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Critical Readings in Teacher Education

Provoking Absences

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INTRODUCTION

Lines of Articulation and Lines of Flight in Teacher Education

This book emerged from our unease with “what is” in teacher education and our hope for what it might become. We have taken as our starting point the premise that teacher education, like other fields of study, defines itself both by what it includes and by what it excludes. In setting limits, this process of self-definition, as Foucault (1972) describes it, repulses a whole teratology of learning, and excludes and removes from view a whole range of possibilities. Once excluded and removed, these absent possibilities are not straightforwardly available for assessment, criticism and analysis (Code, 1991). Teacher educators have spent a great deal of time seeking the flaws in existing structures and practices in teacher education and attempting to eradicate them—we have spent a lot less time, however, learning to perceive what is not there to be perceived. If teacher education is to have a different future, we will need to ask difficult questions: What is it in teacher education that has been repulsed? What is not there to be perceived, and how might we begin to perceive it in its absence? Posing these questions, we believe, can assist in interrupting the perennial discourses of teacher education that, too often, confine us to familiar terrains of policy and practice, and recycled litanies of concerns that engulf us in waves of disillusionment, alienation and anxiety. As Hannah Arendt cautions: “the chances that tomorrow will be like yesterday are always overwhelming” (Arendt, 1993, p. 170). We acknowledge the “truth” of Arendt’s caution but, like her, we are optimistic that the “infinitely improbable” (p. 170) can occur, and that teacher education might be more.

THE TEXT OF TEACHER [EDUCATION]

On the first day back at school for many Canadian children, Sarah Dougherty of Montreal’s The Gazette reported the following story of Melanie Bertrand, a beginning teacher:

Thrown into a tough secondary school during her teacher training, Melanie Bertrand started questioning her career choice. “There were fights, the cops were constantly there—it was mind-boggling,” Bertrand said. “The kids, they didn’t want to be there.” Bertrand had a starkly different experience at another school, which convinced her to stay the course. “You don’t have to discipline these kids, they actually ask for more work,” she said of her stint at
the tiny, private Lower Canada College in N.D.G [Notre Dame de Grace]. Bertrand is weighing job offers in both the public and private sectors as she gets set to start her teaching career this fall. Since the early 1990s, Quebec universities with teacher-training programs have added courses in classroom management and beefed up in-class training. Despite this, some experienced teachers say their young colleagues need still more training in dealing with the growing number of disruptive and special needs students...Bertrand wishes she had even more training in classroom management. “We were never taught to deal with the students, the unruly and unmanageable ones,” she says. (Dougherty, 2006, L8)

To teach in “tough” schools where kids don’t want to be and where police intervention is an everyday reality affords particular types of sense-making to those with a desire to be professional. Erica McWilliam (p. 35) portrays the now-familiar figure of the risk-conscious teacher—“manager of unruly bodies”—who, being “properly professional”, must be alert to “potential dangers” and attend to “the systematic work of minimizing the possibility of trouble”. She describes how, “awash with data” about children (Hattie, 2005) and “proliferating categories of students” and “the large army of classroom support personnel with claims to specialist knowledge”, teachers’ disciplinary-specific or craft knowledge is “made over” as professional expertise in diagnosis, classification and treatment decisions. While many believe that the psychologizing of pedagogy is in the best interest of the learner as a social and psychological subject, others are wary of the change in the “attentional economy” of teachers (McWilliam, p. 38). The forensic teacher must be “trained” in the scrutiny of her students and, as Dougherty (2006) would have it, “in-class training” must be “beefed up” to produce a teacher with “a positive, flexible, adaptable disposition toward the changing challenges (read: behavioural and intellectual disorders) of school life” (McWilliam, p. 41). In an era of risk consciousness, policy makers’ seemingly preferred subject-positioning for teachers becomes one of coldly rational calculation aimed at averting trouble.

Sarah Dougherty’s report in The Gazette is endemic of a “process” reality wherein larger questions of “what” and “why” are usurped by “how”. The beginning teacher wonders “how” she will cope with the monstrous “other”. The journalist challenges teacher educators on “how” the university program “trained” Bertrand to cope. In an instant, and under the influence of modern psychology, pedagogy is posed as “a science of teaching in general” (Arendt, 1993, p. 182). A teacher, so it seems, is someone who can teach anything once she knows “how to”—in this case—manage a classroom.

As the conversation staged by the journalist focuses almost exclusively on a beginning teacher’s coping mechanisms, the private sphere encroaches on what might have been an opportunity for public dialogue about education, leaving only individuals with their respective personal and institutional accounts and eclipsing any other possibility introduced by the beginning teacher’s story. There is no deliberation about educational ends, no consideration of authority in teaching, no apparent concern for the manner in which schools shape and are shaped by social inequities, no allusion to the larger responsibility of the teacher and teacher
educators towards the life and development of children and for the continuance of the world. Instead, there is only an enchantment with “small things”, where a logic of means/how persists (Arendt, 1993).

We are mindful, however, of Cochran-Smith’s (2000) commentary that media coverage of teacher education is often “broad-brushed and simplistic”, and “anti-intellectual and ungrounded”, intended to provoke rather than to illuminate. Once the first day back in school has ended, so-called “debates” about inadequately prepared teachers and delinquent hoards of public school children typically subside into insignificance (pp. 21–22), and we recognize there is a danger in reading too much into this news story.

And yet, witness the beginning teacher, Melanie Bertrand, at the entrance of the profession, immediately caught within familiar discursive zones: Does teacher education have a vested interest in the propagation and selective dissemination of particular discourses? Is it possible to “do” teacher education differently while remaining within familiar and comfortable discursive zones? Has the continual recycling of these discourses coalesced assumptions about pre-service teachers, teacher educators, and the practices of teaching and teacher education into unyielding and limiting “regimes of truth”?

We have conceptualised this book as an endeavour to expand the theoretical horizons of teacher education and the concerns that teacher educators, researchers and policy-makers have traditionally taken up. The term *provoking absences* is open to a multiplicity of meanings, and we use it here primarily to trouble what has been deliberately excluded or silenced, to invoke what may have been previously overlooked or unrecognized, and to engage with possibilities not yet found. We anticipated that the authors whom we invited to contribute to this collection—given their histories of provocative theorizing about teacher education and the contexts of teaching—would interpret their brief variously, and we have not been disappointed. The chapters that follow challenge our familiar ways of thinking about teacher education and offer rich possibilities for reading and enacting it otherwise.

**READING THE TEXT(S) OF TEACHER EDUCATION RHIZOMATICALLY**

Teacher education is a “text” that encodes meaning and requires interpretation. Like all texts, teacher education is already inscribed in culture and discourse; it has multiple authors, predominant metaphors, assumptions and practices (Morris, 1998). The chapters in this collection are multi-layered and their complexity invites multiple and varied readings. The authors offer surveys of contemporary realities in teacher education; they disrupt dominant discourses, interrogate the taken-for-granted, create spaces for alternative discourses and subject-positionings, and use theory to evoke new possibilities and rich imaginaries.

Our purpose as editors is not to read or interpret the authors’ work in a conventional way, but to ask “what it does, how it connects with other things” (Groz, 1994, p. 117, cited in Alvermann, 2000, p. 116). In this case, we ask what the chapters that follow mean in relation to each other, and how we can move
around in and between these chapters in ways that may enable us to reconsider taken-for-granted understandings of teacher education. We have found Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) concept of rhizome helpful in considering these questions.

Typically (but not necessarily) an organic structure, a rhizome is defined by its interconnectedness: “any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7). Literally and figuratively, a rhizome provides a stark contrast to tree-like structures such as the archetypal “tree of Western thought that supports a binary logic and symbolizes linear and ordered systems of thinking” (Alvermann, 2000, p. 116). Tree-like structures are held in place by a root system that “plots a point, fixes an order” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 4). A rhizome, in contrast, has no firm positioning and no beginning, culmination or ending, but is characterized by intersecting and interconnecting lines. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) distinguish between “lines of articulation or segmentarity” that segment, codify and solidify, and “lines of flight” that deterritorialize and destratify (p. 4). When there is a rupture in the rhizome, lines of articulation shatter into lines of flight that take us into new territories. The lines of flight, however, remain part of the rhizome as they “always tie back to one another” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 10). When a rhizome is “broken, shattered at a given spot”, it will inevitably “start up again on one of its own lines, or on new lines”. To illustrate, Deleuze and Guattari refer to the rhizomatic nature of a colony of ants, noting that “you can never get rid of ants because they form an animal rhizome that can rebound time and time again after most of it has been destroyed” (p. 10). While we hesitate (even metaphorically!), to link teacher education to colonies of ants, it could nevertheless be argued that both prompt disquietingly similar connotations of industriousness and dogged determination to resume temporarily disrupted patterns and projects.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987, pp. 13–14) go on to explain that because rhizomes are “open and connectable” and “susceptible to constant modification”, they always have “multiple entry ways”. The following chapters, individually and collectively, offer multiple entry-points for challenging traditional thinking and theorizing about teacher education, and destabilize what is too often considered as known, settled and beyond doubt. They rupture and splinter into fragments well-worn lines of articulation and segmentation, disrupting and fracturing familiar trajectories and erupting into lines of flight that can open up new spaces for exploration of what has been previously excluded, removed, or otherwise absent. In doing so, the authors engage in “mapping” (Deleuze, 1995/1990). We use the term mapping to mean working from sets of interacting lines that invoke and evoke different configurations of ideas and understandings from those that appear ingrained in conventional thinking and theorizing about teacher education, many of which are often considered uncontestable. We are especially interested in working with fragments of possibilities thrown up by the lines of flight. Our interest lies not in codifying these fragments on conventional “axes of significance and subjectification” in teacher education (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 15), but in exploring their interconnections and potential for creating “very different regimes” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 23) within teacher education. Because lines of flight
are so interconnected, we are wary of dichotomizing. We are not arguing that what has gone before in teacher education is necessarily “bad”, nor that what the authors in this collection are proposing is “good”; rather, we argue for expanding our repertoires for theorizing and for practicing.

In the remainder of this introductory chapter, we read alongside and “across” the contributing authors to join with them in identifying intersecting lines of flight towards new critical and ethical possibilities. As we do so, we look for opportunities to overlay our mapping onto more conventional and bounded readings, or “tracings” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) of teacher education. As Alvermann (2000) explains, it is “by inspecting the breaks and ruptures that become visible” (p. 117) when a map or tracing is laid on the other that we can come to recognize what has previously been absent.

Like the contributors to this collection, we focus especially on spaces where potentially promising possibilities for destabilizing the discourses and cadences of teacher education appear to be emerging. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) refer to such spaces as “smooth spaces”. They contrast smooth spaces to “striated spaces” which, like chess boards, are “coded, defined, bounded, and limited” (St Pierre, 2000, p. 263). Striated spaces are evident in shifts to standardization and audited accountabilities, and in the ubiquitous, predictable and seemingly pre-scripted debates characterizing many educational contexts. Although “smooth spaces are not in themselves liberatory” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 551), the dynamic interaction between smooth and striated places gives cause for optimism. Deleuze and Guattari describe how “smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space” (p. 524). It is this constant oscillation that leaves open the possibility of provoking what is currently absent. How to make use of these oscillations to maximize their possibilities for changing current trajectories of teacher education is a question implicitly addressed by authors in this collection.

By reading back and forth between chapters, we do not seek closure; instead, we attempt to link ideas that at first glance might seem tangential. Following Alvermann (2000), we work “at the surface” of what these chapters offer to connect sometimes disparate ideas, to weave together incidents, refrains, echoes and citations. These “disconnections, overlappings, variations” (Barthes, 2000, p. 288) emerge as a network of ideas and possibilities that unsettle many of the cultural claims, knowledges and classifications that have come to characterize teacher education.

LINES OF ARTICULATION, LINES OF FLIGHT: PRACTICE, AUTHORITY, QUALITY

Even a partial mapping of the multiple and complex discursive contexts of teacher education surveyed by our contributors highlights their collective portrayal of teacher educators (and educators more broadly) as caught between the past and present, the old and new, suspended, as it were, in an “agitated passage” (Carroll, 1984, p. 75) between attraction and repulsion, between the familiar and the strange.
Teachers educators and teachers are cast in the “difficult position of being simultaneously heir […] to a particular history” (Levinson, 2001, p. 14) and hostage to it and, at the same time, courted and denounced by yet other, newer discourses that are also determined to constitute them as particular kinds of teaching subjects. Delueze and Guattari (1987) would argue that the rupturing of discourses that favour “striated”, orderly spaces can generate fragments and lines of flight that are rich in potential for positive change. Here, we outline three striated spaces—practice, authority, and quality—that constitute lines of articulation that segment, codify and solidify the field of teacher education and, as such, preoccupy the authors in this volume. They urge us to locate and use their fault-lines, fractures, and crevices to create smooth spaces for speaking into existence alternative discourses and subject-positionings.

**Spaces of Practice**

Historically, practice has often been seen as “merely an expression of embarrassment at the deplorable but soon overcome condition of incomplete theory” (Buhner, 1981, p. 204). As such, there has been a strong tendency to dis-embed knowledge from the immediacy and idiosyncrasy of particular teaching situations and from the experience and character of teachers (Dunne & Pendlebury, 2002):

> Through this disembedding it is supposed that what is essential in the knowledge and skill can be encapsulated in explicit, generalizable formulae, procedures, or rules. The latter then are to be applied to the various situations and circumstances that arise in the practice so as to meet the problems that they present. These problems are supposed to have nothing in them that has not been anticipated in the analysis that yielded the general formulae, and hence to be soluble by a straightforward application of the latter, without need for insight or discernment in the actual situation itself. (Dunne & Pendlebury, 2002, p. 197)

In this “practitioner-proof” view (Dunne & Pendlebury, 2002, p. 197), useful knowledge is defined in terms of that which researchers have unearthed and which practitioners can subsequently apply to practice. Teacher education is therefore premised on the understanding that the sources of teacher excellence are in certain knowledge systems that have been sedimented from the research literature (Phelan, 2005).

In the last decade, there have been several efforts to overturn the emphasis on abstract generalization and to return to the realm of the practical in teacher education (Phelan, 2005). Many sought to prepare teachers who could dwell within the rough ground of experience, appreciate its complexity and deep interpretability, and respond ethically (see Hoban, 2005). However, such efforts may also lead to an undue privileging of narrative as practices of “identity” and “experience” in teacher education. The conflation of narrative and authorial intention, the belief that experience makes meaning (or rather, “meaning setting off the alarm of experience” as noted in this volume by Britzman and Gilbert, p. 202), combined
with little consciousness of how “interested” language is, characterize the prevalent use of narrative in teacher education. “The more we utilize narratives, the less we know about how this meta-narrative, as a feature of modernity, forecloses the work of thinking about our thinking” (Britzman & Gilbert, p. 202). Other writers in this volume, however, highlight the potential of narrative to sharpen insights into the powerful effects of the interplay of dominant discourses, normative structures, and conventional positionings in the production and perpetuation of conformist subjectivities. Dennis Sumara, Brent Davis and Tammy Iftody challenge us to read the “small stories” of individual experience against “grander cultural narratives” (p. 171) and to look for opportunities to use the former to disrupt the latter. Bronwyn Davies highlights the “revolutionary potential” (p. 174) of narratives of rebellion to achieve a similar end.

Practice has also been conflated with reductionist forms of “school practice”. Consider the opening line of a recently released study of university-based education schools in the United States:

The nation’s teacher education programs are inadequately preparing their graduates to meet the realities of today’s standard-based, accountability-driven classrooms, in which the primary measure of success is student achievement. (Levine, 2006, p. 1)

The report provides “an examination of the successes and failures of university-based teacher education programs” and offers “criteria for excellence” on which to judge “the quality of programs and changing teacher-education policy”. Levine (2006), a former president of Teachers’ College, Columbia University, concludes with five recommendations, which include transforming schools of education “from ivory towers into professional schools focused on school practice”, a focus on “student achievement as the primary measure of the success of teacher education programs”, and the establishment of “effective mechanisms for teacher education quality control” (pp. 9–10).

Instrumentalist views of teaching of the kind espoused by Levine are the provocation for Jennifer Gore and Robert Parkes’ chapter about the “privileged place” of classroom management discourses in teacher education (p. 45). These discussions continue to be constrained by modernist and binary views of “power as possession” held either by the teacher or put in the hands of the students (Gore & Parkes, p. 47). The lack of critical engagement with or interrogation of classroom management discourses in the teacher education literature, they argue, enables these discourses to operate as a “regime of truth” that constructs “the good teacher” as a “classroom manager”. The effect is to produce a situation in which teachers and student teachers “are likely to desire classroom order over the construction of an intellectually engaging learning environment” (Gore & Parkes, p. 45).

An emphasis on performance and classroom management, in conjunction with the absence of critical interrogation of the discourses underpinning them, “has strengthened the mythic, but experientially real, gap between ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ in the preparation of teachers—a phantasmatic gap that has still to be bridged”, according to Green and Reid (p. 24).
What is it about pedagogy, as both a concept and a practice, that can explain its marginal status in relation to educational studies and educational research, as well as teacher education? Further: How might pedagogy be re-defined and re-assigned a significant value within that practice? (p. 24)

Understood as a hybrid concept, Green and Reid argue pedagogy brings together elements of “art” and “science”, “theory” and “practice”, as such it refers specifically to the situated social practice of teaching and learning wherein “teaching” is viewed not so much “the cause of ‘learning’ but rather as its context” (p. 25). They gesture toward a poststructuralist epistemology of practice—one that emphasizes the interplay of power and meaning, discourse and subjectivity, and language and the body.

In a similar vein, Stone imagines how educational studies, and particularly philosophy of education, might cultivate in teachers “a welcoming openness”. Such “openness”, she writes, “brings forth questions to which there are no easy answers” (p. 74). She critiques the current approach of philosophical “isms” which tends to promote the pursuit of a certain system or credo as the basis of beliefs about practice, arguing that neither philosophy nor philosophy of education can provide essential and perennial authority as a basis for practice.

Spaces of Authority

Tied closely to the project of mass schooling, teacher education developed as part of the production of the nation-state. In their chapter, Brennan and Zipin remind us that the nationalism at stake in that project refers to a culture of belonging and as a synonym for belief, ethnicity, and religion (e.g., Ireland/Catholicism/Whiteness), rather than nationalism as a civilization of culture. The latter relies on democratic and humanist ideas of civilization, society and community, which are all dependent on our ability to imagine the other—the one who is not close—while the former expels the other to the margins.

In Europe, the legitimacy of nation-centered authority in teacher education has been maintained despite the Bologna Process—an attempt to integrate higher education within a pan-European structure across member countries of the European Union. In a recent policy statement, it was maintained that:

Teacher education is a major element of the graduate labour market, affected by the new Bachelors’ and Masters’ degrees. Teacher education must remain a matter of policy determination at national level, reflecting the diversity of national cultures. (Bergen Policy Statement, 2005)

Addressing the application of a Bologna Process in Australia, Singh and Han question, in this volume, the notion of “categorical purity”, what is meant by “national cultures”, and what it means to be an English or Australian teacher or, for that matter, a “teacher” for British Columbia or Quebec in Canada. They assert that reconsidering teacher education in terms of cultural globalization may make it possible to move the framing of knowledge away from a nation-centered focus to engage the means and methods involved in the local/global circulation of education.
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cultures, practices, and artifacts. They document how the arrival of World English students in teacher education in Australia underscored just how much teacher education embodies a particular educational culture. Students hailing from South East Asia found that the progressive student-centered pedagogies espoused by faculty were not necessarily evident in the teacher education program and that their own experience of test-driven, text-based pedagogy was largely ignored. Moreover, any deep engagement with equity issues was absent, with faculty resorting to either individualistic views of equity or suggesting that the foreign students should have stayed in their own countries. The opportunity to move towards a broader framework within which to educate teachers about alternative approaches to teaching, learning, schooling, and education, was lost.

Challenging “categorical purity” is easier said than done. Teacher education is caught in a “devil’s bargain”, as Brennan and Zipin argue in their chapter, in which it must sustain its public legitimacy as a field and retain government funding. The difficulty was evident of late when the press for “practical-vocational” competencies (as against school and society courses) emerged in Australia:

A recent federal Minister for Education publicly accused education faculties of degenerating into ‘quasi sociology department’ (Maiden & McKenna, Aug. 11, 2005) while lamenting teacher education’s failures to produce teachers able to redress the ‘literacy and numeracy crisis’ that holds Australia back ‘in global economic terms’. Such subjection of social justice claims (signified by ‘quasi sociology’) to a politics of derision (Ball, 2006) finds a rousing chorus among tabloid and radio media commentators. Teacher educators’ commitments to work on behalf of social justice claims are thus clouded by senses of risk to career. (Brennan & Zipin, p. 106)

Teacher educators, largely Caucasian former teachers in national systems, are often caught in the middle. Many hold an understanding of teaching as a state profession associated with service and social justice values. In the current atmosphere however, such commitments transform into mildly progressive investments in multiple intelligences and individual learning styles and, to a far lesser degree, radical social justice faith in schooling. Moreover, meritocratic assumptions about “schooling” and deficit views of the “illiteracies” of less advantaged students prevail. In turn, concerns about student teachers who cannot write or communicate adequately in English pervade introductory courses in teacher education. The situation is particularly problematic for indigenous people, where “widespread co-option of ‘cultural’ claims into ‘economic standards of self-justification”’ (Brennan & Zipin, p. 101) makes support for cultural claims such as the struggle for recognition of historical languages and identities both more impossible and more necessary—put short, it amounts to a new kind of assimilationism.
Spaces of Quality

The resounding discourse of quality in contemporary teacher education may be another attempt at a type of “categorical purity” (Singhe & Han, p. 120), and yet another reflection of the “historical technologies of nation, nationality and nationalism” (Mayer, Luke & Luke, p. 79):

Teacher education programs are bound by local employing authorities’ and state bureaucracies’ bids to control and monitor field placements as well as the content of curriculum courses and to ensure that all courses—subject matter preparation included—are aligned with their licensing and accreditation standards…. In many North American, Asian and European sites, teacher education is increasingly becoming a training in how to deploy a particular local educational jurisdiction’s curriculum and how to comply with its particular assessment grids and accountability systems. (p. 79)

“Standards” imply a romantic nostalgia for a time when teachers were competent and children received quality education. Yet as travelers who return to a previously visited place can attest, memories can be like phantoms, and false memories of excellence, rigor, and high standards can be so convincing that they replace reality (Phelan, 1997). Meanwhile, policy-makers quickly conclude that teachers are key because they are directly responsible for students’ learning: “Quality teaching means quality education for all students” (Alberta Education, 1995, p. 2). This kind of logic leads directly to a push for standardization of teaching in the form of skills, knowledge, and attributes—an escape from teacher judgement, if you will, and the beginning of a “narrow” professionalism (Phelan, 1997).

And so, the pilgrimage begins towards the shrine of teacher competencies and emphasis on accountability via testing and outcomes-based curricula. Standards, linked to employability, are used in determining accreditation and assessment of university programs, further emphasizing to faculty and students that the School of Education’s “core business” is “work preparation”.

In their chapter, Mayer, Luke, and Luke link the standardization of teaching with the emergence of “the generic teacher, branded as a corporate entity and defined in terms of generic competences, skills, interchangeable parts in a global education system with uniform practices including testing, mandated textbooks, scripted teaching, school-based management, marketisation and economic management issues” (p. 81). Identifying two contradictory push/pull factors, they argue that teacher education is being reshaped in the context of economic and cultural globalization. On one hand, teacher education must operate at a local level, wherein the teacher’s expertise is not taken as transportable across space and bordered educational jurisdictions, and standards are thus articulated and justified locally. On the other hand, standards operate to produce a generic teacher, “a more objective, standardized and quantifiable commodity which can be understood, judged and even transported/exported across national boundaries, bypassing the local knowledge of states, schools and universities” (p. 88). Ironically perhaps, the generic teacher is the construction of a global, transnational teacher by default, “without a strong normative view of what teaching can and should entail in relation
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to globalization” (p. 89). As such, standard-based reforms tend to sidestep questions about the construction and regulation of teachers’ work and teacher education in the context of cultural and economic globalization. In a critical response to this default position, the authors draw on a philosophy of cosmopolitanism to articulate “the making of a ‘world teacher’ who can teach in and about the complex dynamic socio-demographic and industrial conditions, knowledge and technological relations” (p. 89).

There is a glimpse of a “world teacher” as Mitchell, Weber and Yoshido invite us to consider student teachers as youth workers. Their case-studies from Rwanda, South Africa and Canada reframe teaching and teacher education as a broadly conceived ethical and social endeavour. Refusing to cast “quality” as “standard” or to embrace impoverished mainstream views of teacher education, they confront teacher education with a different mandate: activism in a socially unjust world. Drawing on discourses of youth participation, community mobilisation, human rights activism, new alliances, participatory research and social change, they illuminate fragments of possibilities and potential lines of flight that challenge us to consider how teacher education might situate itself and to rethink what it might become.

Practice, Authority, Quality: Striated spaces marked out by “poses, postures, silhouettes, steps and voices” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 353). Each space designed to delineate and reinforce the territorial boundaries of teacher education, creating a critical distance between what it is and what it is not. Striated spaces can also rupture into lines of flight, connections and linkages that extend beyond what we have traditionally thought of as constituting concerns of the profession. Every rhizome contains not only lines of segmentarity (according to which it is stratified and territorialized), but also “lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 10). What then, of rupture?

RUPTURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At the heart of these chapters are the ethical positionings available to us in the dominant and emerging discourses of teacher education. Too often it seems teacher education is codified in narrow and impoverished terms of securing predetermined outcomes. The effect, as Brennan and Zipin forcefully argue, is that teacher education operates as a form of “cultural imperialism by baptizing generations of return (and often grudgingly as part of the “devil’s bargain” referred to by Brennan & Zippin previously), teacher education is accorded at least some legitimacy and public funding. Consequently, questions concerning ethical responsibilities must include: What ethical principles are we drawing upon in negotiating that “devil’s bargain”? What responsibilities do we have to ensure that teacher education is more than a “culturally normative” project (Brennan & Zipin, p. 102), and how can we go about meeting those responsibilities? Has “cultural resistance”, or “the problem of not wanting to know” (Britzman & Gilbert, p. 208), led us as teacher educators to sometimes lose sight of our ethical responsibilities? In what
circumstances? In our enthusiasm for the seductive language of reflection and narrative, for example, have we forgotten our ethical responsibility to “pay attention to how we word the world” (Davies, p. 173) and the impact of the discourses that we have taken up?

One of the effects of discourses, as Gore and Parkes (p. 51) argue, is that they can “deflect responsibility”. Singh and Han illustrate how deflection can play out in practice. Some teacher educators in their study appeared content with a “superficial reading of “equity”, which they used as an excuse to avoid “deep engagement with different education cultures and what this meant for their teaching” (Singh & Han, p. 129).

Conversely, Pitt asks us to consider whether we are being diverted from important social justice considerations by a tendency to worry unduly about relatively minor or displaced paternalist concerns. She refers to teacher educators’ anxiety about their “pedagogical authority” (p. 187) and their propensity to recoil from their capacity to influence. She contends that, although well-meaning, an “anxiety of influence” can translate into a reluctance to introduce students to the kinds of challenging ideas conducive to creativity and deep intellectual engagement. Pitt leaves us with a discomforting question: Are we exercising or refusing to exercise our authority and influence in ethically responsible ways?

An overwhelming refrain throughout the chapters in this collection is the importance of not recoiling from asking uncomfortable questions. Britzman and Gilbert, for example, refer to queer theory as legitimization of gayness, thus enabling the “reversal of what counts as a problem” (p. 204). Their chapter throws up many unsettling questions: What other reversals of problems should we be working towards? And how can we draw on other theories to deepen and complicate narratives? What different positionings might different narratives make possible? What new configurations could emerge and will these be more ethically just? What will have been said about teacher education in the early 21st century? Will it have been different from what has gone before, or enslaved to its past?

If we are committed to teacher education escaping the bonds of its past, then “there remains much soul searching and hard work to be done” (Brennan & Zipin p. 110). We will need to acknowledge that we are entangled in an ethical aporia, or unresolved perplexity (Derrida, 2001); in other words, that we are inevitably caught between unconditional ethical impulse and an unavoidably conditional adaptation of this impulse. The challenges we face are at once “more ‘impossible” and the need to address them “more necessary” (Brennan & Zipin, p. 100). If we are to rupture what some might see as an unwarranted complacency about ethical matters pervading teacher education, then “we must work up the courage, intellectual resources and ethical imagination to address what postcolonial teacher education might look like, and to ‘possibilize’ this ‘impossibility’ in institutional practice” (Brennan & Zipin, p. 112).

If teacher education is to be more than what it currently is, more than social engineering, more than mastery and colonization, more than “the impulse to invent—through its technologies of correction—the needy student, the dangerous individual, the attention deficit, the ignorant parent, the docile body, the
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dysfunctional gender, and all the other tragic roles that spring forth from the moral panic that stages education” (Britzman, 1998, p. 58), and indeed, more than The Gazette’s troubling newspaper story of Melanie Bertrand that began this introduction—then teacher educators will need the imagination and courage to challenge and transgress the present limits of what is considered acceptable.

We will need to find new openings for different conversations and new theoretical frames and resources for making sense of these conversations. We will also need to engage in continual “questioning” (Stone, p. 74) of the logic of the normalizing structures, spaces, hierarchies, discourses, categorizations, power relations, and regimes of truth that characterize, shape and constrain teacher education. And to paraphrase Singh and Han, we will need to go beyond resistance, beyond ignoring silently, beyond pretending to ourselves that we are only marginally affected, beyond convincing ourselves that we can “carry on un-implicated” (p. 133), beyond remaining content with the merest of ethical toeholds. Ultimately, “we are responsible … for our revolts” (Pitt, p. 199).

Neo-liberal structures and discourses leave little space for revolts or for alternative framings of teacher education, and they undoubtedly complicate struggles for recognition of the legitimacy of alternative framings. But they cannot extinguish hope that teacher education can become a “new thing in an old world” (Arendt, 1993, p. 193)—a space for the creation and recreation of “islands of freedom” (Villa, 1993, p. 200) wherein we imagine, think, speak and act alongside one another, wondering aloud: “What if?” Nor can they prevent moments of rebellion that generate fragments of possibilities and potential lines of flight “to new knowledge, new insights, new modes of being” (Davies, 2004, p. 1).

IN CLOSING

Could teacher education be more? Could it be “a new thing in an old world?” How might the new come about? Progress and doom are two sides of the same medal, Arendt told us, but what does this mean for teacher education? Is it foolhardy to have the audacity to hope that we can avoid turning the next generation of teachers into “the living dead?” (Euginedes, 2002, p. 345; in Pitt, p. 187).

The contributors to this book have identified many potential starting points for opening up new trajectories and new lines of flight for teacher education. In their exploration of “multiple absences in teacher education at the level of textual, personal, collective, generic and disciplinary knowledge” (Singh & Han, p. 118), they have alerted us to fragments of possibilities that offer potential escape-routes from the tired recycling of the same old concerns. As a text of teacher education, the chapters collectively immerse us in different theoretical standpoints. They require us to approach them with a posture of aliveness and attentiveness to new language, to newly glimpsed openings and fractures, and to new configurations and relations. In recasting theory as evocative object (Bollas, 1992, p. 83) rather than tool to apply, they offer the means by which one can radically alter one’s way of imagining reality. Above all, they alert us to the value of reading different theoretical perspectives against each other, rather than settling “for a single
all-encompassing account, one ‘theoretical’ explanation of what is really happening” (McLeod & Yates, 2006, p. 88) in teacher education, and how it might happen otherwise. The “smooth space” to which these authors gesture possesses “a greater power of deterritorialization than the striated” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/1980, p. 480) and remind us that

…and smooth spaces are not in themselves liberatory. But the struggle is changed or displaced in them, and life reconstitutes its stakes, confronts new obstacles, invents new paces, switches adversaries. Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/1980, p. 500)

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INTRODUCTION


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1. METHOD(S) IN OUR MADNESS?

Poststructuralism, Pedagogy and Teacher Education

INTRODUCTION

“Poststructuralism” is clearly no longer novel in the work of educational researchers and teacher educators, nor in curriculum inquiry and praxis. Nonetheless, its incorporation into educational discourse has been uneven, complex and sometimes contradictory, and its institutionalisation can be viewed as all too often erratic, unsatisfactory and perhaps somewhat of a domesticating move. It has also, arguably, entered more into the “content” side of (teacher-)educational discourse than into the “process” (or “methods”) side. In English teaching and language and literacy education, for instance, this is manifested in sometimes quite radical reconceptualisations of reading and writing, and of texts and textual practice. It does not register so much in the (“practical”) realm of teaching and learning as such, whether in terms of classroom practice or of teacher education. Yet it can be argued that teaching and learning—what we are naming here as pedagogy—is the organising frame for reading and writing (or “literacy”). It is important, therefore, to give more explicit attention within poststructuralism to matters of pedagogy per se. In this way, notions such as programming, classroom organisation and student management can usefully be rethought in poststructuralist terms. Within this, we argue, the pedagogy of small-group work—a productive though always/already ambivalent technology of curriculum and schooling (Reid et al., 2002)—would benefit significantly from such a poststructuralist re-assessment.

In this chapter we explore the implications and challenges of poststructuralism for reconstituting pedagogy as discourse and as practice, taking particular account of small-group forms of collaboration, interaction and (“distributed”) learning in school and classroom culture. Our argument is that poststructuralism, as a distinct field of theoretical and philosophical inquiry, represents an extremely useful resource for teacher education. Our concern here is to begin to reconsider in particular the discourse(s) and practice(s) of what has traditionally been described as “methods” courses in pre-service teacher education, although there are clear implications also for in-service and professional development work oriented towards improved classroom practice. In this way, our concern is with professional practice more generally. Conventionally and all too often, “methods” courses are seen as more or less instrumental(ist), and as necessarily requiring so-called “practical” experience, demonstration and expertise. We argue that major...
reconceptualisation is urgently required in seeking to re-claim practice as pedagogy. Our specific concern here is with thinking with, through and beyond poststructuralist theory and philosophy as a crucial resource for “rethinking the educational subject” (Peters, 1998, p. 22) and hence, for re-inventing the project of teacher education.

ON POSTSTRUCTURALISM

What is meant in this context by the term “poststructuralism”? An increasing number of introductory and other accounts are now available in the specific context of education studies (e.g., Cherryholmes, 1988; Davies & Gannon, 2005; Lather, 1991; Pinar & Reynolds, 1992; Peters, 1998). As well, there are more and more accounts coming onto the market of the often linked term “postmodernism” (e.g., Parker, 1997; Usher & Edwards, 1994), although confusion and controversy still reign about how these two terms relate and about their relative importance and priority. We see poststructuralism as a specific body of theory and philosophy largely associated with Europe (particularly France) since the 1960s and 1970s. It has both informed and substantively contributed to what has been described as the “postmodern” turn, and to the emergence of “the postmodern” as a key term of reference with regard to momentous cultural-ideological and political-economic shifts in developed (post-)industrial societies and the new world order more generally. There is, however, a caution to be exercised here: More than simply a body of knowledge, poststructuralism must be understood in terms of a distinctive mindset and as difficult to define or describe in any exact sense. As well as a specific body of knowledge, then, it refers to a way of viewing the world including knowledge. “Poststructuralism”, accordingly, must be grasped as “an umbrella term of convenience” (Pinar & Reynolds, 1992, p. 3). Moreover:

At the outset it is important to acknowledge the volume and complexity of the work associated with the term. Furthermore, any effort to ‘explain’ poststructuralism distorts it, for it is clear that it is a mode of cognition more than a set of propositions that can be listed in linear, logical fashion. (Pinar & Reynolds, 1992, p. 7; our emphasis)

Peters (1998) similarly sees the singular term (“poststructuralism”) as problematic in that it “does not take account of the…multiple formations of thought, multiple sources of inspiration, multiple differences and lines of influence between [poststructuralist] thinkers,” and hence, “the multiple uses and meanings of the term as they have been applied to [and by] different thinkers” (p. 2). That said, we want to enter into this paradox, nonetheless, with a view to making a case for poststructuralism as a significant resource for the theory and practice of teacher education.

For the moment, we want to start by identifying two figures who represent for us the distinctive discourse of poststructuralism: Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Foucault and Derrida are widely-acknowledged as key figures in this regard, although in practice (in education at least) more emphasis and attention is
given to Foucault for reasons that perhaps warrant some reflection. With regard to Foucault and Derrida, Weedon’s (1987) relatively early account still remains a useful starting point. As she indicates, poststructuralism can be understood as “a theory of social meaning and power” (Weedon, 1987, p. 27). The relationship between meaning and power, understood firmly within a historical-metaphysical framework, lies at the very heart of the poststructuralist project. Conventionally, Derrida (1976) is more usually associated with the concept and problematics of “meaning”, while Foucault (1997) is associated more with a renewed sense of the nature and significance of “power” as a category for social analysis and understanding. Yet in an important essay, Derrida (1978a) has written expressly of the relationship between “force” and “signification” in a way that suggests that such easy compartmentalisation is neither inevitable nor particularly helpful. Although it is not the case that power and meaning can be mapped neatly onto force and signification, there is still an important sense in which the work of these two major theorists might usefully be read as offering similar but different perspectives on a common set of issues and problems.

The now familiar “power-knowledge” couplet has been Foucault’s distinctive contribution to the lexicon of social and educational analysis. Within a revised account of power that emphasises its productivity and its relational character—as against what he calls “the repressive hypothesis”—Foucault has argued that knowledge production proceeds as immanent to power relations and as emphatically social and historical in nature (Foucault, 1982). This has been especially important and generative when it has been articulated, however awkwardly, with neo- and post-Marxist accounts of power and economy.

But what is missing in the Foucaultian perspective is a sense of the complex interweaving and intricacy of psyche and the social world, or the “inner” and “outer” dimensions of social subjectivity and social practice. Any notion of interiority is rigorously denied in such work, and that would therefore include matters of affect and emotionality and indeed, of desire and investment. A means to complement and extend the programmatic rationality of such investigations, then, is to properly acknowledge and theorise (ir)rationality, or the operations of the unconscious in social life, textual practice and intellectual-academic activity. We have found that a better, more comprehensive and complete formulation here is “power-knowledge-desire”, and it is this that informs the arguments and remarks that follow (cf. Henriques et al., 1998). However, rather than following through the implications of psychoanalytic formulations of desire and the unconscious, we want to take another route here with regards to notions of embodiment, the “unspoken” and symbolic power (Butler, 1997).

Both Foucault and Derrida can be understood as contributing decisively to the distinctive project that is characteristically identified with poststructuralism. Each is in a sense complementary of the other’s strengths and weaknesses vis-a-vis educational practice and politics, understood as a matter of the complex intrication of meaning and power. Important supplements to their work are to be found in the feminist engagement with poststructuralism, particularly the contributions of Judith Butler and Bronwyn Davies. These are rather different scholars but they share a
common and abiding interest in matters of power and meaning. Butler’s (1997) work on discourse and subjectivity, and on what Youdell (2006) summarises as “discursive agency and performative politics”, is a crucial reference point here. Of particular value is her interest in psychoanalysis and the unconscious. For Butler (1997), the poststructuralist concept of subjectivity brings together both “subjection”—being subject(ed) to—and “subjectivation”—becoming a subject, or being formed as such. Davies (1996, 2003, 2006) similarly develops a strong account of the relationship between discourse and subjectivity, but extends her analysis to take explicit account of language and the body as material-semiotic phenomena. Her work, moreover, offers a generative way of engaging empirically with such concerns, specifically in the context of education.

For our purposes here, we want to focus for the moment on the notion of subjectivity. “Subjectivity” is perhaps the key concept in poststructuralism, the single most provocative and productive concept, and one which throws the current-traditional program of teacher education into the most profound crisis and challenges it the most profoundly. This is because acknowledging and accepting that the human subject is constituted in and through social practice, constructed and reconstructed over time and place, and not a prototypical, pre-existing, self-possessing plenitude, changes the way in which pedagogic agency is to be conceived. It means understanding the formation of the teacher as moving into and taking up a distinctive subject-position, or rather, an array of subject-positionings, a professional identity-in-motion. Moreover, this is something that is produced in and through specific discursive practices and arrangements. Becoming and being a teacher in such a view is to be understood as an institutionalised but still always precarious and temporary “fixing” of the interplay between professional identity and social subjectivity.

Similarly, absolutely crucial to a poststructuralist understanding of curriculum and pedagogy, in schools and in teacher education alike, are the concepts of subjectivity and discourse, and the relationship between them. In particular, subjectivity is to be conceptualised within such frameworks and perspectives as formed within discursive practice, and as constructed in and through discourse. Rather than subjects producing (or “authoring”) discourse, as in the usual humanist understanding, they are themselves positioned and produced as subjects in and by discourse. The value of this concept of subjectivity here is that it must be understood as emphatically social right from the outset, and as bringing together and effectively transcending the limitations of the “individual-society” dualism. In doing this, it cuts across the disciplinary division of labour between “psychology” and “sociology” as organising contexts for educational theory and practice. In Donald’s (1985) terms, it brings together the concepts of “subjection” and “subjectification”, and hence the senses of “being formed as subjects” and of “being subjected to”, and allows for due consideration to be made of power (Davies, 2006).

Teacher education can therefore be understood, as with schooling, as quintessentially “a practice producing subjects”. It is crucially concerned with the initial and continuing formation of “teaching subjects”, or of teachers as
knowledgeable and capable educational agents. Subjectivity is to be understood as a dynamic ensemble of qualities and attributes performed in making up the human agent at any particular time, and drawing in more conventionally humanist notions such as character, personality and “self”, and social identity more generally. We understand teacher education, therefore, as a process through which (new) teacher-subjects are supported to begin to perform themselves differently in the discourses of education and care. This involves bringing together and holding in a contradictory and unfinished synthesis, or “settlement”, particular knowledges, concepts and understandings; particular skills and capacities; and particular attitudes, values and dispositions. Woven together, these enable a convincing performance of teaching. Teacher education constitutes the provision of—and taking up of—a purpose-built ensemble; in short, of “knowing what”, “knowing how” and “knowing why” within a distinct professional-industrial framework of (self-) understanding and social practice.

In this relationship, discourse is understood as an organised ensemble of social relations and social practices which, worked together, project particular forms of subjectivity as more or less powerful or successful. Crucial to this notion is the importance of language, signification and the Symbolic Order. In terms of teacher education, current discourses of “quality teaching” and “effective classroom management” provide particular forms of language, meaning and symbolic power that constitute what it means to be a teacher in this place, at this time. Although discourse is certainly not to be simply identified with language, a close and arguably necessary relationship exists between language and discourse, both as concepts and as forms of practice.

Derrida (1978b) links both of these terms in his early account of structure and what he calls “the structurality of structure”, now regarded as a classic assertion of poststructuralist theory and philosophy. As he indicates, a radical crisis of representation follows upon what he describes as awareness of a “rupture” in the history of structure, meaning and metaphysics, whereby for the first time “the structurality of structure [began] to be thought, that is to say, repeated” (Derrida, 1978b, p. 280), and recognised as such. If structure is “structured”, then it is in its very nature susceptible of being structured in some other, alternate way. The very condition of classical structuralist thinking, its reference back (and forward for that matter) to a single organising, authorising centre, became itself problematised and destabilised.

One of the consequences of this rupture is that the absolute link between science and representation was henceforth broken and dispersed forever, at least as an article of faith and a guide to action. This in turn meant that truth, meaning and knowledge become caught up inescapably in the play of the world—it became ‘worldly’, and therefore impure. Among other things, a result of Derrida’s philosophy is that science (including “educational science”) becomes recognisable and intelligible as a social institution, and as a social practice caught up in the (re)production of shifting networks and formations of power, knowledge and desire. This means that in teacher education, as in other “sciences”, we are challenged to consider the implications of this ineradicable introduction of notions
of undecidability, complexity, multiplicity and “chaos” into our concepts and practices of teaching and teacher education.

Countering, but also complementing, such a view is Foucault’s insistence on limits, constraints and scarcity. Foucault argues that a social system is never totally open to “free-play”; there are always limits, and that these are to a significant extent historical and institutional in nature. This is particularly the case with education, and with schools and classrooms as worldly, chaotic and often unpredictable phenomena. How is “chaos” to be managed? What ordering principles are available to allow us to fix—however provisionally or temporarily—the flux of meanings in teaching? What disciplines the play of the world? The important point here is there is a constitutive tension to be observed in such processes and dynamics. They are always already situated and constituted in discourse.

Finally, acknowledging these concepts of subjectivity and the body allows us to engage with issues of desire and corporeality, in terms of accounting for conscious and unconscious thought, along with both practiced and automatic bodily actions. In this way, we can acknowledge the crucial contribution to such a framework of feminist poststructuralist work (Davies & Gannon, 2005; Martusewicz, 1992). Here, Foucault and Derrida are articulated not simply with psychoanalytic work but also—and perhaps more importantly—with feminisms more generally, especially those which engage explicitly with issues of force and signification, texts and bodies, knowledge and identity. It is clear that a fully-realised theory and practice of teacher education must engage with and account for the complexity of these issues.

We suggest that such a poststructuralist view of the world is a more appropriate and useful resource for teacher education than the “pseudo-science” of what might be called “unreconstructed modernism” (Doll, 1993), which assumes that there is a single ultimate and authoritative truth about teaching. It enables us to live and work productively with uncertainty, unpredictability, “risk”, contingency and the inescapable (dis)order of things in a postmodern world. It hence provides a basis for reconceptualising teacher education and, more generally, for an educational praxis without guarantees.

To summarise the field of possibilities in the poststructuralist framework for teacher education developed to this point: firstly, we have presented a set of pairs of what we see as key concepts, although it is important that these are not seen in binary terms; secondly, however, we have also presented these concepts somewhat differently, reading across them as it were, to form a quite different, though obviously related, set. This may be represented in the (ironic) form of a table, thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. A Conceptual Field</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language</td>
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</table>
Understanding a practice-discipline such as teacher education within the terms of reference outlined here means drawing on notions of “meaning”, “discourse” and “language”, as represented here in the vertical left hand column. There is a risk, however, that conceptualising teacher education in these terms alone will be seen as overly “linguistic” or “semiotic”; as simply a matter of “speech-acts” and textual practice, or writing and reading, about the approved and “successful” practices of teaching. This column needs therefore to be explicitly supplemented by the right hand column; that is, by a field comprising notions of “power”, “subjectivity” and “the body”. This column could, of course, stand on its own as an organising framework for teacher education, and indeed does so in work such as that of Gore (1998) and others drawing more formally and systematically on Foucault. However, our view is that such work is itself better supplemented by the left hand side of the chart here. In this way, keeping in mind the tensions and complementarities between these understandings of meaning and power, between discourse and subjectivity, and between language and the body, a poststructuralist account of teacher education requires us to attend to all of these in their rich and complex interrelationships. The work of Derrida and Foucault, Butler and Davies, and of poststructuralism more generally, is brought together in what amounts, in effect, to a supplementary synthesis.

ON PEDAGOGY

How does this account of poststructuralism help in teacher education, then? What does poststructuralism offer in regard to teaching prospective and practising teachers and in learning how to teach and how to become a teacher? Our concern here, as we have already indicated, is not so much subject matter—that is, the manner in which poststructuralist perspectives in specific subject-areas such as history, science or English (among others) impact on what is to be taught and learnt (“what to teach”). Rather, we are interested in “method”—the form of teaching, and the manner in which teaching occurs: “How to teach”, in short. That no easy or straightforward distinction is either possible or desirable between understanding what to teach and how to teach does not lessen the value of asking such questions, provided that they are seen as related in important ways. In this case, indeed, there is an important sense in which pedagogy embraces both such questions, which implies in turn the priority of pedagogy over curriculum (usually understood as referring to “school knowledge” most commonly realised in the form of school-subjects). In this section, then, we initiate a more systematic inquiry into the concept of pedagogy itself, as at once absolutely central to teacher education (and the educational enterprise more generally), and yet still under-valued and, as Lusted (1986) put it over two decades ago, “desperately under-theorised” (p. 3). That this remains the case, even now, is confirmed in Hamilton’s (1999) more recent account of what he calls “the pedagogical paradox”.

Simon (1985) argues that the British education tradition (arguably still extremely influential in Australia) lacks what he calls a carefully theorised pedagogy—a “science of teaching”. He claims that this never developed in British
teacher education systems, and that, in contrast to other Western countries, the concept of pedagogy is “alien” to educational thinking there. He argues that this is because of the characteristically social class-dependent history of schooling and teacher education in Britain—a point reiterated by Levine (1992, p. 197). Teacher education developed rather differently in the US, where the science of teaching “methods” flourished, as did educational science more generally. In both contexts, though, eugenics-based, psychologistic notions of intelligence and learning—rather than research into the social practice of teaching—served to create the “scientific” basis on which the academic-professional field of teacher education was built, and built credibility for itself within the universities. In this way, the organising focus of teacher education (historically, in terms of both “General” and “Special Method”) has not in fact been pedagogy but psychology. Moreover, the latter has been the governing frame for curriculum theory, assessment, “method” and also—quite separate from all these (even physically so) in being located in schools—the Practicum. Educational testing, grading, and the measurement of “normal” and “deviant” populations of children became the primary focus of educational research and teaching in Anglo-Australian universities—and hence psychology, rather than pedagogy, became central to the “science” of education.

For these reasons, emphasis on pedagogy in teacher education has remained either a matter in and for “the schools”, or for particular curriculum (“methods”) courses in teacher education. This has strengthened the mythic, but experientially real, gap between “theory” and “practice” in the preparation of teachers—a phantasmatic gap that has still to be bridged, in our view. What is it about “pedagogy”, as both a concept and a practice that can explain its marginal status in relation to educational studies and educational research, as well as teacher education? Further: How might pedagogy be re-defined and re-assigned a significant value within that practice?

To begin with, pedagogy must be understood as a hybrid concept, bringing together elements of “art” and “science”, “theory” and “practice”. For Levine (1992), for instance, pedagogy is to be understood as a “complex of thinking, feeling, information, knowledge, theory, experience, wisdom and creativity which are the inherent, acquired and continuously-honed qualities of individual good teachers”. She also sees “pedagogy” as implying that teaching is “a theorising profession offering scope for the building of theory and practice out of its essential elements via processes of reflection, analysis and synthesis—a profession capable of development, renewal and rigorous intellectual activity in its own right” (Levine, 1992, p. 196). As she puts it:

Where are the concept-framing words which indicate that teaching is an integrated set of practices based on understanding of pupils’ actual lived experience and modes of learning? Where are the words to indicate teaching as an extensive understanding of educational theory interrelated, in practice, with a wide range of classroom management skills? (Levine, 1992, p. 197)

For her, pedagogy is therefore perhaps centrally a “concept-framing word” in this regard. Others offer insight into what is, in effect, a necessarily expanded concept
of pedagogy. For Gore (1993), pedagogy must be understood as embracing both social and educational vision, as well as specific instructional strategies and skills. Simon (1985, p. 78) describes the concept of “pedagogy” as “a science of teaching embodying both curriculum and methodology”. These are all useful contributions to developing a theoretical account of pedagogy. More recently, Alexander (2000) has proposed a more systematic and comprehensive view of pedagogy, arguing that as an over-arching, superordinate concept it “contains both teaching…and its contingent discourses about the character of culture, the purposes of education, the nature of childhood and learning[,] and the structure of knowledge” (p. 551); that is, “the performance of teaching together with the theories, beliefs, policies and controversies that inform and shape it” (p. 540). Although some might see this as too all-embracing, it focuses attention felicitously on teaching as practice-in-context, thus allowing for pedagogy to be understood as a situated “practice producing subjects”.

We see pedagogy as a concept as first and foremost referring specifically to the situated social practice of teaching and learning, as dynamically interrelated (although by no means identical or isomorphic) activities. Moreover, pedagogy is to be understood therefore as teaching-for-learning, in the sense that “teaching” is best conceived not so much as the cause of “learning” but rather as its context. As such, it involves elements and phases of both “transmission” and “interpretation”, of “teacher-centredness” and “learner-centredness”, and also of “negotiation” as a social-dialogical activity, realised in and through a distinct pattern of practice over time (Green, 1998).

We want to argue, further, that the proper focus of pedagogy is the classroom together with the class itself, or the cohort. As Roger Simon (1992) writes:

As a complex and extensive term, the concern of pedagogy includes the integration in practice of particular curriculum content and design, classroom strategies and techniques, a time and space for the practice of those strategies and techniques, and evaluation purposes and methods. All these aspects of educational practice come together in the realities of what happens in classrooms. (p. 57, our italics)

It is the class, learning within the “structured” space of the classroom, which must be managed—that is the proper object of pedagogy. It is only within this context, furthermore, that one can attend more directly and appropriately to differentiated forms of instruction addressed to particular individual or to groups. Hence what is at issue here is the articulation of what might be called a poststructuralist epistemology of practice—one that emphasises the interplay of power and meaning, discourse and subjectivity, and language and the body, as outlined previously—with a focus on classroom practice. To that end, we have proposed a curriculum framework that aims to inform how (prospective) teachers might operate with regard to matters such as programming, student discipline, and classroom organization (Reid et al., 2002). Central to this framework is, firstly, an integrated view of management and learning, and secondly, due regard for
openness and closure in curriculum and classroom practice. The framework is represented thus:

**Figure 1. A Curriculum Framework**

We seek to elaborate this framework below. For the moment, it must suffice to say that our concern here is with, on the one hand, emphasising the management of learning (and the learning of management) on the part of teachers and students alike, and on the other, pointing to the movement between open and closed structures in pedagogy (as realised, for instance, in and through teachers’ programming). The classroom, in such a view, exists in time and space, and changes over the course of the teaching duration, whether that be measured in the lesson, the term or the year. The task is how to represent such complexities in practice. How to work within(in) such purpose-built representations, as we see it, is precisely the challenge of pedagogy.

**ON POSTSTRUCTURALISM AND PEDAGOGY IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

The complexity of teacher education can be readily understood within a poststructuralist perspective as we consider that student-teachers participate and are positioned in the fragmentary, often contradictory discourses and practices that constitute the worlds of campus, school and classroom. In these contexts they are, as subjects, continually being acted on by, and being reconstituted within, the practices and power relations of the particular discursive regimes in place at each site. The range of contradictory discourses struggling for supremacy in the field of teacher education may often work to construct the subject who is becoming a teacher in limiting and unproductive ways—and unless she has a means of understanding the contradictions and tensions between discourses, she is most likely to be subjectivated by those discourses most resembling what she already knows. This is the perennial “problem” of teacher education understood in poststructuralist terms. It is the problem of what appears to be a simple
reproduction of the status quo in teaching so that teaching practice remains very much the same (and similarly unproductive) across time and space.

As Davies (1991) notes, one source of this dramatic conflict can be accounted for in the idea of “bodily inscription”:

If one’s body has learned to interact with the world in certain ways, then these ways may need more than access to a new discursive practice to change them. Or the means of translating an idea into everyday practice may not easily be achieved, one’s life-practice-as-usual, or life as the practical expression of old familiar discourses always coming more readily to hand. (p. 14)

The idea of pedagogy as “bodily inscription” is important here, because it is only through attention to “re-inscribing” the body-knowledge of student-teachers that changes in practice (and discourse) can occur. It is not difficult to see how the “old familiar discourses” of teaching and learning practice are learned from years of watching teachers in operation (Britzman, 2003), of “being there” in classrooms while teaching was carried out, and becoming familiar with well-practiced ways of teacher behaviour. These include ways of speaking, walking, sitting, “treating” the spelling list, ruling up the blackboard, organizing the day, and so on. In this sense, the notion of teaching habitus is close to what Connelly and Clandinin (1988) call personal practical knowledge, or “the knowing of a classroom”. As they write:

Where is personal practical knowledge? It is in the person’s past experience, in the person’s present mind and body, and in the person’s future plans and actions. Knowledge is not found only ‘in the mind’. It is ‘in the body’. And it is seen and found ‘in our practices’. (p. 25)

The challenge for teacher education is to enable new teachers to act on their sites of practice as well as in them with a knowledge of the situated nature, and the contingency, of all teaching practice. This of course requires the production of a particular form of teaching subjectivity—a teaching-self who can act agenticly to perform a successful teaching-self in a range of teaching situations. As we noted above, we are working with an understanding of teacher education as a process through which (new) teacher-subjects are supported to bring together (in a perhaps uneasy and even contradictory synthesis or “settlement”), a set of diverse knowledges, capacities and dispositions that are recognisably teacherly and allow a convincing performance of teaching. This is, of course, a tall order, and one that no experienced teaching professional could expect to be fully realised in a neophyte.

A particular case in point has been the case of small-group work, which teacher education has long cherished as a means of promoting more open, learning-oriented pedagogy. In the following section of this chapter, we discuss small-group work as an exemplary instance of the potentially useful role that poststructuralist perspectives and insights can play in the reconceptualisation of educational practice, especially in times of rapid and rapidly accelerating change. What can poststructuralist theory tell us about small-group work in the classroom that we didn’t already know, or had never thought to ask?
A rereading of the discourse of small-group work—such as that exemplified in our own research and writing over the years (Green & Reid, 1990; Reid, Green & English, 2002; Reid, Forrestal & Cook, 1989)—allows us to understand and explain why a poststructuralist emphasis on the practice of material bodies in the bounded space of classrooms has been so necessary and important. That the classroom is a bounded space, for instance, is suddenly significant. Representations of “the classroom” in discussions of small-group work have commonly depicted the classroom as a rectangular, “box”-shaped area with only one major exit. The classroom is thus cut off from the outside world. Everything that enters (or leaves) must do so through the door, thus providing frames of action in time and space around what happens in this classroom space—the lesson. Of course, we have all been in classrooms where either bodies or things have entered or left the room via openings other than the door, and we have probably all seen and understood these as “transgressive” or “disorderly”—as needing to be disciplined (or even punished)—in order to be brought back within the bounds of “normal” classroom behaviour. Even so, the point remains: The question “What is a classroom?” cannot simply be taken for granted.

“The classroom” is indeed a disciplined space, in all senses of the word. It functions within the panoptic of school as a “cell”—connected via the corridors or the PA system to the central monitoring and controlling power which controls the “organization of space and the distribution of activities through time” (Griffith, 1992, p. 14). While the classroom is thus a unit in the physical and organizational division of the school population, small-group work functions also to divide the class itself into smaller units (“cells”) to be managed. As Kamler et al. (1995) have shown, a significant part of the teacher’s work in the very first weeks of school can be seen as explicit “disciplinary work” aimed toward shaping the individual bodies of students into the corporate “student body” of the school and classroom. This disciplinary work takes up a large proportion of teaching/learning time for young children in school, as they learn to “sit up straight”, “face the front”, “keep their arms, feet and elbows to themselves” and raise their hands in the air before they talk. That sort of discipline is well-recognised as part of a “vernacular pedagogy” (McNamara, 1991), and yet it has little or nothing, necessarily, to do with the sort of disciplinary knowledge that teachers are also charged to teach. With regard to small-group work, then, it is clear that many teachers may be attempting to implement such a distinctive form of practice without the “body knowledge” of how to act as a member (or as a teacher) of a classroom comprised of a set of (smaller) corporate groups.

One important facet of this body-knowledge for teaching with small groups has to do with monitoring the talk and activity of students as they are engaged in their work together. This links directly with the Foucaultian notion of the teacher as the “eyes and ears” of the institution, observing and guiding the students under her panoptic gaze into the “good subjects” of her discipline. The purpose of the gaze, in these terms, is like that of the teacher herself: It aims eventually to become redundant, as the norms and truths of the institution become internalised in the
“normal”, well-disciplined, individual student-subject. Most discussions of small-group work in classrooms—including our own—pay attention to the need for the teacher to be a careful “monitor” of small-group talk in order to make sure that students are “on task”, “not having difficulties”, and “working”. The assumption here, of course, is that without the disciplinary monitorial gaze of the teacher, they won’t be. They are not yet able to be “their own first, best gaolers” (Griffith, 1992, p. 14) within the small-group “cell”.

This is a complex matter in terms of poststructuralist analysis insofar as it implies a shift from the explicit panoptic position of the teacher, situated “at a precarious fulcrum in the network, at once the most seeing and the most seen” (Schmelzer, 1993, p. 131), towards a teacher positioned on the margins of the small group itself, on the periphery of the learning action, always Other to the small group of students that is presently in focus. In Derridaen terms, we might even consider the work of the teacher of small-group work as “teaching under erasure” — always deferred, signifying something else, something that might be, but is not yet, or not now. The point here, of course, is that this teaching, by definition, is necessarily uncertain of its own ends, and thus is uncomfortable for many, especially in a policy context of accountability and outcomes. A poststructuralist understanding of how and why small-group work is necessarily unpredictable and ungovernable (in the strictest sense), and yet productive allows us to understand this as a strength and a resource to be built upon, rather than a deviance to be reined in and controlled. Once this understanding is in place, then attention to the pedagogy of small-group work can be understood in its difference from traditional classroom norms, and in the different forms of disciplinary work that it entails.

A CONCLUDING NOTE

In this chapter, our concern has been with the becoming-subject of teacher education and, in that regard, with bringing together poststructuralism and pedagogy as crucial concepts for a reconceptualised project of teacher education. Poststructuralist theory and philosophy open up the possibility of developing a (de)constructive critique of current educational discourses and institutions that better reveal the complexity of pedagogy as a situated social practice concerned fundamentally and distinctively with the social dynamics of meaning-making and the exercise of power. This is because it allows for pedagogy to begin to be grasped at once as “teaching” and “learning”, “theory” and “practice”, “art” and “science”, and indeed “competence” and “performance”—all informing and feeding back into each other in a complex reciprocating action. That is, it enables a different understanding of what has all too often been locked within the praxis traps of a generalised binary logic. Above all, it enables us to make due consideration of the necessary complexity of pedagogic practice. Naming that complexity, reckoning it henceforth into all our calculations—a move entirely consistent with the dangerous “logic” of poststructuralism—may well be a crucial first step in moving towards more informed and effective educational practice in classrooms and in teacher education.
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2. MAKING EXCELLENT TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

In the days before the teaching of grammar was dismissed as irrelevant, I was taught that the word “excellent”, like “perfect” or “unique”, was a superlative adjective and that therefore it could not be qualified. Nothing could be more excellent than anything else, just as nothing could be more unique or more perfect. An excellent teacher, by implication, would be someone who had reached a pinnacle of pedagogical capability—nothing more would or should be done to make that teacher better. Yet in a few short decades, we have become used to seeing and hearing superlative piled upon superlative in an inflationary verbal economy dedicated to ensuring that we have the best that consumerist hype and long-term professional investment can supply. As any self-respecting marketeer knows, there must always be something “even more superlative” coming to a store or development office near you.

Framed within this logic, excellence as a state of pedagogical perfection has a much more truncated shelf-life. It is not to be thought of as a point of arrival but as a category of achievement that has value only as long as the measures by which it is calculated have value. The “excellent” teacher is thus a moving target, a quality performer as measured by professionally approved and sanctioned key performance indicators that may be rendered obsolete at any time. But the term ‘excellent teacher’ connotes more than this. It names a highly positive disposition to professional and personal learning—indeed, a disposition that blurs any distinction between the personal and the professional. An “excellent” teacher wants to achieve her/his full potential through relentless and never-ending self-developmen, out of which she can self-regulate in the interests of students and colleagues.

As a script for fashioning professional education workers, the call to “excellence” is pitted against elites of any kind. While there is much that Oxford or Harvard, for example, might be able to claim by way of a scholastic reputation, any claim they might make to excellence is rendered dubious by the sorts of league tables that constitute how excellence has come to be thought (Foucault, 1985). Now that “quality teaching and learning” is measured by quite specific evidence of clear learning objectives, low attrition, demonstrated applications of digital media and the like, elite institutions, steeped as they invariably are in historical tradition—and with many of the charming absurdities that abound in such traditions—are less likely to be top of the table. While this may not bother Oxford or Harvard (indeed, they may well wear high attrition and the like as a badge of...
honour), there are good reasons for state-assisted institutions to pay close attention to improving their place on "excellence" league tables.

My interest here is to explore what the contemporary call to (professional) excellence offers by way of scripts for self-fashioning teachers—the work that it does to make up teachers as seeking after desirable "professional" attributes, including emotional attributes. My focus is on the work that excellence does to shape the teacher as both a hyper-rational manager of systems of audit and accountability and as a passionate leader who can influence and motivate others in highly constructive ways. Put another way, I want to investigate how excellence works as a call to hyper-rationality and the right sort of irrationality simultaneously.

AN END TO GREATNESS

I take as my starting point consideration of vocabularies that have been rendered unthinkable as descriptors of the "good teacher". The word "great", once used so freely as a descriptor of famous teachers—Socrates, Mohammed, the Buddha, Jesus—is now tainted in educational scholarship and teacher professionalism literature by the implication that it demands pedagogical discipleship, a demand that we are all supposed to have eschewed in postmillennial times. Any invitation to discipleship, apprenticeship or other vertical model of instruction-led pedagogy is suspect for its reliance on the ability of One Great Man to attract others to him by the sheer power of his personality and his ideas. Whether or not we blame Carl Rogers or his successors for our rejection of the cult of personality in teaching, the fact is that we are now highly suspicious of any teacher who comes "like Gulliver among his Little People", and remains disconnected from professionally endorsed and sanctioned opportunities for self-development. The Great Teacher was one who, by definition, had overtly arrived and who therefore had no need of development nor of being a member of the team. As sage and guru, the Great Teacher occupied a singular and sacrosanct space that would not be constrained by the space of small teacher professionalism.

The work of eradicating the Great Teacher has been in progress for some decades. Much of the praise (or blame) for this achievement rests, initially at least, with the rise of minoritarian politics in the late sixties and early seventies, and the powerful messages it disseminated about education as part of the Ideological State Apparatus (Althusser, 1971). Re-framed through ideology critique, the Great Teacher is rendered a less than admirable figure. Dragged from his pedestal, he is now a stumbling block to the achievement of social justice and equity in a democratising classroom. Stereotypically white, male, and middle class, the Great Teacher represents a set of moral-ethical values that have come to be seen as both oppressive and out of touch with the politicising times.

This ideological work parallels both the psychologising of pedagogy and the feminising of teaching over the period of the 1980s and 1990s. The rise of interest in "the learner" as both a social subject and a psychological subject (see Henriques et al., 1984) makes it possible to re-think the conditions of possibility for effective pedagogy. It becomes increasingly impossible to think pedagogical effectiveness in
terms of a powerful teacher and his passive, obedient pupils. The ideal teacher is transmuted through the discourses of educational psychology into a “facilitator of learning”, one resource of many that ought to be made available to the student-as-learner. As facilitator of learning, the good teacher seeks to empower the learner rather than to exercise personal power. Gender, race, class are no barrier to “teacher-as-facilitator”—being effective in promoting learning for individual development and social change is what counts.

Cut down to size, the small ‘e’ effective teacher becomes a category that can more readily accommodate femaleness in a patriarchal order of things. Women, of course, had been actively teaching for more than a century before ideological critique of the Great (Male) Teacher came to be in vogue. Madeleine Grumet’s (1988) Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching attests to the importance of, and ambivalence around, the army of “schoolmistresses” who schooled generations of children for a public world of work and civic responsibility. This work had always been, as Grumet indicates, thankless, onerous and unremarked, with women teachers receiving lower pay and having poorer working conditions than their male counterparts. In the last decade of the twentieth century, however, a female teacher was able to take her place as a legitimate professional, no longer lesser than a male teacher except in those boys’ schools that persisted in clinging to some of the less charming gender absurdities of our pedagogical past.

By the nineties, the good-teacher-as-effective-facilitator had managed to hail a more diverse array of individuals to the role of pedagogue. This greater diversity, however, brought with it a stronger rationale on the part of employer groups for closer scrutiny and regulation of teachers’ work through a new generation of programs of professional development and systems of accountability. With the welfare state in full retreat from the funding of education at every level, and a heightened focus on education as both the hope and despair of parents wanting a guarantee of success for their decreasing numbers of children, the “effective facilitator” was ripe for further transmutation into professional classroom manager, an expert providing “high quality” client services in “more-for-less” times.

**THE RISK-CONSCIOUS TEACHER**

These “more-for-less” times are characterised, according to Anthony Giddens (2002) and Ulrich Beck (1992), by a political and moral climate of trouble minimisation, a shift from risk as “taking a chance” to risk as “cold calculation” (Keynes, in Bernstein, 1998, p. 12). “Risk society”—the term Beck (1992) uses to describe this climate—is produced out of a negative logic, a shift away from the management and distribution of material/industrial “goods” to the management and distribution of “bads” (e.g., the control of knowledge about danger, about what might go wrong and about the systems needed to guard against such a possibility). According to Giddens (2002), this modernist climate of cold, calculated risk is “marked by a push and pull between accusations of scaremongering on the one hand, and of cover-ups on the other” (p. 29). This push and pull of risk is evidenced both within and outside organisational life, as claims and counter-claims
constitute certain matters as more or less “risky” or certain people as more or less “at risk”.

This does not mean that risk-as-danger is not “real”. Rather, it means that risk-consciousness as a moral climate of coldly rational calculation is now the logic for thinking social and organisational good. In Michel Foucault’s (1980) terminology, it works as a “regime of truth” (p. 131) that constitutes proper (i.e., risk-conscious) social and organisational conduct. Risk, then, becomes the driving logic for a “game of truth and error” rather than as Truth itself (Foucault, 1985, p. 6) that is played in educational institutions as it is in all other social organizations. As a hegemonic logic for naming what is good practice, risk-consciousness provides a new “prescriptive text…that elaborate[s] rules, opinions and advice as to how to behave as one should” (p. 12), allowing all educators to “question their own conduct, to watch over and give shape to it, and to shape themselves as ethical subjects” (p. 13). In other words, rational calculation offers teachers a further script for being properly professional, one that invariably requires alertness to potential dangers and greater attention to the systematic work of minimising the possibility of trouble.

As a regime of truth, risk-consciousness supplements—and under certain conditions comes to replace—the local, disciplinary-specific or “craft” knowledge of the effective teacher. It is not that local teacher knowledge is displaced altogether. Rather it is made over as “professional expertise” through a process that Ericson and Haggerty (1997) describe thus:

[P]rofessionals obviously have ‘know-how’, [but] their ‘know-how’ does not become expertise until it is plugged into an institutional communication system. It is through such systems that expert knowledge becomes standardized and robust enough to use in routine diagnosis, classification, and treatment decisions by professionals. (p.104)

As professional experts, teachers are required to make “routine diagnosis, classification, and treatment decisions” about their increasingly diverse student populations. This has seen a crude mechanism for examination—the one-off memory-based test—replaced by a new regime involving multiple instruments and measures of performance that make learning outcomes more visible, calculable and thus more accountable. As “professional expert”, a teacher eschews any arbitrary exercise of personal power, preferring to pay attention to documenting those aspects of the student that are important in terms of inhibiting or enhancing learning outcomes. In this way, teachers come to act as risk managers, utilising a new generation of systemic rules, formats and technologies for communicating within and across educational institutions. Armed with such paraphernalia, “expert” teachers seek to solve any and every potential “trouble”, real or imagined (see McWilliam & Perry, 2006; Strathern, 1997, 2000).

For teachers’ performance to be rendered calculable (and thus susceptible to audit by self and external others), it is necessary that expert teacher knowledge become standardised and routinised so that it can be used to diagnose, classify and treat potential dangers within the organization (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997). This
has the effect of changing the focus of professional service from the student to information about the student. Put another way, the target of practice is no longer an individual student-as-client, but factors which have been deemed by institutional policy to be those most liable to produce risk to the organization (i.e., risk of failure, of waste, of lower standards). An effect of this, according to Robert Castel (1991), is the mutation of the practitioner-client (or teacher-student) relationship, so that the direct relation with the assisted subject that has characterised classical forms of pedagogical work is transmuted into a relationship of practitioner-to-information. Castel (1991) elaborates this risk-focused logic in this way:

The essential component of intervention no longer takes the form of the direct face-to-face relationship between the...professional and the client. It comes instead to reside in the establishing of flows of population based on the collation of a range of abstract factors deemed liable to produce risk in general. (p. 281)

These items of information are then stockpiled processed and distributed along channels completely disconnected from those of professional practice, using in particular the medium of computerized data handling. (p. 293)

THE FORENSIC TEACHER

An effect of all this has been a heightened pressure on teachers to be data vacuum cleaners in schools, never missing an opportunity to make additions to the collation of a range of abstract factors that, when taken together, come to define a student/client as a case of (more or less) potential risk as a learner. Along with this it has been possible to use statistical correlations of heterogeneous elements to differentiate student population categories (part-time, mature-age, low SES, LOTE, indigenous, on-line and so on), each demanding new modalities of intervention commensurate with the risks deemed to be associated with that population category. Proliferating categories of students in this way has made it possible to provide work for a large army of “classroom support personnel” who may well have more status and more autonomy than the classroom practitioner in that they can make claims to “specialist knowledge”, rather than being (merely) generalists. Teaching “the whole child” may well be understood as high moral ground, but that high ground turns to swampland in a climate in which any claim to specialization has become more mysterious and thus more potentially lucrative.

With more “experts” claiming legitimacy in the education professions, data collection possibilities—demographic data, psychometric data, performance data—have become boundless, so much so that schools are now “awash with data” (Hattie, 2005). Yet, as Hattie also notes, we have yet to see evidence that collecting and collating system-wide data has any real impact on teaching efficiency or effectiveness. Notwithstanding this fact, there is little doubt that the imperative to gather data on students-as-clients has made significant changes to the “attentional economy” (Taylor, 2005) of teachers. As “excellent classroom managers” and
“developers” of children, effective teachers are on constant alert to record anything that might have significance for their performance as “lifelong learners” now and in the future.

Paying attention to young people in this way can have the effect of allowing teachers to “see” what is going on in their classrooms differently. This is an effect, at least in part, of the hegemonic status personal psychology has achieved in defining and explaining everything about human beings and their behaviour. In *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (1991), Nikolas Rose argues that psychology is now so pervasive as a way of seeing our world that Western individuals use it unrelentingly as a way to make meaning out of their everyday life and work. Rose argues calls this process of seeing the “psychologization of the mundane”. He explains:

A psychologization of the mundane, involv[es] the translation of exigencies from debt, through house purchase, childbirth, marriage, and divorce into ‘life events,’ problems of coping and maladjustment, in which each is to be addressed by recognizing it as, at root, the space in which are played out forces and determinants of a subjective order (fears, denials, repressions, lack of psycho-social skills) and whose consequences are similarly subjective (neurosis, tension, stress, illness). Such events become the site of a practice that is normalizing, in that it establishes certain canons of living according to which failures may be evaluated. It is clinical in that it entails forensic work to identify signs and symptoms and interpretive work to link them to that hidden realm that generates them. It is pedagogic in that it seeks to educate the subject in the arts of coping. It is subjectifying in that the quotidian affairs of life become the occasion for confession, for introspection, for the internal assumption of responsibility. (Rose, 1991, p. 244)

A plethora of psychological categories, classifications and processes of remediation are now readily available to teachers as mechanisms for detecting symptoms (both positive and negative) in their students and in themselves. Yet it is not just that these forensic tools are so readily available; the point is that the ‘excellent’ professional is both enabled and constrained to make use of them. Simply put, the call to psychologise is one that focuses a teacher’s attentional economy as much on Myers-Briggs as on molecules.

As forensic workers armed with psychological tools, “truly professional” teachers come to “see” dangers that others may not. Joseph Tobin (1997) demonstrates this principle at work by carefully documenting the reactions of preschool teachers in the USA and Ireland to a sixty-word description of the behaviour of a fictional child, Emily. The passage he gave them read as follows:

Emily touches herself a lot. When she’s excited, she keeps touching herself with one hand. During story time, she rubs her legs together with a sort of far off look in her eyes. Even at lunch she’ll have a hand in her pants sometimes. I don’t mean she’s doing it every minute, but it’s not like it’s only now and then, either. (p. 130)
Tobin indicates the dramatic difference he found in interpretations of the passage, with the twelve American focus groups “detecting the tell-tale signs of child abuse” while not one of the eight Irish groups saw the signs of abuse in this case. Tobin notes:

Because Emily is a fictional character who appears in a text barely sixty words long, we cannot say she was or was not abused. Nor can we know how these teachers would react to the reality of a girl masturbating in their classroom. Presumably their reaction in real life to a girl like Emily would be based on intuition and contextual knowledge that they cannot bring to a vignette. Still, it is striking that eight of the twelve American focus groups brought up sexual abuse as a possible explanation of Emily’s masturbation. (p. 133)

The diagnosis made by the American teachers is constituted out of a particular type of sense-making afforded to those with the desire to be “professional” and the tools of analysis that made it possible to “see” potential harm. The American teachers’ interpretation that this was a likely case of abuse is not the product of irrational moral panic, but of forensic work conducted in the interests of the fictional Emily as a potential case for psychological and therapeutic treatment. In discharging their duty of care differently from the Irish teachers, they may or may not have been better teachers, but they were “professional” in their risk-oriented response. Put another way, “seeing” Emily as a possible case of abuse was an appropriate way for a risk-conscious (and therefore “professional”) teacher to interpret this scenario.

THE SELF-REGULATING TEACHER

At the same time that teachers are shaped—and shape themselves—as risk-conscious and attentive managers of their classroom environments and populations, they also have available to them particular dispositions in relation to self-management. As Paul du Gay (1991, 1994) indicates, there has been for over a decade now a global call to “making up” all professional workers as organisational leaders and managers. This has impacted in as much in Australia as in other parts of the Western world, with educational employers groups working hard to develop individuals whose personal and professional lives are not just inextricably intertwined, but imbued with precise dispositional qualities that are recognisable as “professional” and leaderly.

As truly professional leaders, excellent teachers, like their counterparts in business organisations, are called to conduct journeys of self-discovery (Senge, 1990) in both their personal and their working lives, so that they can learn the discipline of caring passionately about their role in an organisation, thinking creatively about their work and communicating effectively to achieve their goals. As Cameron (2000) indicates, professional excellence is now characterised by warmth, rather than distance, power-sharing rather than domination, and coaching rather than coercion and control. This new model of leaderly performance augments rather than detracts from organisational efficiency and good managerial
practice. Put another way, the achievement of high quality people skills is the currency of emotionally intelligent (and therefore successful) leaders (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002). Armed with a script for risk managing through systemic rules and technologies of surveillance, and a script for self-fashioning around the right sort of irrationality, the excellent leader/manager knows when and how to plug into highly rational systems and when and how to eschew rationality in favour of deep mutual interpersonal confluence. This confluence of two apparently distinct paradigms is captured, in some sense at least, in the term “emotional capital” (Thomson, 1998). The imperative is to capitalise, whether it is to capitalise an individual’s feelings or individual’s knowledge—both can and ought to be put to work in the interests of “excellent” performance.

Capitalisation of emotions demands, among other things, that leaders utilise the right emotions at the right time for the right reasons. Enrolling the emotions in this way requires, among other things, that feelings be rendered calculable in much the same way as ‘intelligence’ was rendered calculable (“IQ”) when it was thought to be the key to social and economic success. Little wonder then that we have seen the rise of emotional intelligence (“EQ”) as a key attribute of excellent teachers. Testimonials to the transformative power of EQ proliferate on educational leadership websites. On the 6 Seconds Emotional Intelligence Network (n.d.) website for example, Goleman’s claim that, “emotionally intelligent [educational] leaders are more successful” is supported by “Dr. Anabel Jensen…[who]…worked for three years with one of the largest school districts in the US…building a more effective workforce [with]…12,000 employees” (para. 12). The Goleman interview also cites a British study which “found that in schools where the Head Teacher used a more emotionally intelligent leadership style, [there was] higher …academic achievement of the students” (para. 13). The report goes on to assert that this is because “school leaders who use their EQ inspire teachers to be more dedicated and motivated so that they teach better—and therefore the students learn better” (para. 13). Similar claims are made by The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning website, whose “extensive database of research on the subject” purports to show that “EQ training improves students’ relationships to school—which in turn improves their academic performance” (para. 14).

THE ENTERPRISING TEACHER

Technologies for self-fashioning such as those mentioned are distributed through a variety of mechanisms that fall under the rubric of ‘professional development’. Regular engagement in PD activities—and a desire to continue to engage in them—mark the upward and forward trajectory of the “enterprising” educator. The burgeoning market in the professional development of teachers is testimony to the zeal with which many teachers are responding to the call to excellence as consumers of such materials. There are, as I have indicated elsewhere (McWilliam, 2002), good reasons for paying attention to the nature of “developmental” materials and the claims of those who generate them.
Professional development demands the sort of make-over that constitutes a fundamentally new worker identity (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; McWilliam, Meadmore & Hatcher, 1999; Taylor, 1999). To respond to constant and unremitting change, so the logic goes, an entire self must be completely made over as an enterprising individual. An OECD report Towards an Enterprising Culture: A Challenge for Education and Training (1989) gives a clear script for comporting oneself as a “developing professional”. Such a person, it claims, is:

- an enterprising individual...[with]...a positive, flexible, adaptable disposition towards change, seeing it as normal, and as an opportunity rather than a problem. [S/he has]...a security borne of self-confidence, and [is] at ease in dealing with insecurity, risks, difficulty and the unknown. [Sh/e is also]...able, even anxious, to take responsibility, and is an effective communicator, negotiator, influencer, planner and organiser. An enterprising individual is active, confident, and purposeful, not passive, uncertain, and dependent. (p. 36)

This sort of self-comportment is recognisable across the social and human services as being commensurate with “proper” professionalism, and the needs and demands of the culture of enterprise that has come to replace a more long-term culture of public service.

“Enterprise culture” is underpinned by two distinct understandings. The first is the idea that the market is the best way to achieve effective organisational arrangements. As such, the market has “paradigmatic status” for “any form of institutional organisation and provision of goods and services”” (du Gay, 1991, p. 45). Schooling is no less susceptible to this market logic than any other sector, with schools worldwide jostling to recruit “top drawer” students and to be seen to be top of whatever league tables apply to their organisation.

The second understanding concerns the most appropriate ethical comportment of individuals—any individual—in a society, and what their relationship to the economy should entail. In this way of thinking, the creation of wealth, which is understood to be the final measure of success (and therefore of schooling outcomes), is best achieved by a “highly individualistic form of capitalism” (Heelas & Morris, 1992, p. 3), drawing heavily upon psychology and psychotherapy for its theorising of the nature of the self. Whatever their occupation, individuals ought to work industriously and competitively to achieve their potential. Autonomy is paramount, and dependence (particularly welfare dependence) is frowned upon. According to such a view, individuals should be prepared to take up any and all opportunities to develop themselves to accept responsibility for achieving bold and ambitious human goals (du Gay, 1994; Heelas & Morris, 1992).

Self-comportment of this type looks and feels different. Adkins and Lury (1999) provide an interesting analysis of the way that such understandings of ideal self-comportment are translated into intensified processes of aestheticization and emotionalization, processes that have become part of the work of self-invention.
and self-management in a performance culture. The proliferation of “professional development” workshops is one feature of this highly individualising imperative at work to produce stylised identities that are recognizably aspirational in terms of excellence. Such workshops offer a profusion of ways to develop oneself—as a conflict resolver, team-builder, health and safety advocate, stress manager, classroom manager, emotionally intelligent and resilient leader, creative developer and so on. Thus it is that an Excellent Teacher, unlike a Great Teacher, is bound to refuse any sense of having arrived, either in a professional or a personal sense. Moreover, there is no space outside this logic—it is the condition of unfreedom within which all truly professional teachers go about their business. And increasingly, their business is to require at every level the sort of tough self-regulation that makes it possible to do the forensic work of self-scrutiny necessary to the caring, creative and communicative leader.

CONCLUSION: DOUBTING EXCELLENCE

So what, one might feel compelled to ask, is the problem with the call to be an excellent teacher? After all, it seems that an excellent teacher is more likely to pay close attention to students, to be actively engaged in professional development, to be enterprising and self-regulating as a “true” professional?

There is no denying the new disciplines and the new pleasures that the call to excellence affords. However, some of its effects invite scepticism. Self-regulation as an excellent professional means there can be no end to learning. Teachers are no different from any other occupational group in terms of the expectation that they will accumulate new skills and knowledge throughout the entire life span. Moreover, they should expect that others will want to do the same. Chris Falk (1999) understands this imperative as “sentencing learners to life”, arguing that “life-long learning” is now working as a vehicle for selling commodities and as a profitable commodity in itself. To Falk, life-long learning “is largely a project of economic, social and epistemological recuperation dedicated to delimiting rather than expanding the subjectivities of learners exposed to it” (p. 7). He claims that life-long learning has departed from its original intent to make learning more attractive by disassociating it from schooling, and now acts to make education more intrusive and more damning of those who choose not to engage in it (p. 8). To the extent that the pursuit of professional excellence is part of the modern populist form of adult education called life-long learning, it must be suspect for its “headlong pursuit of relevance as defined by the Market” (p. 1), and its complicity in the production of the “malleable-but-disciplined” individual that is so necessary to enterprising culture, yet so problematic when it comes to generating critical thought. Among all the scripts for self-fashioning as an excellent teacher, there are few if any that make radical doubt a priority. And radical doubt is the basis of so much that is original and creative in the production of new knowledge.
REFERENCES


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