

Wouldn't that rectify many of our problems?

Sorry if you found the formatting above irritating. I was seeking emphasis.

Imagine if all working conditions were decent, such as informed-and-responsible use of resources, our treatment of each other, the nature and intent of my work and its outputs, and decent pay—neither obscenely high nor indecently low. It's worth considering that much of what goes wrong in this world stems from workplace errors. Think 9/11 and security lapses, for instance. Even the effects of natural disasters stem in part from our limited ability to predict, and our limited capacity to protect against them, through, for example, building codes, deficient or greedy zoning practices and the like. Work decency might eliminate some of the distractions that lead to errors. The reason I didn't include education as my chosen SDG workplace is because the goal above subsumes teachers' (and learners') work. Imagine if everything that happened in schools was decent. Much if it is, of course, but if every interaction between students, teachers, executive, parents and the community, especially those

of us charged with supporting education, were decent and supportive, our schools would be more productive and congenial. And we wouldn't need to arm our school students (or our student teachers) with the resilience for a hostile workplace, because, according to this goal, hostilities would cease. Crime, being indecent work, would also cease. You may say I'm a dreamer.

I confess that I chose a second SDG: 16 Peace, justice, strong institutions.

For me, this addresses the non-work part of the above equation. What if we treated each other decently? Both at work and not-at-work? Many of our daily interactions are with people in their workplaces. If others' workplaces (including our dealings with their personnel) were decent, their workers' willingness and capacity to help us would almost certainly improve. The development of strong institutions also addresses issues such as crime and rule of law. I do add a caveat here, however. I don't want too-strong, or unaccountable, institutions. That might entice or entrap them into indecency.

Of course, we will never agree entirely on what's "decent". I think that is what prevents this from becoming anodyne and heaven-like—I need confrontation with the intellectual roughage of ideas and viewpoints different from mine—no irritation, no pearl. In a context of the sometimes-confronting world of intercultural learning, Otten (2003, p. 15)*speaks of "cognitive irritation, emotional imbalance and a disruption of one's own cultural world view". These apply to higher order learning more broadly.*

What if there were a place in the world, where everyone, including the kids, took education more seriously than we do here in Australia; where students and others paid more respect to teachers than we do in Australia. What might that look like, in terms of everyone's attitudes and behaviour? (And what if we had to compete with *them*?) Under the ambit of "what is working", Thompson (2018, pp. 12–13) outlines a school characterised by self-efficacy, one with high expectations regarding students' learning: "all students are treated with kindness, compassion, and equity; the school climate is safe and positive, resulting in truly remarkable student success and outcomes". Thompson concedes that this may look like an "unreachable dream" (p. 13), and it may appear even more so if, in the first of Thompson's quotes above, "students" is replaced with "teachers" (or "everyone"). But what if we gave it a go and led the way? How might schools change in terms of being places where everyone wants to be? It is reasonable to assert that the teachers need to be the leaders in this. But there is little to be gained if others—students, parents, bureaucrats, the community and the media, do not follow teachers' lead and respond in kind.

Improving the Improvers

Unquestionably, we seek quality teaching and learning processes and outcomes, and the circumstances under which these can best occur. Necessities for these will include quality in terms of governance, support, modelling, leadership and example-ship—in short, quality polity. I'll make a bold claim here. I believe that part of our job as teachers is to improve the practice of bureaucrats and others employed to support

education. To teach them, as it were. Sachs' words, cited in Chap. 5, are worth repeating here. "A new approach requires that teachers collectively and individually address those in power to make it clear that a top-down approach is simply not working, not, in principle, is it likely to work" (2016, p. 414). Accountability needs to apply its own maxims to itself; to be held accountable, to be transparent, and demonstrably supportive of improvement to learning and opportunities for our school students and their teachers—in this it shares much with teaching.

Cochran-Smith et al. (2018, pp. 39 ff.) outline eight accountability dimensions, under three clusters, each proceeding from an assumption:

- Foundations of accountability: values; purpose; concepts. Underlying assumption or axiom: teacher education, and associated accountability, are neither value-free nor neutral.
- The problem of teacher education: diagnosing the problem; addressing the problem. Related assumption: problems don't exist exclusively external to stakeholders' worldviews, ideas and ideals.
- Power relationships in accountability: control; content; consequences. Associated assumption: accountability is not neutral, but political.

The above constitute a diagnostic assessment of teacher education and related accountability. Naturally enough, they apply more broadly to the teaching profession and calls for its accountability. The underlying assumptions in particular provide a useful rudder for navigating shoals of accountability. In short, teacher (education) accountability does not enter the field as an ingénu/e. Cochran-Smith et al. (p. 44) proceed to explain that.

> Every accountability policy or initiative is animated by certain conceptions and operating assumptions about the role and image of the teacher; the nature of teaching, learning and schooling; the meaning of teacher quality and teacher education quality; definitions of effectiveness and success in teaching and teacher education; what it means to learn to teach and teach someone to teach; the knowledge teachers need to teach well; and the assumed nature of relationships among teacher preparation, teacher performance, school outcomes, and larger goals.

All this, before Cochran-Smith et al. even proceed to the "problem" of teacher education, which they typify as relatively facile couplets of problem-solutions; a "culprit-saviour dilemma" (p. 50), wherein teachers are ascribed both roles. As Elmore and McLaughlin (1998) pointed out, policy reforms derive from distrust of professional judgement; the untrusted are then entrusted to implement and police the policies in schools and classrooms, as a form of "compliance, voice and power" (Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2018, p. 53). Harvey (2007, p. 207) argues that current processes of accreditation "are not benign or apolitical but represent a power struggle". He alleges a.

> taken-for-granted underlying myth of an abstract authorising power, which legitimates the accreditation activity. This myth of benign guidance is perpetuated by the powerful as a

> control on those who provide the education and represents a shift of power from educators to bureaucrats.[2]

Giroux (1985, p. 21/22) expressed it thus: "teacher work is being increasingly situated within a technical and social division of labor that reduces teachers to the dictates of experts removed from the context of the classroom". This process.

> serves to widen the political gap between those who control the schools and those who actually deal with curricula and students on a day-to-day basis…teachers are relegated to instrumental tasks that require little or no space for oppositional discourse and social practices…theories of teaching are increasingly technicized and standardized in the interest of efficiency and the management and control of discrete forms of knowledge.

Compounding this, "policy as numbers has become the reductive norm of contemporary education policy at all levels of rescaled political authority" at all geographical scales, from local to global (Lingard, 2011, p. 357). Day (2017) calls on educational leaders to practise "high levels of individual and collective trust – trust that is not blind or unconditional but based both on a combination of understandings of the complexities of [teachers'] work and the positive and negative influences that mediate this" (p. 173).

A most effective way to subjugate learners is to subjugate ("proletarianize", as Giroux (1985) puts it) their teachers. I can't say confidently whether this is a wilful strategy on the part of governments and bureaucrats or if it has merely become habit-forming because it feels good when they do it. But the effects are identical. If teachers rail against some current moves to standardise teaching and learning, they may be accused of side-stepping scrutiny. But this should not be allowed to derail the quest for quality teaching and learning, and commensurate support. It is the aims, motives and quality of the scrutiny and support that are at heart here.

The evaluation of teachers can contribute to, or detract from, the enhancement of teaching and learning. Nieto (2003) proposes that "teachers are not mere sponges, absorbing the dominant ideologies and expectations floating around in the atmosphere. They are also active agents, whose words and deeds change and mold futures, for better or worse" (p. 19). In outlining how that process of moulding might apply to teacher-learners, Cochran-Smith (2001, p. 180) explains "how prospective teachers learn to be educators as well as activists by working in the company of mentors who are also engaged in larger movements for social change", while Sachs (2003, p. 154) asserts that "an activist teaching profession is an educated and politically astute one". Similarly, Clinton and Dawson (2018, p. 312) argue that teacher evaluation can serve the purpose of "*enfranchising* the pression" (emphasis added). They describe teacher evaluation currently as "largely an exercise in compliance around performance management as opposed to a process that promotes evaluative thinking, continuous improvement and connection to student outcomes" (p. 312).

The first of the three key ingredients in the OECD report cited in Chap. 2 (2019, p. 9) is confidence to teach, the other two being innovation and enabling leadership.

[2] In the year following this publication, Harvey was suspended from his position, for public criticism of accountability measures. He subsequently resigned (Times Higher Education, n.d.).

This raises a problem and a prospect for the teacher workforce. Much of what occurs in the teacher profession at the moment, such as standardisation and accountability measures, is unlikely to nourish teacher confidence (Harvey, 2007).

On Leadership

The third of the OECD's (2019) three key factors is strong leadership. Numerous researchers have discussed the characteristics of good educational leaders, such as principals, as part of improvement processes. Balyer (2012) enumerates, among other attributes, attention to individuals, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation. These characteristics bear remarkable similarity to inspiring teachership. Principals, in turn, need support. Barber and Mourshead (2007, p. 30) report "school systems in which principals spend most of their time on tasks not directly related to improving instruction…limiting their capacity to effect real improvement in student outcomes".

Good, supportive leadership is needed at every level that shares responsibility for the delivery of education. At school level, the executive needs to stand strong in their support of all teachers, particularly beginning teachers. Beginning teachers will likely need greater support—this is difficult in those hard-to-staff schools where executive members are also more likely to be new to their roles, and may also require considerable support. Beginning teachers are more prone to errors of judgement borne of inexperience. But without such inexperience, there is no new lifeblood to the profession, and ultimately, no experience, no profession. New blood in the profession is likely to assist with the OECD's second recommendation—innovation—particularly if all teachers are encouraged to take calculated risks, and supported in their efforts to experiment.

School leaders, in turn, need a supportive milieu. Strong and courageous leadership is also needed at system and jurisdiction level, which may require audacity, as this assumes a political mantle. Finally, strong, committed leadership is requisite at political level. This might be one stresspoint in representative democracies. While I am not calling for any alternative to representative democracy (!), I ask politicians to resist the allure of populism, of scapegoating teachers for any (perceived) shortcomings of student performance, in the hope that such pronouncements will find favour with the electorate. Firstly, a more educated electorate is less likely to "fall for" such claims; to the extent that you, as politicians, have funded and supported *real* (critically literate) education, and helped us to hone this defensive weapon against you, we are truly grateful. That previous sentence is not offered at all with cynicism—leaders who have helped sow the seeds of scepticism and criticality have demonstrated true courage, as well as insight in any support and commitment that they have lent to higher order thinking in the education system. It most certainly *is* a weapon that can be used to neutralise you and any claims you make. Secondly, almost all of us can recall teachers who inspired us, and others that we exasperated, wilfully, or just because we couldn't help ourselves, as students. For many of us

voters, including—especially?—parents, our loyalty to teachers flows more richly through our veins than does our loyalty to politicians. In short, politicians' sincere commitment and loyalty (over lip service) to the teaching profession and its members is likely to produce positive results electorally. More importantly, it is likely to pay dividends educationally—in terms of *real* education, whether or not those kids in China outmath us or not.[3]

The quality of leadership might well be measured by its effects. Allen, Gringsby and Peters (2015) identified no correlation between perceptions of school climate, and student achievement. The latter, however, was measured through standardised testing. Higher order, harder-to-measure fruition may be happening in transformational schools. If student "performance" isn't improving, the leadership is, by definition, un-transformative. Other researchers (e.g. Menon, 2014) have uncovered correlations between effective leadership and student achievement. A slippery definition of good leadership might assert that it is a set of examples worth following.

Numerous studies have sought teachers' views on effective leadership, at school level and beyond, and the conditions it might incubate. Hirsch (2006) surveyed 4200 teachers in Alabama. Their respondents' priorities in choosing a school to teach in can probably be taken as proxy for the things that are most likely to attract them to teaching and retain them. In descending order, the surveyed teachers prioritised the following 11 aspects: strong, supportive leadership; class size/teaching load; salary and other compensations; commitment to shared decision-making; support through specialist, assistants and the like; curriculum and instruction approach; time for planning; support for students; like-minded colleagues; experienced staff and opportunities for professional learning. All of the above scored more highly than did school performance on tests and accountability measures, proximity to home, and the type of students in the school. Fernet, Trépanier, Austin, and Levesque-Côté (2016) sought responses from 598 teachers in Canada, and outlined some of the working conditions that can assist teachers through the early years of teaching. These include autonomy, workload, support in classroom management and a sense of community. These can overcome (beginning) teachers' emotional exhaustion and foster their loyalty to the job and its people. Walker and Slear (2011) surveyed 366 US teachers, and discerned a positive correlation between certain principal behaviours, and teacher efficacy, which, in turn, improved student achievement. Taking this a step further, it seems reasonable that the behaviour/s of those who are employed in the service of improving teaching and learning outcomes should be those likely to assist and inspire teachers.

I return here to McGrath and Van Bergen's (2017) warning of teacher extinction. At the risk of overstretching the metaphor, habitat loss is a crucial contributor to species extinction. A resulting question is, how do we manage the environment, and the climate, to help teachers, and thereby their students, to thrive? What are the optimal surroundings in which teachers can learn? Those who have the best answers to these questions are the learning professionals themselves—the teachers.

[3]The kids in China already outnumber us. Just saying.

Stop Dreaming and Get on with Your Work!

I concede that I am projecting an ambit(ious) dream here. I don't pretend that where cultures need challenging and changing in schools, that that will be an easy task. And I am not simply adding this to teachers' to-do lists. This will require shared vision and determination to optimise schools as workplaces and learnplaces, from all stakeholders—students, teachers, executives, parents and the community, teacher employment jurisdictions and politicians. And it will need the way cleared to help it happen, by, for example, providing teachers with more higher order thinking time, through a reduction in other aspects of their workload. I ask, "in whose interests is it *not* to support teachers"? If we can achieve support for teachers, without relegating students to mere compliance and acquiescence, we are likely to be world-beaters—in a race that is worth running and winning. But one hopes that the aim is nobler than mere world-beating. More importantly, we are likely to leave a legacy and example for the world in education—one worth following.

If nothing else (and there *is* much else!) the teaching profession should excel at fostering growth and fostering learning, and creating the conditions in which this can best occur. Experienced teachers can help by welcoming and nurturing their new colleagues (Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, Varadharajan, & Burke, 2018). And these experienced teachers can be supported in their efforts to do so, through recognition of such efforts through, for example, reductions in their own responsibilities. Educational jurisdictions are in a more powerful position still to create the conditions whereby learning flourishes, for the whole community of learners—teachers and students. To return to the title of this section, "stop dreaming and get on with your work", I actually see this as getting with our work while still dreaming and visioning.

In Chap. 6, I avowed that I wouldn't necessarily want to enrol my kids in the school which is best at doing basic skills tests. Similarly, I'm in no hurry to move to a country or jurisdiction that is better at doing basic skills tests. And not just because of the weather in most such places.

I recently watched a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC, 2019) documentary which took three British school students to Korea, to see how they would cope with the rigours of the Korean school system. I concede that the documentary drew on a narrow, illustrative data base, but it was nonetheless instructive. In a sense, how the British students coped or not is somewhat peripheral to the story. You can read a summary at BBC News (2016). Here are some snippets, paraphrased one of the Korean host students finished school at 4:20 pm. He then proceeded to the library, but had to wait to enter, as it was too crowded. The library closed at 10 pm, so he then returned to his school, where he studied until midnight. School started the next day at 7:50. The documentary suggested that such study patterns are widespread in Korea, but didn't offer statistics. It did offer one statistic, however: "South Korea has the highest suicide rate in the industrialised world and [suicide] is the number one cause of death for those aged 10 to 30 years old". The documentary implies, rather than stating, a causal link between pressure placed on young Koreans to achieve,

and suicide and other related social problems. Wales, the visiting students' home country, is ranked 42 places behind PISA-topping Korea. I can't be sure, but it seems unlikely that Korea's high PISA scores are solely the result of more efficient, more effective, teaching and teachers, even though I'm sure they work very diligently. In the same way that I mightn't necessarily seek the best basic-skills-performing school locally, I'm fairly confident I wouldn't want to put my kids through the Korean system, whatever its "benefits". To the extent that a PISA-base contributes to such circumstances, it, too, needs to be questioned. High performance in basic skills is to be welcomed if it is a symptom of a more substantial foundation of good, higher order learning. It is difficult to be certain that this is the case in Korea, and perhaps other jurisdictions achieving good basic skills scores.

But the Korean system does appear to illustrate a point. You can achieve "good" basic skills results through a high-pressured approach. Apart from the abovementioned apparent costs, creativity and spontaneity, critical thinking, and questioning the system may be further casualties.

If education is to improve our students' lives, I'm unconvinced that life improvement is achieved by spending all my waking hours (and some sleeping hours, according to the BBC documentary) at work or in study. There is little that would make me question the value of education. The prospect that it serves as preparation to spend all my waking hours at work might be enough to make me do so, however. But I retain hope.

Looking Forward, Back and Around

Along with many conservatives, I look to the past, and it offers me some hope and solace. Despite the glum observations in Chap. 4, the news is not entirely bleak. The world, or at least much of it, is a better one than the one I was born into—better for many women, children, people of colour (aren't we all?) including Indigenous peoples, and LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and intersex) people. The lives of people with disabilities have been improved by more advanced technologies, and more advanced attitudes—both education-born/e. Australia and other nations are gradually coming to terms with our past in our treatment of such people, including our slow awakening to the plight of people with mental illnesses. And this century to date has progressed considerably better (again, for some more than others) in terms of global geo-politics, prosperity and opportunity, than the previous one. 100 years ago at the time of writing, few women worldwide could vote, and most had to leave their (more humbly) paid work upon marriage or pregnancy, Indigenous Australians were largely ignored except by the police, sex between men was illegal almost universally, and paedophilia went largely unnoticed, except by the victims. Out-of-wedlock (a quaint-sounding term nowadays) newborns were vilified—accessories after the fact, perhaps? And 100 years ago, more misery awaited: babies born at this time might succumb to the influenza pandemic, as might their entire families, with cadavers outnumbering mourners.

STOP PRESS: covid-19 and its associated economic impacts are now casting this century in a new (or old?) light. More of this later.

Returning to last century, some children who survived influenza, by age 11 or so, would be thrust into bootless penury and homelessness, with little if any social support, courtesy of the Great Depression; surviving baby boys would be ripe, 21 years after WWI, to kill one another (and others) in another global war to dwarf the First. Oh, and toilets have improved in the past century.[4] Mine might be only the second or third generation to see the death of our child before our own as somehow an offence against nature—but I haven't lost sight of youth suicide statistics. I recall Sarah Palin's provocation to Barack Obama's supporters, "how's that hopey-changey stuff workin' out for ya"? (courtesy Fox News, 2010). I have to concede, "some days better than others", but I hasten to add, "better than anything else that is on offer". I'm grateful that, as I write, it's 2019, not 1920.[5]

Some months on from the sentence above, it's too early to anticipate the full impact of covid-19. Surely we are better placed than a century ago to face it. Advanced attitudes, and reserves of humanity, may prove vital accompaniments to advanced medicine in so doing.

Naturally, the struggles for equality and freedoms remain unwon. But there are pricks of light in the darkness. Saudi women are now permitted to drive—even though that victory has cost its proponents dearly. India—and the West—(Bollywood and Hollywood?) are questioning attitudes to women in ways probably unhoped for (or unfeared, by some) a couple of decades ago—baby steps towards our civilisation, perhaps. Sadly, acid attacks on women appear to be on the increase (Heanue, 2019), although this might be partly because of increased reporting. In the late 1800s in Australia, baby boys could expect to live for 47.2 years, while baby girls might anticipate attaining the grand age of 50.8 (ABS, 2011). Both genders can now expect[6] to live into their 80s (ABS, 2018), a figure which, if recent trends continue, may look tragically quaint in a century. At the beginning of *this* century, same-sex marriage was espoused nowhere. While its progress may seem agonised, it could also be described as remarkable in its scale in under two decades, even in some rather conservative societies. Indigenous peoples' rights are slowly being recognised.

Extending from this, there are numerous things for which I'm grateful. I've never had my courage tested by being compelled to, or refusing to, kill or die for my country, or for another's Empire. I'm too old to be of use to the armed services now (if ever I was), and a decision to forfeit my life would no longer be a courageous one, but a mere leave pass from the miseries of senescent decrepitude. I hope that no future young generation might be called upon to make such sacrifices.

I return here to a line from the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008): "how things have become the way they are" (p. 8). This leads me to ask what sort of a society, a people, has our education system contributed to producing.

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[4] Have you heard the song *Potty like it's 1899*? Me neither.

[5] See what I did there, George Orwell (1949)? If that's your real name?

[6] That is, unless they are Indigenous (AIHW, 2019).

As I asserted above, Australia has much good in and about it, and not solely because of the weather. We have real freedom—some might argue too much freedom—to air our minds (or our mindlessness). Political extremism does not appear so far to have taken root in Australia to the extent it has in some other places. This might be due in part to certain features of Australia's voting system (Reilly, 2016) such as compulsory voting, and the secret ballot, also championed in Australia. Australia is sometimes tarred as racist, but for the most part, we live as peaceably as any multicultural and multi- and no-faith country on earth. I'm not a fan of getting a parking ticket, but I'll pay the price (so to speak) for the privilege of living in a place where rule of law largely prevails. Figures for NSW show that in the two years to 2018 all crime rates were falling, or at worst, stable (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2018). We have more open space than many countries to enjoy our generally fair weather (actually, more rain in some places wouldn't go astray—just saying). Australia enjoyed—or has enjoyed—it's too early to know which verb tense is more accurate—economic prosperity for almost 30 years. And I'm happy to live in a country that prioritises health and education if numbers budgets cited in the book's final chapter are a reasonable proxy. Unemployment has remained relatively low in Australia for some time, at around five per cent. That is still one-in-twenty, equating to two or three parents of a class of about 25 students. And I can see no way of avoiding a rapid and imminent increase.

Which Future?

The present and future probably lie somewhere in between the rosy image I portrayed above, and the bleak one portrayed in Chap. 1. I grew up in the shadow of World War Two. We stared into the black soul of what "humanity" was capable of, and told ourselves "never again". More recently, however, white supremacism and other forms of fundamentalism have crept back into our "thinking" (?)—for some of us, anyway. Possibly it was always there, silently pupating (or the opposite of pupating—a butterfly retrogressing to a caterpillar?). Is it possible that the half-century or so after the Second World War was just an aberration, precipitated by the horrors of the War? Could it be that we are now simply reverting to form? I tremble for future generations when I consider the consequences of that, particularly for those who become the random targets of hate. The thought that "we" might raise and educate our boys and girls, and "they" might raise and educate theirs—and then send them out to slay one another. (How) might education rescue and redeem us?

I return to the question of the kind of person I want (my) education to produce, or at least to nurture. Among other things, I want my education to produce and sustain people who can assume the perspective of others, and who are capable of examining the effects of their behaviour on others. I'm not certain that that can prevent further holocausts, but I can think of nothing that offers better prospects for so doing. In the school yard or global playground, how might we stand with people who need

standing-with[7]? In which direction do you want to take and move our world? As I see it, the best teachers are those who can change—I love he delicious double meaning of that verb's in/transitivity.

Nussbaum (2019) ponders the following question:

> What is it about human life that makes it so hard to sustain egalitarian democratic institutions, and so easy to lapse into hierarchies of various types – or worse, projects of violent group animosity? Whatever these forces are, it is ultimately against them that true education for human development must fight.

Kemmis and Edwards-Groves (2017) claim education is to "form people so they can *live well in a world worth living in*" (p. 7, emphasis in original). So much of this world is worthy of living in, while much falls short of that ideal.

As I've asserted in previous chapters, some of the key features of good teaching may be central to the solutions here. I will deal with a few of them in turn.

Teaching is Complex

I hope this book has already established the complexity of teachers' work. In more poorly resourced communities, the input of the teacher assumes even greater significance. Schwartz, Cappella, and Aber (2019, p. 169) discuss the in/adequacy of teacher education and support in a developing world context. They observe that "families and communities in underresourced settings are less likely to be equipped to compensate for any lack in teacher ability (be it a lack of skills, knowledge or promotive attitudes)". In such cases, a teacher might be standing atop a more precipitous precipice. On the other hand, it may be that we need clearer eyes to recognise the resources that such communities bring to their learning. Such conditions might also apply to more disadvantaged communities in more developed countries. These are the schools wherein many beginning teachers may be deployed. A systems approach may be one way to negotiate the complexity of learners, schools and their communities. Darling-Hammond (2017) investigated several systems she deemed to be high performing, and found that, while several structural and contextual elements differed significantly, a feature common to all was the comprised "*systems* [Darling-Hammond's emphasis] for *teacher* and *leader development* [my emphases]…with multiple, coherent and complementary components" (p. 294).

Teaching is Complex Commitment to People—To Learners

My commitment to my employer, and to the subject/s I teach, proceeds from this prior commitment. My employers, too, should commit to supporting my students,

[7] I wanted to avoid the term "defend" as it sounded somewhat condescending.

both directly and through supporting me. The best way to support children is to support parents in the work they do. The same applies to supporting learners—through supporting their teachers.

Teaching is Complex Intellectual Work

I believe that we need to work to convince the broader public of the complexity of the work we do. Are there "pedagogical natives", those who can teach instinctively? Certainly there are those who are more, or less, positively predisposed to teaching than others. In such discussions, though, I believe that it's easy to conflate the medium and the message. Teachers are both. Of limited use (or potential danger?) is an inspiring speaker with little or no substance, or a substantial knowledge-holder with little or no ability to help learners clasp the message to their hearts and minds.

Teaching is Complex Relational Work

It is premised on, and thrives on, trust and faith. Having faith in learners, and having faith in teachers. As in Chap. 1, perhaps reflect on your favourite teacher.

Teaching is a Complicated Search for Sometimes-Uncomfortable Truths

This perhaps sounds a little dour—but we need no encouragement to cosy up to comfortable truths or to comfortable untruths. Indeed, we need encouragement encouragement to venture beyond them. We have all been confronted by new assertions conflicting with the old.

Learning is Complex

Teachers understand learning. It's what they do. They are, therefore, capable of planning and making sense of their own learning as well as almost anyone. That said, teachers' understanding of learning is imperfect, and emerging. It's an understanding that can grow and flourish given the right conditions; experts elsewhere may well make valuable contributions in this regard.

Teaching Involves Complex Discernment

Perhaps even more fundamentally, teaching is a discerning profession. Even if discernment might appear at times to be at odds with caring, an honest and forthright discernment should be care-driven. It is worth supporting teachers in their decision-making (assessment-related and other), and give them opportunities to hone their related expertise. Teachers, as much as anyone, understand the importance of assessment for learning, not just of learning. Linked to this, teaching is complex ethical work, including, but not limited to, assessment.

To recap, teaching is complex; those who teach, can.[8] As Aristotle noted "master-craftsmen [*sic*]…can teach and others (i.e., those who have not acquired an art by study but merely picked up some skill empirically) cannot" (cited in Wheelwright (1951, p. 69). Teaching surpasses knowing, and telling. Teacher professional learning increasingly needs to be done with and for teachers, rather than to, or on them (Dinham, 2013).

Shulman (1986 p. 8) asked

> How do teachers decide what to teach, how to represent it, how to question students about it and how to deal with problems of misunderstanding?…When this novice teacher confronts flawed or muddled textbook chapters or befuddled students, how does he or she employ content expertise to generate new explanations, representations or clarifications? What are the sources of analogies, metaphors, examples, demonstrations and rephrasings?

And how do teacher educators teach such things? And teach pre-service teachers to provisionally suspend belief in all such things. Moreover, much of the above arguably applies to factual knowledge; yet more complex are discussions of aesthetics, ethics and the like. In a context of increasing global complexity and volatility, education systems appear to be retreating to the security of increased control and simplicity—a spooked dog retreating from a thunderstorm under a bed.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) discern two current approaches to capitalising on education. The first is a business model, similar, perhaps, to my security guard model. It is characterised by relatively short-term investments (such as fast-tracking teacher education), rapid returns and competition over collaboration. The second, professional capital, recognises the longer-term—lifelong—returns on investments in education. Hargreaves and Fullan posit that professional capital comprises three elements, working in concert. The first is human capital, investing in the individual. This, they claim is of limited value in the absence of social capital—investment in the power of groups, and in collaboration. The third form of capital is decisional capital, investing in teachers the power, authority and confidence of autonomous, professional decision-making (pp. 2–5). Drawing on the work of Hargreaves and Goodson (1966), Day (2017, p. 10) ascribes to professional capital the following characteristics: exercise of professional judgement; engagement with moral and social purposes; collaborative cultures; teacher authority; active care; self-directed learning;

[8] Without apology to George Shaw: "He [*sic*] who can, does. He who cannot, teaches". (1903/2000, p. 230).

and acknowledgement of complexity and commensurate status and reward. These make for interesting comparison with the medical profession definition in Chap. 1.

At the outset of this chapter I wrote about conformity, and people presuming a parental role over other adults. I offer here a tentative hypothesis: It is possible that parenting other grown-ups is among our basest instincts? Might it be that we see relinquishing our parenthood over other adults as a splintery beam down which we dare not slide barefoot? Possibly the educated left and right of politics have one thing in common; we know what's best for the rest of you. For the right, it tends to manifest in rules: you can't marry another man, or another woman, or die with dignity, because I disapprove, or believe that that it's un-good for you. And if you're not prospering, that's just the natural order of things—you should be more like me. For the left, it tends to display itself in helps: if you're not prospering, it's everyone else's fault. Let me rescue you from your poverty/ignorance … (to become more like me). Both groups, I believe, might following the all-too-human script of wanting others to conform to our (imagined?) image. And both might be antithetical to the change they purportedly seek. To the extent that this is true, it offends autonomy-orientation, the capacity for adults to weigh consequences, make decisions and weigh consequences.

Primum non nocere: first, do no harm.

The above is a common paraphrase deriving from the Hippocratic Oath.[9] It makes a claim on all of us claiming to support of education and educators. Not only do current reforms often fail to fix their assigned problems, but they are also potentially harming the cause of real education, according to Ravitch (2013). A section above dealt with improving the improvers. Rancière, citing Jacotot, observes that "equality is not a given, nor is it claimed. It is practiced, it is *verified*" [Rancière's emphasis]; it can "never exist except in its verification and *at the price of being verified always and everywhere*" [my emphasis] (Citton, 2010, p. 33). I believe that "equality", above, can be seen as a proxy or pre-condition for, or outcome of, autonomy, and/or freedom—within and beyond the schoolroom. As Rancière notes, autonomy and freedom come at the cost of equality's verification (its "making-true") everywhere and everywhen. The price might be intra- or interpersonal, such as the renunciation of power, ego or surety; as Biesta (2014, p. 79) explains, emancipation refers to a surrender of ownership. A related question might be how are those educrats who support education emancipating teachers, and leading them autonomy-wise?

What might a Pedagogic Oath look like, and what means might operate to revision it?

Personal musings

It is reasonable for government, parents, all of us, to expect much of teachers, given the outcomes we entrust them to meet, "but teachers also deserve more from the systems that employ them" (Evans & Yuan, 2018, p. 24), and from the public more broadly. Evans and Yuan continue "without decent working conditions, teachers are

[9]The doctors might want to re-think their attitudes to euthanasia, the costs of their services (particularly in the light of their attitudes to euthanasia) and their 'treatment' of one another (Holroyd-Leduc & Strauss, 2018; Bala et al., 2016), but I digress.

unlikely to be motivated and deliver quality education". Schools should be places of humanity; a place for my being (in both senses of the word). This seems obvious, but it may get lost in the hurly-burly of the day-to-day. Are we becoming better, and more human/e? In short, what can those of us who are defenders of education do, in the cause of "improving our [and others'?] ability to improve" Engelbart (2003, p. 1)? And how can teachers insist that we do this? The next chapter will explore some possibilities.

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Chapter 12
Recommendations: What We Know and What We Can Do

This chapter is a call to action, and outlines some of the practical measures that teachers might undertake to reclaim their profession and its standing. It will also offer some advice to others with a stake in education.[1] In short, it sets forth outline how teachers can leverage their own skills and knowledge about teaching and learning, and apply these to the re-education of others, not just their students.

> Counterclaim *n* a claim set up in opposition to another, esp. by the defendant in a civil action against the plaintiff.
>
> HarperCollins (1999), p. 362

Preamble

> I am Teacher

I accept that the syntax above is flawed, but I trust you get the gist. Apologies, too, to Reddy and Burton (1972). At the heart of this section is commitment to education and its benefits. Chapter 4 referred to teachers being pushed and pulled around by their passions. Education gets pushed and pulled around quite a bit, too. Maybe it's time for education, and teachers, to push back some. Some of the advice will concern how the rest of us can demonstrate our membership, even honorary membership of, solidarity with, and commitment to, the teaching and learning community of practice, for the benefit of all—the common-wealth and—well-being.

Teaching and management (and parenting) hold this in common—they are about "managing" (I'm not so sure I like that term) *people*. And enabling them. And making yourself redundant in the process by helping them reach a point of responsible autonomy. If you can't manage that, it's really hard to proceed further. That will be the backdrop for some of the information on offer in this closing chapter. Curriculum

[1] Not a wooden stake in its heart, it is hoped.

J. Buchanan, *Challenging the Deprofessionalisation of Teaching and Teachers*,
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and assessment documents are often couched in terms of what learners know and can do—hence the subtitle of this chapter. All of us in the education field, including those of us outside the schoolroom, work in the service of education, and, therefore, of educators, in support of their learners. In the words of the song referenced above, (Reddy & Burton, 1972), "I know too much to go back and pretend" otherwise. In examining school system performance internationally, Barber and Mourshead (2007, p. 5) contend that.

> the experiences of these top [10] school systems suggests that three things matter most: 1) getting the right people to become teachers, 2) developing them into effective instructors and, 3) ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instruction for every child.

Sounds simple. Particularly if teaching equates to instructing. But teaching requires "constant informed and complex decision making" (Mills & Goos, 2017, p. 637). Barber and Mourshead concede that "the complexity of this task and uncertainty about outcomes is rightly reflected in the international debate about how this should be best done" (p. 5). Mockler and Groundwater-Smith (2018, p. 37) point out that "simple solutions embedded in orthodox approaches to effectiveness are less likely than ever to be useful in solving the intransigent or 'wicked'", with regard to educational complexities and problems. They warn against (p. 142) "recourse to simple solutions, elixirs and silver bullets" as proposed solutions to complex educational problems, by "those unfamiliar with the exigencies of everyday life in schools" (p. 53). As a child, I was advised by my dutiful parents to listen to the teacher. All these years later I still commend that advice.

Our Aspirations

In Chap. 2, I introduced the "Melbourne Declaration" (MECCTYA, 2008) on Educational Goals for Young Australians. It's a good place to seek counsel on who should do what in support of education. I'd like to proceed through some of (what I see as) its highlights, and allow you to bathe in its warmth. As is the case in many spas, there will be the occasional jet of cold water, to make you appreciate the warmth. I concede that I've cherry-picked from the Declaration. I accept that I'm less concerned about prosperity. That's because I have it. In my defence, though, I believe that prosperity, or at least adequate material comfort, and employability, will proceed from the elements highlighted in the document. Ignore my commentary if you wish, or just read the Declaration, and highlight your own bits. Or rewrite[2] it. Many countries have similar aspirational and heartening documents. The Melbourne Declaration is the kind of stuff we should be metaphorically nailing (e-nailing?) to our political representatives' doors, to hold them accountable—our Disputation on the Power of Indulgences?

[2]The Declaration is under revision at the time of writing.

According to the Declaration, "Australia values the central role of education in building a democratic, equitable and just society…high quality of life for all". Schools are pivotal in "promoting the intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians…healthy, productive and rewarding futures" (MCEETYA, p. 4). I'm not sure that schools should be yoked with responsibility for spiritual development, but these are an attractive set of outcomes—and further illustrate the complexity and responsibility of teachers' work. To continue.

> Australians must be able to engage with scientific concepts and principles, and approach problem-solving in new and creative ways…social interaction, cross-disciplinary thinking…a school's legacy to young people should include national values of democracy, equity and justice, and personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience and respect for others (p. 5).

We entrust teachers to facilitate the above for our young. I'm unconvinced that values are national, or can be nationalised. I'm sure that values can cross national borders—unlike some refugees.

Schooling should be "free from discrimination"; it contributes to "a socially cohesive society that respects and appreciates cultural, social and religious diversity" (p. 7). I'm tempted to replace "respects" here with "interrogates" in two senses of the word: inquire about, and ask to defend itself. "Interrogate" somewhat jars on the ears, sounding like it has terror at its heart, but it describes the process of inter-rogating—"asking among, or between". An apt way to consider and question others' cultures, and our own—as long as we all—Centre, and Periphery (see Dovchin, Pennycook, & Sultana, 2018) commit ourselves to this equally. Biesta (2010, p. 85) invokes generating "responsible responsiveness to alterity and difference".

The Declaration holds the government (and calls us?) to "Encourage parents, carers, families, the broader community and young people themselves to hold high expectations for their educational outcomes" (p. 7). It appears the village does raise the child after all. How, then, is the village supporting the child's teachers? It's difficult to know when we've met this criterion of "encouraging" successfully—higher order outcomes are slipperily elusive in assessment. Is "encourage" sufficient?

"Promote a culture of excellence in all schools, by supporting them to provide challenging, and stimulating learning experiences and opportunities…build on [students'] gifts and talents" (p. 7). I'm not sure why there's a comma after "challenging" above. For emphasis, perhaps? "Personalised learning" further underscores complexity and responsibilities for teachers in meeting their students' needs.

> Successful learners [including teachers?]…play a role in their own learning…are able to think deeply and logically, and obtain and evaluate evidence in a disciplined way…are creative, innovative and resourceful…able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas and disciplines…plan activities independently, collaborate, work in teams and communicate ideas (p. 8).

[Cold water jet alert:] The above appears inconsistent with the increasing micromanagement applied to teachers of late—and basic skills testing until year 9.

Successful learners "are able to make sense of their world" (p. 8). If they manage this, I pray that they might explain it to me in terms that I can understand. I wish them luck. As with culture, etc., above, I suggest replacing "make sense of" with "interrogate" their world.

Confident and creative individuals: "have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity…to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing…a sense of optimism about their lives and the future" (p. 9). What circumstances and contexts might be most conducive to such wellbeing, for learners and those who teach them? Also, is it realistic to (ask others to) hope in the face of gloom? I'm not saying that everything's gloomy. Just sometimes. Perhaps the take-home message here is that a removal of autonomy is likely to corrode, dissolve or undermine—pick your metaphor—teachers' and learners' sense of agency and optimism. Confident and creative individuals "are enterprising, show initiative and use their creative abilities". They "develop personal values such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others". [Another cold douche incoming:] To what extent and how do current teacher-testing regimes embody honesty, empathy and respect? Current approaches possibly build resilience. The confident and the creative, "relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships… embrace opportunities, make rational and informed decisions about their own lives and *accept responsibility for their own actions*" (p. 9, emphasis added).

Active and informed citizens: "act with moral and ethical integrity", another test for the testers, and us all. They "contribute to, and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians". As with gender, the lines between the two groups are blurry. "Reconcile" means to "make friendly again". Nice, in a world where "befriend" has assumed sinister connotations. (I'm not suggesting a suspension or abandonment of vigilance in this regard.) Such citizens are "committed to…democracy, equity and justice…are able to relate to and communicate across cultures". In sustaining and enhancing their social and natural worlds, locally and globally, such citizens "are responsible" and "*work for the common good*" (p. 9, emphasis added). I note that, as opposed to curricular outcomes, the outcomes here are not led by demonstrable verbs: "explain, identify, analyse…", in an apparent concession by the Declaration that such things are difficult to measure. That aside, if we were able to demonstrate such outcomes of school for *all* students—the Declaration doesn't appear to discriminate or cherry-pick here, as to which children should bear these fruits—that would be a superlative outcome, and a race worth winning globally—not that I wish to demote this to a competition.

According to the Declaration, "excellent teachers have the capacity to transform the lives of students and to inspire and nurture their development as learners, individuals and citizens" (p. 11).

Deserving of its own paragraph, I reckon. I'm tempted to buy a t-shirt with "Transformer" on it. Or "Influencer". I hope that you've had the fortune of at least one teacher in your life who has done some or all of the above for you. If you haven't, much of this section may seem like hollow, unattainable rhetoric.

Teachers can't achieve this alone. School leaders (how might we support *them*?): "facilitate learning…by promoting a culture of high expectations in schools…creating and sustaining the learning environment and the conditions under which quality teaching and learning takes place" (p. 11). It's the environment, stupid.[3]

The curriculum provides "a solid foundation in knowledge, understanding, skills and values on which further learning and adult life can be built". It "will support students to relate well to others and foster an understanding of Australian society, citizenship" (p. 13). The curriculum should facilitate "deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning [the term 'basic skills' does not appear in the Declaration, but 'essential skills' makes an appearance on p. 8.[4]] and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications". The curriculum (and, presumably, the teachers who convey it) will "enable students to…understand the spiritual, moral and aesthetic dimensions of life; and open up new ways of thinking". Curriculum serves to "support the development of deep knowledge within a discipline, which provides the foundation for inter-disciplinary approaches to innovation and complex problem-solving". It will also "underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise".

We are demanding much of our young, and of their pedagogues, their child-leaders. Moreover, how do you give all that a mark out of 10? According to the Declaration, "assessment will be rigorous and comprehensive…national testing" (p. 14). [The water in the spa is now getting a little cold. And it's going down a bit. We may soon discover who's naked in here.] "Targeted support can help disadvantaged young Australians to achieve better outcomes"—yes, but school and teachers cannot do this in the absence of sustained support. [Not only has the water grown cold, it's developed a dubious colour and odour about it.]

Parents will be offered information on the school's extra-curricular activities. Laudable though these have the potential to be, the subtext is that merely fulfilling the demands of curriculum (and general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities, etc.) is insufficient.

Parents will also be provided with "information about a school's enrolment profile" (p. 17) [Eww. Slime!] I'm not sure on what valid basis a parent might select or reject a school based on its "enrolment profile". I may have misinterpreted that statement's intent.

More broadly, the Declaration declares that "the community should have access to information that enables an understanding of the decisions taken by governments". [Sometimes, though, it seems that government decision-making is as murky as my spa water.] "Governments will ensure that school-based information is published responsibly, so that any public comparisons of schools will be fair…privacy will be protected". I'm not sure if, and how, governments can ensure public comparisons are

[3]With apologies to Carville (1992). Respect.

[4]For those offended by the term Basic Skills Testing, I suggest adopting the euphemism BS Testing in polite company.

fair, and how they can convince an aspirationally sceptical public, and teaching and student body, accordingly.

Well, bits of the spa experience were agreeable, at least. But even the pleasant parts of the spa experience are mere froth, bubble and hot air—faking it real?—if we do nothing to realise them. I need a shower.

Current basic skill testing regimes arguably establish a vicious circle. The more the school students seem incapable of spelling and punctuating better, the more spelling and punctuating they are obliged to do (and under test conditions—without the supports available to us in everyday work situations).

Teacher Recruitment, Supply and Demand

In 2016, Masters observed that the matriculation threshold for people entering teacher education was well below the aspirational top 30% level, and declining. This aspiration is, itself, modest. For a teacher with an ATAR matriculation score of 70, almost a third of their students are "better at school" (it's a rough measure, I'll grant) than they themselves were. Similarly, one-third of the parents they encounter outperformed such a teacher at school. More concerningly, the lowering of ATARs is presumably a sign that fewer matriculants find school teaching attractive. This establishes another vicious circle, in concert with the basic skills one—a vicious downward double helix? As Barber and Mourshed (2007, p. 25) explained.

> Once teaching became a high-status profession, more talented people became teachers, lifting the status of the profession even higher…Conversely, where the profession has a low status, it attracts less [and fewer] talented applicants, pushing the status of the profession down further, and with it, the calibre of people is it able to attract.

Barber and Mourshed refer to Finland and South Korea in this regard, which had existing "strong teaching forces"; the first "became" is arguably the slithery term in Barber and Mourshed's quote above.

The matriculation score problem may be exacerbated by universities over-enrolling teacher education students, the lower performing of whom will struggle to find jobs in the profession. Such graduates are more likely to find work in hard-to-staff schools, teaching the underserved—which seems undeserved.

Of course, no simple formula equates the best students and the best teachers, a point noted by Masters (2016). Being or becoming a good teacher is so much more than being a good at passing (basic skills) tests, the most easily quantifiable measure of student performance. Nevertheless, teachers do need to be adept at spelling, punctuation and the like in their leadership of children and dealings with parents and the community. Even though Barber and Mourshead (2007) are not averse to "hard" measures, such as interventions and examinations, they assert that "the challenge is broadly one of finding the best educators and giving them the space to debate and create a better curriculum and pedagogy" (p. 26).

A strong "gatekeep" in teacher education only computes in the context of large numbers wanting to enter. In the absence of popularity, walls, gates and other barriers are redundant and counterproductive. We will see what the draconian measures in Australia, if they are imposed in the absence of more professional attractors, produces. One outcome may be the de-diversification of the profession (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018); dual processes leading to a constriction of curriculum and candidature.

I tend towards pessimism. But this far into the final chapter, I was hoping to be in a better place than this. Were this a novel, at this stage, the hero might find himself gagged, and tied to the railway tracks, hoping that the heroine, on a horse, will arrive before the train does. I've shared too much. What might be salvageable from this point?

I occasionally set my GPS for a trip up the north coast, then drive south, just to mess with its head. I'm a man with multiple, complex needs. Ridiculous though my gesture sounds, we have arguably done something similar to and with the Melbourne Declaration. If the Declaration (Part 1) represents our educational aspirations, arguably, the system has failed to meet them, or even to head (us) in the right direction, as per the Chinese proverb cited in the previous chapter; it appears to be continuing to fail its teachers, and vicariously, its students. We may have lost sight of some of the Declaration's lofty aspirations, because we are looking in the wrong direction. I perhaps need to take a look out the window, there's a beautiful, fragrant Melbourne Declaration (well, most of it, anyway) out there. Ponder what education can achieve for those who get a real one, and the benefits for the rest of us who those young people go on to assist.

Just as subjugating or undermining teachers is bound to have similar effects on learners, so supporting learners is likely to have a flow-on effect. Barber and Mourshead (2007) set out some features of schools where effective new instructors are developed. These include extensive induction for new teachers; more than ten per cent of time dedicated to professional development; extensive peer observations and demonstration lessons; discussion of practice and diagnosis of individuals' teaching; and substantial research budgets for improving instruction (p. 41). The effectiveness and quality of such strategies is difficult to quantify. To enhance student performance, such schools employ effective, and needs-responsive means of supporting struggling students. Such jurisdictions are attractive to teachers, with a 1:10 ratio of entrants to applicants, and a top 10% entrance threshold.

Who Can Help?

I mentioned in Chap. 1 the prospect of making the teaching profession more competitive, and selective-of-candidates, by making it more attractive. What follows is some, necessarily brief, advice as possible starting points for various stakeholders for their consideration. The advice derives from some of the themes stitched into the book,

in particular: education should be autonomy-oriented; good teaching and learning proceeds from mutual trust and respect, both earned; education is complex and risky.

Advice to Governments (Read This Particularly If You're Not in Government)

I sometimes muse that somehow, national governments have inadvertently swapped their military and education budgets, and that the developing world is being flooded with Soviet-era overhead projectors, "just in case the other side is doing the same". In Australia's case, the criticism is a cheap shot, in more ways than one; Australia, to its credit, spends almost two billion dollars more on its education than on its defence, according to The Conversation (2019). That's a lot of overhead projectors. The reverse is true for the United States, however (Office of Management and Budget, 2018). It allocates approximately six billion dollars (that's $6,000,000,000, for those who like lots of noughts[5]) to education (p. 39), and more than half a trillion dollars ($600 billion, $600,000,000,000) to defence (p. 33). Russia also reportedly spends more on defence than on education (The Interpreter, 2016). According to China's China Daily[6] (2019) and China Power (2019), education considerably outspends the military in China. These expenditures might, in part, explain their respective countries' rankings. It leads me to my first piece of advice, to governments.

Stop Telling Us to Go Fund Ourselves

According toTing, Palmer and Scott (2019), the four wealthiest schools in Australia outspent, on their buildings and renovations, the (fiscally!) poorest 1800 schools combined. That means that any of those 1800 schools (between a fifth and a quarter of the 8500 overall) spent, on average, just over one five-hundredth ($^1/_{500}$—looks suitably smaller) of those four wealthiest, private schools. And, of course, some schools in the poorest quarters have much less than that average at their disposal. The report also asserts that "The richest 1% of schools spent $3 billion. The poorest 50% spent $2.6 billion combined". Chances are, those wealthy schools had fewer urgent, non-discretionary, attention-seeking repair jobs. In a US context, Ravitch (2013) refers to the privatisation of education as a "reign of error". It could be argued that these wealthy schools are largely funding themselves: much of their income derives from parents' fees. Moreover, no doubt at least a proportion of those parents pays high levels of income tax, and might contribute in other ways, by, for example, employing others. Nevertheless, it seems hard to justify or normalise such disparity.

[5]Of the world's 2-trillion-dollar expenditure on education a little more than a decade ago, according to Barber and Mourshead (2007, p. 5).

[6]This morning's morning minion?

Such schools might like to sponsor or adopt a school in a povo part of town.[7] It would demonstrate to the broader community these well-heeled schools' solidarity and commitment to the broader teaching and learning community of practice. Failing that, the government might like to supplement some of those more indigent schools' funds.

School disrepair is more expansive than building maintenance. Teachers are unsustainably time-poor and overburdened, with demands cognitive, emotional, conative and ethical. Reducing face-to-face teaching time is probably the most effective way of supporting teachers in the first instance, and renovating the profession. A formula might be devised whereby one hour of K-6 teaching entails a further hour of preparation and marking (it will often be more). A 40-h week would then equate to 20 h of teaching—presuming no other, non-teaching, or extra-curricular, responsibilities. A further reduction in face-to-face teaching hours might apply to high school, particularly in the senior years. Similarly, a further reduction in face-to-face hours might apply to teachers in their first one or two years of the job. Smaller classes, or two teachers per (only slightly larger) class might be other options, but these are likely to be more costly, as they would also require building modifications, which, as indicated above, are already problematic. Team teaching, including teachers' aides, would bear other community-of-practice fruits that emerge from collaboration and idea-sharing. Relieving teachers of work that is unessential to their pedagogy would also bear dividends. Some administrative work and recess/lunch supervision come to mind. More broadly, avoid the temptation to go after politically expedient "low-hanging fruit and quick wins" (Masters, 2016, p. 26).

The Status of Teaching

Increasingly, schools are becoming where knowledge is not just located, encountered, organised and communicated, but places where new knowledge is produced—sites of research (Sachs, 2016)—both pedagogical and content-related—places where members undertake "conversing with data" (McAteer, 2013, p. 62), whether those data refer to assessment tasks or other areas of study. Edwards (2011, p. 36) refers to "places where local expertise could be made explicit so that it might be drawn on later… spaces…inhabited by workers from different practitioner backgrounds who recognised that collaboration would help with the complex problems that they were dealing with". More broadly, Edwards commends relational and distributed expertise, and relational agency, in a way that much current micromanagement of teaching and teachers appears to douse.

Raising the status of the teaching profession, which will also enhance its attractiveness, could be achieved through offering periods of study leave, if not every seventh, then perhaps every tenth, year. Teachers would typically only become eligible at most four times in their careers. Given current attrition rates, many would become

[7] Acknowledgement to McDonald (2007) for the concept.

eligible on fewer occasions again. But such a proposal might also increase teacher retention—I say this at my peril; lower attrition will flow back to the preparation of fewer pre-service teachers, resulting in fewer teacher educators, representing a saving to government. Part of the "sabbatical transaction" might require providing feedback to your current school or more broadly, after, for example, being seconded to a position as adviser to literacy education or the like, with time built-in for research pursuits of personal/professional interest.

Increased time for peer review: this, as we explore multiple ways of not being sure. As asserted in the previous chapter, teachers have the best-fitting responses to educational dilemmas, particularly in their local contexts—informed, ideally, by the consideration of initiatives in other local contexts. Stenhouse (1985) affirmed the primacy of experience over measurement. I'm not sure I'm entirely convinced of this, but at the very least, experience should be given a voice to complement, confront and perhaps contradict measurement. Measurement—particularly measurement of what's most valuable—derives in part from experiences and subjectivities. Teachers need time to further investigate, share, articulate, apply and consider the effectiveness of such responses. Schools would assume some features of universities, leading in the generation of theory—theory-in-practice and practice-in-theory. Edwards and Stamou (2017) observe the phenomenon of "some research sticking and informing policies and practices, while other research gets washed away" (p. 265). They recommend undertakings between researchers and practitioners; "knowledge exchange" (p 265). Such exchange has several features: it is intercultural, and requires understanding of the other partner and their circumstances; it is collaborative, and it is reciprocal. Singh, Allen, and Rowan (2018, p. 217) point out that "theories become lived practices - they perform – not simply inform classroom practices".

Advice for Citizen-Kids (Read This Especially If You're Not a Kid)

The bits in brackets in these headings aren't simply a cheap, reverse-psychology trick to trap young people into reading. They'd see right through it anyway. Perhaps more importantly, if you're one of the very few school students reading this, you're probably one of the kids who doesn't need to heed the advice. So, maybe others, such as parents and teachers can encourage their kids to read it, or discuss it with them. Or if you're a kid, get your parents and others to read it. Imagine your future. Having a job is not just an evil necessity, or even a mere in/convenience. It offers a chance to do things for other people. And at the end of it, you get money, which you can use for fun things. To give credit to a now not-so-recent advertising campaign (McCann-Erickson, 1997[8]): Salary? $1000 per week. The dignity, independence

[8]See https://www.aaaa.org/timeline-event/mastercard-mccann-erickson-campaign-never-got-old-priceless/.

and contribution of a job? priceless.[9] I love the double meaning conveyed by self-determination. Are you on track for your career ambitions? If not…? All this may sound old-fashioned, but it's simply extending from part of the Melbourne Declaration, that the responsibility for education is shared by us all. You may find it interesting to do some peer review, by looking at the work of some of your contemporaries, young world-changers listed in the section "how to get there" later in this chapter. If you're in reasonably comfortable circumstances, you might also find it interesting to investigate some other peers, in developing countries, and compare their opportunities and circumstances with yours.

Advice to Citizen-Parents (Read Especially If Not a Parent)

Politicians are unlikely to listen to me, or to teachers. But, if you, as parents of schoolchildren, speak up in sufficient numbers, they will be forced to listen. Consider the type of education, real education, you want for your children's lives—for my money, the Melbourne Declaration offers some clues. Insist on that for your kids.

Support your children's teachers. You and they have your children's best interests in mind. Work with them. As Mueller (2019) quipped, "parents are having trouble finding time and energy to offer a hand in the classroom, yet many do find time to engage in unsolicited teacher condemnation". Apart from anything helping in the classroom would give insights into the complexity of the work. Some of the complexity of teaching and learning may have opened itself up to you if you have been recently assisting your children with online learning through covid.

If teaching should be autonomy-oriented, it's reasonable to assert that so should parenting be. At the end of the day, you want your kids to be responsible, self-starting adults, independent of you. That's confronting, but it's less so than the alternative. There's no space to discuss this adequately here, but you may find the following exercise of interest. Psychotherapist Morin (2017) offers 13 pieces of advice for healthy parenting. These include "snapping your kids out of" (my term, not hers): a victim mentality; self-centredness; fear of risk, or of "having a go"; flight from discomfort. For me, one element common to much of this advice is letting go, and letting your kids practise fending for themselves. If nothing else, the list might make for interesting discussion with other parents, teachers, or, depending on their age, your kids. You'll be acting in *loco magistri/magistrae* (in the place of a teacher). Also, if you'd like your children to transcend basic skills, let your school and your government know.

[9] $1000 per week doesn't buy as much dignity and independence as it used to, but I hope you get the intent.

Note to the Citizen-Standardists[10] (Read This Especially if Etc.)

As asserted at the outset of this section, good teaching is independence-oriented. Extend to the practitioners an increased say in the direction and priorities of their work. They draw on many years' experience with their practice, their communities, their students. Allowing more scope for educational research to be conducted in schools will strengthen and embolden their voice. In short, it may be worth heeding Senese's (2002, p. 51) advice, to "relinquish control to gain influence".

As noted above, peer review and observations, and the conversations they generate, are highly effective ways to build the community of practice. If handled carefully, they can strengthen the bonds of trust and mutual respect among teachers. They are also a badge to students that teachers, too, are part of a practising community of learners. I believe it would be valuable for those who have been out of the school classroom for some time, and who design standards and the like, to be seconded to schools for a period, to observe, and to have their teaching observed, to model and demonstrate the precepts they have recommended. This, I believe, could assist a rapprochement and build trust and respect between teachers and bureaucrats, and would almost certainly contribute to everyone's learning. The same could apply to teacher educators who have been out of the school classroom for some time. To be honest, the thought makes me nervous. It's been a while… It will serve as a good refresher of how complex teaching children is. Cochran-Smith et al. (2018) note that "some approaches to educational accountability diminish trust among stakeholders and/or erode a sense of shared responsibility for the quality of the work" (p. 50).

Memo to Citizen-Self: Act Educated

(I'll break my rule here and say, feel free to ignore this if you're not me—I don't wish to preach.)

I am convinced that it is education, and the educated (us!),[11] who are at the forefront of this movement or revolution—always have been. It's largely a bloodless revolution, but not necessarily without sweat or tears. An associated question for me is how do I act educated? Fullan and Scott (2014, p. 3) argue that "for the first time in history the mark of an educated person is that of a doer (a doing-thinker; a thinker-doer) – they learn to do, and do to learn", while Kohl (1983, p. 29) proposed that an intellectual inquirer "has a breadth of knowledge about the world, who views ideas in more than instrumental terms, and who harbors a spirit of inquiry that is critical and oppositional". A further way of helping me to frame what an educated

[10] I originally mistyped "standardistas" and was tempted to let it stand.

[11] Or is it "we"? Anyway.

person is, is to ask, how do I avoid acting uneducated or ignorant[12]? What kinds of behaviours, attitudes, dispositions and actions distinguish an educated wo/man, or any citizen, from an ignorant one? What kind of behaviours honour the expense that was outlaid for my education, and stand as a reasonable return on that investment?

In Chap. 1, I criticised the dismissal of critical thinking by a particular American political party. I'm guilty of the same thing. I'm guilty of much I've criticised in this book. I use my own echo-location devices to navigate and to smooth difficult issues, I have my own go-to echo chambers where we nod and tsk in approval and disgust, and my own views that I cosset and keep pure from external high stakes examination, or impurities. I'm part of the problem. So are you, probably. I hope you followed my earlier advice and didn't read this bit.

All of us should return the favour of accountability. We all need to hold governments to their rhetoric and promises. The Melbourne Declaration's two goals (MCEETYA, 2008) are that young Australians are to become "successful learners…confident and creative individuals", and "active and informed citizens" (pp. 8–9). What has your government and mine done to advance these objectives for our learners, today, this week, this year? What have I done towards those ends?

"In a country with alarming inequities of income and opportunities, reducing the social exclusion needs to be one of the principle [*sic*] objectives of the [Education] Policy." This is a tenet of the Pakistani Education Policy (Government of Pakistan, 2009, p. 12); there are few if any countries to which it doesn't apply. The Policy calls Pakistan's citizens: "to raise individuals committed to democratic and moral values, aware of fundamental human rights, open to new ideas, having a sense of personal responsibility and participation in the productive activities in the society for the common good" (p. 18). Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Government, 2009) bears some close resonances with the Melbourne Declaration goals. It sets out to enable all young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (p. iii). I mention these as two I have encountered recently.

How to Get There

Pollard (2005) outlined five possible coping responses to imposed change: compliance; incorporation; creative mediation; retreatism and resistance. Of these, he sees creative mediation as the only viable response. As part of this endeavour, Pollard draws on the work of Sachs (2003) and nominates five strategies: social capital; engagement; collective action; transformative politics and strategic positioning. To these, Pollard adds reflexivity and collective responsibility: reflexive activism. I concede that resistance is also alluring. Part of this might mean reversing the tide—reclaiming the profession and teaching others, rather than simply being taught by them.

[12] OK, uneducatedly or ignorantly.

Teachers, you/we are not alone. Now is a good opportunity to seize the day, pedagogically. Many parents have discovered the complexity of your work as they support their children's learning at home, through covid-19. Moreover, the community has come to realise this: you are frontline workers. Without you, the economy implodes, not just in future, through an un(der)educated generation, but here and now; if it wasn't already obvious, you concern yourselves with the well-being, not just the learning, of those in your care. And during covid you have exercised this care in the face of risks—whose extent and likelihood are still not entirely known—to your own, and your family's, health.

Moreover, aside from enjoying the smorgasbord of nations' educational aspirations, outlined above, I recommended in Chap. 10 familiarising young people with their peers—other young people who have made a difference to others' lives, and who have used the online world to leverage this. Among those who come to mind are environmental activist Greta Thunberg, girls' education advocate Malala Yusafzai, Ryan Hreljac, a campaigner for clean drinking water, and Daniel and William Clarke, orangutan habitat defenders. Each story, and those of many others,[13] are humblingly impressive and encouraging, in terms of the entrustment of humanity's future to this rising generation. Some websites featuring young activists can be found below. And there are many others less well known. Our education systems are contributing something right for at least some young people. I refer to other "betterment warriors" in the footnote below. Apologies to the many I've missed. And respect. And, of course, their ranks grow daily. The—dare I say it?—child soldiers below are the people we risk producing if we take The Melbourne Dec and similar documents at their word, part of the beautiful, risky business of education (Biesta, 2013a):

- Complex. 20 young activists who are changing the world. https://www.complex.com/life/young-activists-who-are-changing-the-world/
- Institute for Educational Advancement. Child Activists: Ten stories about inspirational kids. https://educationaladvancement.org/child-activists-ten-stories-inspirational-kids/
- Global Citizen. These badass youth activists are changing the world. https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/7-badass-youth-activists-you-didnt-know-are-changi/
- Unicef Australia. Five child activists you need to know. https://www.unicef.org.au/blog/stories/june-2019/five-child-activists
- Greenpeace 5 young activists who inspired us this year. https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/20165/5-young-activists-who-inspired-us-this-year/
- CNBC. 7 female activists who are changing the world. https://www.cnbc.com/2018/03/08/these-7-young-female-leaders-are-changing-the-world.html.

[13]Tia Brennen (bicycle recycler and donor), Macinley Butson (inventor), Connor Macleod (tactile banknotes), Vincent Pettinicchio (homelessness activist), Campbell Remess (bear-maker for hospitalised children) and Jack Berne (supporting farmers through drought) come to mind as Australian examples. From what I can tell, most if not all are from quite comfortable homes—all the more impressive, then, that they see into others' lives so.

Rounding up Some Themes from This Book and Their Significance:

The untidiness of teaching and learning (Chap. 1): Defining learning is not straightforward. Moving new stuff into our consciousness, and working out where to put it, can be a complex, time-consuming and emotionally and cognitively draining and aesthetically challenging process. Sometimes the new "mental furniture" doesn't match the old, creating new dilemmas as to what to rearrange or modify, what to keep and what to discard; the new furniture might make the old look shabby. We're likely to resent or feel threatened by someone coming in and moving, or recommending we move, the mental furniture, but as teachers, that's what we do to learners.

Our quest for patterns, resolution and simplicity (Chap. 1): this can lead us into error or blindness. Our quest for tidiness and control can lead to a right/wrong, yes/no world; a black and white existence that does no justice to grey matter, ambiguity and risk. The big responsibility that education and educators (and all of us in the village, helping to raise the child-learner) are tasked with, is to pave the way for us to pursue mind-altering truths and possibilities.

The redundancy-orientation of teaching. Teachers, strive to make your students autonomous, and yourselves redundant. Extending from this, governments (and all of us) could invest heavily in the "first ten per cent" (of life)—the first eight or nine years. Launch every child from birth into reading and basic numeracy. But this is merely a means to one or more ends. The purpose is to provide children early on with these tools to decode the symbols around them, as a first, or parallel, step towards critically understanding them, to help them "become better at negotiating the messy, fuzzy, dilemma-ridden context of real-world life and work with positive impact" (Fullan & Scott, 2014, p. 4). This applies to teacher-learning also. The professional development and status of teachers is a means rather than an end point in itself. It's the quality of teaching and learning that is at stake here.

Many of these matters offend our instincts: relinquishing control over our circumstances, or over others, is scary; uncertainty is scary; autonomy (Derrida's (2014) emancipation) is scary. This might explain why so much effort is concentrated into countering such things.

In Chap. 2, I made some comparisons between teaching and rocket science, unflattering the latter. I want to state here that teaching is *not* rocket science. I actually believe teaching is more complex, but that's not the main point I wish to make here. Rocket science, if my rudimentary understanding is correct, depends on split-second precision, prediction and programming that *you just cannot inject into teaching*. Rocket science appears to be more predictable than teaching. In some ways, I've left lesson one to this last chapter. It's an understanding of this that might unclog our education system, and free and enable its teachers and learners more latitude. Teaching can be like finding yourself in the middle of a modern artwork. You're not always sure which way is up, or out, and not everything makes sense. You can't diminish teaching to a formulaic recipe, or an artform where the same colours and lines work every time—or even twice. It's just not that straightforward. A reference to

the medical profession was also made in Chap. 1. Medical research is at times upheld as the gold standard for professions everywhere. Similarly, though, learning appears to be less predictable, generalizable and linear than in many medical circumstances. Of course, at the experimental edge, medical outcomes are more unpredictable, as covid-19 is demonstrating. Teaching, it strikes me, however, is unremittingly and implacably experimental.

Teaching, and teachers, have many of the keys, and can lead the way. The things I try to apply in my teaching include trust, respect, high expectations, scaffolding, patience and persistence, personalisation, (sometimes unpopular) autonomy- and decision-making-orientation, enabling, challenging, discernment (assessment), understanding of the other perspective, ego-interrogation, recognition of what others bring to the table, courage to be unpopular, lateral thinking—finding other ways to explain, pointing out the point or the relevance, showing my working…

Cochran-Smith et al. (2018) refer to promising practices in teacher education, and illustrate these with exemplar initiatives worldwide. Features common to most of them include democratisation, through practices such as local decision-making and autonomy, and a determination for equity and social justice. One particularly potent feature to my mind is self-advocacy. This reverberates with Freirean (1970) ideals, as we help young people become authors of their own liberation, their own responsibility, their own personhood, their own autonomous adulthood and equality-with-us.

Perhaps the most notable recommendation of Cochran-Smith et al.'s (2018) is the retention of teacher education in-house. Chapter one in this book devoted considerable space to dissecting a definition of medicine as a profession. The quality of teaching has been outsourced from the profession in a way that we would never dare to do in medicine. And the cure is a course of education.

Quality teaching rounds (Gore & Bowe, 2015) present another promising practice. In quality teaching rounds, groups of four-to-eight teachers support one another in communities of practice, through discussing readings chosen by members; observing one another's teaching, and coding the observations according to a framework devised for the purpose (p. 78). Such rounds "focus on detailed description and analysis of practice; take account of local contexts; and use collaborative processes to build a collective vision of a way forward" (p. 77).

On How We Do Things Around Here

It is in democratic governments' interests to culture a docile, complacent electorate, which might quell our "thinking in dark times" (Arendt, 2010). Biesta (2009, p. 43) calls on us to "reconnect with the question of *purpose* in education" (my emphasis). As citizen-teachers, citizen-learners, we need vigilance in terms of how governments may seek to infantilise or disempower us. Basic skills for teachers and students may be one way in which they are doing this, whether wilfully or not.

To some extent, education involves both forming and norming, and even the "forming" will be in part, in our own image as elders. Education fails if it fails to introduce and expose, particularly, marginalised, learners to mainstream ways of thinking, saying, being and doing. It also fails if it merely subjugates learners to such ways, or tries to eliminate or cleanse existing minority cultural traits, or fails to introduce "the rest of us" to such Other ways. Kemmis, Edward-Groves, Lloyd, Grootenboer, Hardy, and Wilkinson (2017, p. 45) speak of being "'stirred in' to practices". They use it in terms of blending in, but I love its double meaning, of being stirred in to action. So it is with teachers. There is, by necessity, an apprenticeship into norms of doing and being, but this shouldn't be at the expense of forming teachers—citizen-teachers who are ready to question, where necessary to destabilise and reform the system, and to raise up their citizen-learners to do likewise.

The "three Rs[14]" of education (reading,'riting and'rithmetic), indispensable though they are, are pathways to (and proceed from) grander things. Fullan and Scott (2014, pp. 6–7) outline the six Cs of deep learning: character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking. To these, or as subsets of "character", and/or "citizenship", I would add compassion, caring, courage and commitment. I would also throw consequence into the mix—teaching and learning that are of consequence, and that make us mindful of consequences—and a willingness to confront. To enhance the experience, Fullan and Scott also take a couple of Es: Ethical Entrepreneurialism. Fullan and Scott contend, "it is no exaggeration to say that the new pedagogies have the potential to support a fundamental transformation in human evolution" (p. 3). Giroux (1985, p. 20) observed that schools are being undermined in their capacity to "prepare students to think critically and creatively" and armed with the skills to "make informed and effective choices about the worlds of work, politics, culture, personal relationships, and the economy", while Biesta (2013b) calls for "transcendence, where teaching brings something radically new to the student" (p. 449). Naturally, not everything in a school day will be radical, but at the moment, basic skills testing and compliance, appear to be a metaphorical pillow, to put us to sleep—temporarily or permanently—I'm unsure which. Before I get too excited,[15] I need to ask how we achieve these things for children in remote or impoverished communities, for girls in circumstances where girl-education invites murder, for children with disabilities or weighty burdens…

But if we fail to act on this, as teachers and as bystanders, I believe we may be doing nothing less than dispossessing our young of their birthright: an education that will give them the wherewithal to confront, perchance to remediate, the problems of this socially and environmentally fractured world. The outcome of strictured accountability is most likely, "not to build an understanding of the complexity and nuance of teaching practice or to celebrate the diversity of teachers and learners, but rather to standardise practice, stifle debate and promise the fallacious notion of 'professional objectivity'" (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009, p. 8). Such an

[14]Two of which are misspelt. I'm tempted to call them the 4 Rs, just to give maths equal opportunity here.

[15]I would willingly go out and set fire to something at this stage, but for the carbon consequences.

approach is largely counter-educational; it offends some of the basics of education, such as failing to devolve autonomy to the (teacher-)learner.

I believe I can be best rescued from my (culturally imposed, comfy) shallow- and narrow-mindedness by people different from me. People who see, feel, love and hate the world differently from me. People who hope, fear and worship differently from me. If I allow them, they will make me reconsider. They will reposition me to deconstruct, to dismantle—or reinforce—my assumptions about how the world works, or should work, and I theirs. At the very least, they can help me find a place where I am brought face to face with my assumptions, perhaps to challenge them, as we rub minds together to watch and make sense of the sparks that result. Their views aren't always palatable to me, nor mine to them. But my digestion and consideration of them provides me with good, healthy intellectual (not as uncomplimentary as it sounds) roughage. Healthy for my education, my leading-out, a rescuing from my smaller, pettier, narrower, more craven self.

Returning to the title and a theme of this chapter, about knowing and being able to do, Fullan and Scott (p. 4) explain.

> at times like this, it is no good to simply know or be able to do a lot, rather it requires the ability to listen, diagnose and figure out what is really going on and determine, in collaboration with other key players, how the situation might best be handled, and then, with their help, to apply the right mix of knowledge and skills to make this happen.

Sound advice for learners, teachers and managers, that.

Teachers, students, parents, managers—all of us—are called into the service of this risky, scary and volatile social experiment, education, an experiment that appears to be paying dividends to date. Arendt (1958) referred to human plurality, which, if I understand her correctly, is twofold, encapsulating both our collectivism-in-action, and our diversity. Each aspect is crucial to our self- and mutual-cultivation, and to our concerted efforts in holding those responsible, accountable for advancing, not retarding, education. The quest justifies associated frictions, and stands to enrich the rewards for education's end users—all of us; "only the educated are free" (attributed to slave-born Epictetus).

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