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Nicole Mockler · Judyth Sachs *Editors*

Rethinking Educational Practice Through Reflexive Inquiry

Essays in Honour of Susan Groundwater-Smith

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Essays in Honour of Susan Groundwater-Smith

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Foreword—An Example to Us All

Susan Groundwater-Smith would not see herself as a model, but to many, including myself, her professional life is an example of how apparent opposites can be brought into harmony and productively harnessed in the service of education. This book reflects not just the scope of her writing and teaching over 40 years and the influence she has had on teachers and researchers from many different backgrounds and countries, but also the ways in which she has acted out in her own life and work the qualities she seeks to encourage in others.

Most noticeably, she takes an inquiring approach to any problem, refusing to accept uncritically accepted views or easy answers. In this sense, she has sometimes seemed a maverick, willing to break educational ranks, ask awkward questions about educational theories, policies and structures and take daring initiatives. Yet she has shown great skill, in the course of varied projects, in working within these structures and using them to the advantage of students and teachers. Always ready to challenge the nature of professional knowledge and learning, and the theory and practice of practitioner inquiry, she has encouraged others to do the same. Yet, despite an innovative and in some ways unconventional approach to learning and teaching, she is also deeply conservative in demanding of herself and others a high level of intellectual integrity and conventional academic standards. The uncompromising nature of this stance is tempered for learners and fellow academics by the fact that she values the questioner as much as their questions. As a result, she has been able to marry the theoretical and the practical in both her writing and her teaching, and to command the respect of practitioners at all levels of the educational system. Many of the following chapters attest to her influence in reconciling perspectives which many still regard as mutually exclusive.

As the contributions to this book suggest, at every stage of her career, she has been open to different opinions, eclectic in her view of where teaching and learning take place and able to find professional friends and colleagues in many countries and cultures. She is prepared to take risks in seeking out interesting educational situations and problems but, having committed herself, is able to stand back and trust others to work with as much commitment as she does. Yet this ability to persuade or co-opt others is not an indication of indifference or a laisser-faire attitude to standards. Rather, her choice of co-participants in teaching, writing and research is

underpinned by iron principles—opinions and judgements must be evidence based; rigorous, critical reflection on this evidence must precede recommendations for action or change; different perspectives should be taken into account at all stages of the research; ends and means must be humane, ethically sound and, where possible, emancipatory. As academic, teacher and writer she exemplifies the distinction between a critical friend (a term to which she has given fresh meaning) and a friendly critic (which I think she would regard as a contradiction in terms).

Moreover, she has often been able to turn to good effect the apparent contradiction between her tolerant acceptance of others' viewpoints and interests and her unflinching adherence to her basic intellectual values, by negotiating different forms of collaborative action. Sometimes these have been in the shape of informal cooperation or more structured partnerships between herself and colleagues in schools, colleges, universities and institutions as diverse as museums and libraries. At others, she has acted as adviser and consultant to groups or coalitions of teachers or others seeking to investigate and improve their practice. In both roles, she reveals herself as a skilled and sensitive facilitator. Once again, the contents of this book reflect her talent not just for working with an unusually wide range of people, but also for persuading others successfully to take similar risks and to trust not only her, but also one another. Few *Festschrifts* can contain so many contributions from both academics and teachers in schools and colleges as this one does.

Another paradox in Susan Groundwater-Smith's career is that much of her writing has underlined the importance to educationalists of eliciting, listening to and taking careful note of the voices of students. She is an impassioned advocate of the rights and the insights of learners, in whatever setting. She has herself worked hard and imaginatively to seek out, listen to and understand what students are saying, or want to say. Perhaps more important in the long run is the work she has done, and is still doing, with teachers and others, to encourage and enable them to do the same. Indeed, her work has most often been directed to teachers, administrators and policy makers rather than to students themselves. The answer to this apparent discrepancy is, I think, that she sees teachers and other professionals themselves as learners, capable of inquiring into and changing their attitudes and practice. Several chapters in this book testify to the fact that she has encouraged and supported teachers, especially in schools and colleges, in their attempts not just to listen to students but also to use them as informed observers and co-researchers.

This dual allegiance—to students' voices and to teachers' capacity to examine and change themselves—has led her in recent years into fierce but well-informed critiques of centralist education policies, especially in relation to students' ability to express their learning needs, teachers' ability to make judgements of quality and the desirable or actual nature of their professional knowledge. Much of her most powerful teaching and writing has been concerned with the damaging effects on students and teachers of a growing tendency within government at all levels to expect compliance to externally imposed standards. Never one herself to give unquestioned obedience to any authority—though unflinchingly loyal in her commitment, once satisfied of its legitimacy—she has shown others how to recognise and constructively question what they may perceive as unwarranted interference in

their professional lives. In addition, she is seeking, and encourages others to seek, for a new professionalism within centralist control and within different pedagogical traditions.

Underlying all these apparent inconsistencies is one consistent theme. During all the 30 years, I have known her, and for long before that, Susan Groundwater-Smith has been centrally concerned with the nature of teachers' professional knowledge, in particular how it is construed, constructed and employed. This has led her more and more deeply into encouraging inquiry by academics, teachers and others into the nature of professional learning and into how, when, where and under what conditions it takes place. But she has never been satisfied simply with definitions; for her, professional learning, if it is true learning, must lead either to the recognition and ratification of good practice or to changes in teacher behaviour and/or the management of schools. So, she is herself an 'inquiring teacher' and an academic who has done a great deal, nationally and internationally, to promote the idea and the practice of action research, and of related notions such as reflective practice and professional inquiry. It is significant that many of the contributions to this book reflect their authors' intention to question some contemporary understanding or practice of teaching or learning, wherever it takes place.

At this point, it becomes impossible to separate the personal from the professional. That she has been able to hold different and often conflicting aims and loyalties in constructive tension for most of her working life is due in large measure to her own personality and life style. These in their turn can appear contradictory. She has been able to achieve all she has in part by keeping to her lifelong habits of hard work, commitment to the task and dedication to the progress and wellbeing of her students. At the same time, she has rich and varied interests outside her professional life, travels widely and often and throws herself into enjoyment, wherever possible with her family, with as much energy as she does her work. She is single-minded in pursuit of particular projects, ideas or aspirations, but simultaneously generates a wealth of ideas and tasks which she might pursue at a later date, or which others are free to take up. She is trusting but exacting, unorthodox but respectful of tradition, sceptical but accepting, tolerant but demanding. These opposites are held together, I suggest, by her warmth, empathy and generosity—in short by her gift for friendship. It is ironic that one who would largely reject imitation as a means of learning should herself have taught others so much by modelling for them personal as well as professional modes of thought and behaviour. I, among other contributors to this book, count myself as fortunate to have enjoyed her as a friend and colleague for so many fruitful years.

Jennifer Nias

Acknowledgements

In many ways, this book has been a lifetime in the making, and our thanks go to Susan Groundwater-Smith, our colleague and friend, whose intellect and energy have long inspired us and continue to do so into her eighth decade.

Thanks also to the contributors, who responded to our initial overtures with enthusiasm despite the busyness of their professional lives, and have created a series of contributions that stand as a worthy testament to Susan's professional life and work.

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Nicole Mockler
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Jan Ax is an associate professor in educational studies at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. He has published and conducted research in educational policy and school organisation, especially in the domain of secondary education and senior vocational education. Currently, he is doing an evaluation of Teacher Education programmes on the master level. Besides, he participates in the international Pedagogy, Education and Praxis research project, focusing on continental European traditions in pedagogy. His teaching subjects are instruction and curriculum, educational research methods, educational policy and school organisation.

Anne Campbell recently retired from the post of professor of professional learning at Leeds Metropolitan University. Her research interests focus upon professional learning through action research and inquiry. She has published widely in these areas and on partnership between schools and teacher education. Her edited book, with Susan Groundwater-Smith, *An Ethical Approach to Practitioner Research: Dealing with Issues and Dilemmas in Action Research,* established her interest in ethical issues across a range of contexts. She has directed and worked on various government research projects in professional practice. Before entering higher education in 1989, Anne worked as a primary school teacher, adviser and deputy head.

Phillippa Cordingley is a founder and chief executive of CUREE. As an adviser to the Department for Education (DfE) and various Government Agencies, she has instigated, designed and developed a range of national strategies and support programmes to promote research and evidence-informed practice. She also led CUREE colleagues in developing the evidence-based National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching. Other leading edge projects designed and developed by Philippa include the General Teaching Council (GTC) Research of the Month website and a five-year research project for building the evidence base for a curriculum for the twenty-first century. Philippa is a professional adviser to the National Teacher Research Panel and a member of a range of research steering groups.

Greg Elliott is the deputy principal of St Mary Star of the Sea College—comprehensive Catholic High School in Wollongong, Australia. Since 2004, the college has adopted a model of action research and practitioner enquiry as its primary vehicle

for professional learning and school improvement. Greg has led this change in professional development (PD) which has resulted in the college recasting its pastoral care, approach to ICT, learning and assessment policies among other initiatives. Greg is a member of the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools: an organisation that shares this research approach to school development. His work has been published in a range of peer-reviewed journals, and he presented this model at the Cooperative Action Research Network Conference in the United Kingdom in 2008.

Michael Fielding taught for 19 years in some of the United Kingdom's pioneer radical comprehensive schools and for a similar period and identical commitments at the universities of Cambridge, Sussex and London where he is currently an emeritus professor of education at the Institute of Education. Widely published in the fields of student voice, educational leadership and radical education, his latest book *Radical Education and the Common School—A democratic Alternative* (Routledge 2011), co-authored with Peter Moss, seeks to reclaim education as a democratic project and a community responsibility, and the school as a public space of encounter for all citizens.

Pauline Fitzgerald is an experienced, enthusiastic educator whose career has taken her from New Zealand to England and Australia. She has taught in a range of education settings including primary and secondary schools and cultural organisations. Pauline has also worked in audience research and is passionate about including young people in the design and development of exhibitions and learning programmes. Pauline is currently a senior education officer at the State Library of New South Wales where she is committed to connecting young people with the collections and resources of the library.

John Furlong is a professor of education in the Department of Education at the University of Oxford. From 2003 to 2009, he was the director of the department; before joining Oxford, John held chairs at Cardiff, Bristol and Swansea Universities. He is an elected academician of the Academy of Social Sciences and has served as the president of the British Educational Research Association; he was also a member of the United Kingdom's 2008 RAE education panel. John's areas of research specialism are the professional education of teachers, educational research policy and the impact of new technologies on young people's learning at home.

Jane Hunter is a member of academic staff in primary education, specialising in Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) and science and technology in the School of Education at the University of Western Sydney. Prior to this appointment she worked as a lead teacher in schools, in teacher education programmes at Sydney University and as a consultant to government and private education providers on various technology, professional teaching standards and curriculum projects. Jane is interested in technological, pedagogical and content knowledge (TPACK), social education and HSIE, especially civics and citizenship, new media and teacher professional learning. Since 2001, she has been a member of the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools.

Lynda Kelly is the Head of Audience Research at the Australian Museum, Sydney. She is particularly interested in developing and measuring visitor experiences and learning, as well as the strategic use of audience research and new technologies in organisational change. Lynda's PhD was in museum learning. She has published widely in museum evaluation, writes a number of blogs on audience research, learning, social media and cooking. Lynda is happily obsessed with all things Web 2.0 and curious to see how this will change the ways people learn. Lynda has just released *Hot Topics, Public Culture, Museums,* co-edited with Dr. Fiona Cameron, University of Western Sydney.

Stephen Kemmis is a professor in education at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga. His research interests include the study of professional practice, approaches to educational research and evaluation, participatory action research, curriculum, indigenous education, education for sustainability and university development. His major publications include *Becoming Critical* (with Wilfred Carr, Falmer 1986) and *Enabling Praxis* (with Tracey J. Smith, Sense 2008). He is currently engaged in a major research program with researchers from Europe on the nature of professional practice and the challenges faced by practitioners from a variety of professions in an era of increased specification, regulation and surveillance of their work.

Bob Lingard is a professor in the School of Education at The University of Queensland. His research interests are focused on educational policy, social justice and schooling, gender and schooling and school reform. His most recent books include *Globalizing Education Policy* (Routledge 2010) with Fazal Rizvi and *Educating Boys: Beyond Structural Reform* (Palgrave 2009) with Wayne Martino and Martin Mills.

Colleen McLaughlin is a senior lecturer and deputy head of faculty at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, where she teaches and researches. She has a particular interest in the fields of practitioner research, especially schools–university partnerships for educational research, and the personal, social and emotional aspects of education, including counselling. She is very interested in the social and emotional aspects of collaboration. Recent and current research is on adolescence, mental health and school experience, bullying and pupils with special needs and the use of student knowledge in constructing HIV/AIDS curriculum in East Africa, as well as communities of enquiry within partnerships between schools and universities.

Jane Mitchell was appointed to the Faculty of Education at Charles Sturt University in July 2007. She has previously held positions at Monash University and The University of Queensland. She completed her PhD at the University of British Columbia (Canada) in 2001. Jane's teaching and research interests are concerned with teacher education, professional learning, curriculum and pedagogy. Jane has a particular passion for partnership work with schools.

Nicole Mockler is a lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Newcastle in Australia. She is a former teacher and school leader, and over the past

decade she has worked as an academic partner with a wide variety of schools and school systems. The current focus of her research and writing is on teacher professional identity, teacher professional learning and practitioner inquiry, and her most recent books are *Teacher Professional Learning in an Age of Compliance: Mind the Gap* (with Susan Groundwater-Smith, Springer 2009) and *Facilitating Practitioner Research: Developing Transformational Partnerships* (with Susan Groundwater-Smith, Jane Mitchell, Petra Ponte and Karin Ronnerman, Forthcoming).

Kris Needham is a senior educational consultant with a particular interest in practitioner research and the use of student voice to inform school improvement initiatives. Kris has been a secondary school principal and held several positions in regional and state offices of the NSW Department of Education. Kris' passion for quality teacher learning processes drives a range of consultancy contexts including executive coaching, interviewing educational researchers for podcasts and vodcasts, being academic adviser to school-based action research teams and designing online learning for aspiring, new and continuing school leaders. This variety of contexts provides opportunities for exploring the potential for theory to inform practice and for practitioners to be supported in accessing current and relevant research.

Jennifer Nias has taught students of all ages from 3 to 56, always seeking to encourage reflection and critical thinking. In her last two posts before retirement (at the Cambridge Institute of Education, and as a part-time research professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Plymouth), she worked on several occasions with Susan Groundwater-Smith, teaching and helping with research projects in Australia and the United Kingdom. Among her publications, many of them arising from her research into primary teachers' lives and careers are *Seeing Anew: Teachers' Theories of Action* (Deakin University) and *The Enquiring Teacher: Sustaining and Supporting Teacher Research* (co-edited with Susan Groundwater-Smith).

Petra Ponte, PhD, has been a professor at the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands) since 2008 and until recently worked as a researcher at the University of Leiden. She worked in various settings as a lecturer, project leader and researcher in the areas of extending special needs provision in ordinary schools, student support and action research as a strategy for professionalisation and education innovation. From 2003 until 2008, she was a professor at Fontys University of Applied Sciences. Currently, she is also an adjunct professor at RIPPLE, Charles Sturt University and an honorary professor at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, both in Australia.

Judyth Sachs is the deputy vice chancellor, provost at Macquarie University. She has previously held senior positions at The University of Sydney and Griffith University. Research interests lie in the areas of teacher professionalism, teacher professional development and higher education policy and practice. She has published eight books and is on the editorial boards of several international journals.

Bridget Somekh is an emeritus professor at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK and an adjunct professor at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. Her

research interest is in the processes of innovation and change, particularly in relation to teaching and learning. She was an editor of *Educational Action Research* for 17 years and a coordinator of the Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN). Her books include *Action Research: A Methodology for Change and Development* (OpenUP 2006); *Pedagogy and Learning with ICT: Researching the Art of Innovation* (Routledge 2007); *The Handbook of Educational Action Research* (with Susan Noffke Ed., Sage 2009) and *Theory and Method in Social Research* (with Cathy Lewin Ed., Sage 2011).

Chapter 1
Rethinking Educational Practice Through Reflexive Inquiry: An Introduction

Nicole Mockler and Judyth Sachs

A *festschrift* recognises the contribution of a scholar's work at an important point in their life. When Susan Groundwater-Smith's 70th birthday was approaching and she was momentarily threatening to 'retire' (a threat that has since been revoked), we thought it timely to reflect on and celebrate her overall contribution to the field of education. We both have worked with Susan and acknowledge her commitment to understanding practice through theoretical, scholarly and practitioner interventions, as well as her contribution to our own lives and those of many others as scholars and educators. Given our respect for Susan and our delight in her, we wanted to find a way to publicly acknowledge Susan the Scholar and hence, the seed for an edited work in her honour was planted. After gaining agreement from prospective contributors and publisher, we divulged our collusion and shared our plans with Susan. She was both humbled and delighted and amazingly, for those of us who know her, temporarily lost for words.

Susan proudly defines herself as a 'close to practice researcher': for over more than 30 years, she has worked in academic institutions but maintained close links with classroom practitioners, supporting them as critical friend, academic partner, researcher-in-residence, mentor and trusted advisor. Over the course of her illustrious career, both as a schoolteacher and university academic, her mission has been a transformative one.

Formed in her early years as a teacher by her experiences working with disadvantaged and at-risk students, and in her time working in the educationally dynamic environment of Woollahra Demonstration School in the 1970s, Susan's belief in the progressive education agenda, her strong framework of professional ethics and commitment to equity and democracy has infused her teaching and research over the course of her career. Indeed, her work serves to remind us of the strong common thread that links practitioner inquiry and professional learning with pedagogies that draw on and promote student agency and assessment strategies that provide authentic and accurate feedback to students and parents.

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The contributors have all worked with Susan in various ways over the years: most as co-authors, some as practitioners whose work Susan has supported, others as colleagues with common research interests. Many of us have been mentored by Susan, our efforts sustained by her encouragement and sheer passion for good educational work. Reflecting Susan's own orientation, this book is a trans-national collaboration, with contributors from Australia, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands; also in keeping with Susan's orientation, contributions have been made by school- and museum-based practitioners, university-based academics and education consultants. What the contributions share in common is a link to the key themes of Susan's work.

Susan's published work spans significant reports for school systems and professional organisations (Bigum et al. 1987; Crawford et al. 1989; Currie and Groundwater-Smith 1998; Groundwater-Smith 1996; Groundwater-Smith and Kemmis 2004), highly successful text books for pre-service teacher education courses (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2006, 2007, 2009), edited collections (Campbell and Groundwater-Smith 2007, 2010; Nias and Groundwater-Smith 1988), invited contributions (Groundwater-Smith 2005; Groundwater-Smith and Dadds 2004; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2006, 2007) and other scholarly writings (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009; Groundwater-Smith and Sachs 2002).

Since the 1980s, her work has focused on the following key areas, between which there is considerable overlap:

- Practitioner inquiry (Currie and Groundwater-Smith 1998; Groundwater-Smith 1988, 1998; Groundwater-Smith and Dadds 2004; Groundwater-Smith and Hunter 2000; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2003)
- Teacher education and professional development (Campbell and Groundwater-Smith 2010; Deer et al. 1995; Groundwater-Smith 1992, 1993a, b, 1997, 1999; Groundwater-Smith et al. 1994, 1997; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009; Mockler and Groundwater-Smith 2010; Retallick et al. 1999; Sachs and Groundwater-Smith 1999; Sharp et al. 1993)
- Teachers' work (Bacon et al. 2000; Groundwater-Smith 1998, 1999, 2001; Groundwater-Smith and Sachs 1998; Retallick et al. 1999)

Integral to Susan's work is the link between these areas, the dimensions of teachers' work that provide rich opportunities for professional development and learning and the potential of practitioner inquiry to transform professional practice and professional learning. For this reason, the proposed book is structured into two parts, with strong links to be drawn between the parts, both within the chapters themselves and in the editors' framing of the chapters.

It is representative of the regard in which Susan is held that scholars and practitioners of the highest calibre have contributed chapters to this volume. We asked each of the contributors to link their contribution to Susan's work through one of the two themes of the book, which themselves emerged from our survey of her work over three decades.

Rethinking Educational Practice Through Reflexive Inquiry: Essays in Honour of Susan Groundwater-Smith explores the reflexive relationship between teachers'

work and learning and the role of knowledge creation in teacher professional practice and learning. In this, as well as the variety of perspectives and contexts it represents, from more theoretical accounts to case studies of inquiry and professional learning, the book comprises a unique volume authored by a range of educational researchers and practitioners regarded as outstanding in their field.

Part I, *Practitioner Inquiry,* includes chapters that relate to both the theoretical and practical dimensions of conducting practitioner inquiry in schools and other institutions, focusing particularly on the critical and transformative dimensions that link so clearly with Susan's work. A number of chapters in this section either embed or themselves represent case studies of practitioner inquiry or action research from the field.

Stephen Kemmis offers a new definition of critical participatory action research, expanding that which he and Robin McTaggart developed in *The Action Research Planner* (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988). Kemmis uses the six-part expanded definition as a framework for a broad-based discussion of Susan's single and co-authored work over the course of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, concluding that while Susan may not define herself as a critical participatory action researcher, her body of work exemplifies the principles of such work to the point where she might be regarded as an accidental practitioner of critical participatory action research.

In examining the commonalities and distinctions between various forms of action research and practitioner inquiry, Bridget Somekh explores the emerging variations in different parts of the world, some of which Susan has been instrumental in fostering, as an example of Appadurai's notion of 'globalisation from below' (Appadurai 2001). She concludes that variations in the action research/practitioner inquiry traditions adapted to local needs and nuances have amounted to the building of an 'extended family', where localisation and globalisation work symbiotically in support of 'collective agency'.

Petra Ponte and Jan Ax explore the links between inquiry-based professional learning and the European conception of educational praxis, using a model derived from combining the Habermasian lifeworld/system distinction (Habermas 1987) and Mannheim's distinction between substantial and functional rationality (Mannheim 1940). Using this frame for analysis of their own second-order action research study, they conclude that authentic inquiry-based professional learning successfully integrates all four dimensions, effectively supporting the researcher to straddle lifeworlds and systems in the construction of new knowledge and attending to both substantial and functional rationalities.

The interaction between adults and young people in educational settings, ranging from students as data source to intergenerational learning as participatory democracy, is elaborated by Michael Fielding in a typology he terms *Patterns of Partnership*. He suggests that Susan's work in relation to student voice and practitioner inquiry calls on us to interrupt the dominant and common forms of student participation in school inquiry, pushing towards the democratic possibilities and challenging the common sense wisdom of our time.

Demonstrating that Susan's influence has not been limited to schools and universities, Linda Kelly and Pauline Fitzgerald provide exacted examples of these

interactions in their chapter, which charts the seven-year relationship between the Australian Museum and the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools. This relationship has seen the museum draw both young people and teachers into conversation about learning in the museum and provided opportunities for them to influence the shape of exhibitions and the way the museum interacts with visiting young people. Kelly and Fitzgerald emphasise the reciprocal nature of the relationship and use qualitative data gathered to highlight the value placed upon the relationship by members of all groups concerned.

Greg Elliott, a school-based practitioner and leader, tells the story of his school community in creating 'space' for sustainable practitioner inquiry and as a consequence, built a generative professional learning community. He examines the role of strategic leadership on the part of the school's governance body, executive team and teaching staff in the creation of this 'third space' and highlights the evolution and impact of inquiry-based professional learning within his school context.

In the final chapter of Part I, John Furlong examines the proposed new *Master of Teaching and Learning* in England as possible 'fertile ground' for practitioner inquiry. He highlights the aims of the programme, on the surface similar to those aims expressed by Susan in terms of practitioner inquiry, and juxtaposes what is essentially an example of neo-liberal education policy with the transformative agenda embedded in Susan's work. Furlong concludes that it is unlikely that Susan's vision will be realised in the MTL, expecting rather that a level of 'managed commitment' to national policies will emerge through this national strategy for inquiry-based professional learning.

In Part II, *Teachers Work and Learning,* the chapters are slightly more broad in scope, attending variously to the policy frames within which teachers' work is constructed, the links between teachers professional learning and development and the factors that shape their practice. Of the many consequences of this broader project, the personal transformation of teachers through the development of a confident professional voice is evident in the chapters in this section.

Nicole Mockler examines the formation and mediation of teacher professional identity, reporting on a qualitative research study that used life history methodology to explore the 'anchors' that serve to fix teacher professional identity at differing points in their careers and life experiences. She concludes that good professional learning and development that incorporates opportunities for teachers to expand their practice and authentically reflect on their practice in context has the capacity to orientate teachers to new and different dimensions of their work, anchoring teacher professional identity anew.

Exploring the links between inquiry and professional learning in teachers' approaches towards curriculum change and educational innovation, Anne Campbell focuses upon issues of collaboration, collegiality and critical friendship in arguing for the importance of academic partnership. She draws upon work conducted with Susan and others over the past decade and locates current initiatives regarding inquiry-based teacher professional learning within the contemporary policy contexts.

Judyth Sachs explores a variety of metaphors for teacher professional learning within currently prevailing educational discourses, arguing that there are a variety

of approaches to continuing professional development that are oriented towards teacher learning. She emphasises the link between trust and professional judgement in identifying catalysts for professional learning and presents a strong preferred vision of a robust teaching profession supported by effective and transformative professional learning and development.

Arguing for the adoption of an ecological approach to understanding and researching teacher collaboration on research, Colleen McLaughlin explores the issue of teacher collaboration broadly, taking stock of both the challenges and potential rewards inherent in collaboration. She argues that an 'ecological approach' to teacher collaboration, which is both contextual and collective, and takes into account both the forces at work in teachers' lives and its own resultant tensions and dilemmas, can assist us in developing an understanding of the nuances of teacher collaboration.

Jane Hunter and Jane Mitchell explore the roles of 'insiders', 'outsiders' and purpose in the development of authentic teacher professional learning. Using case studies from their recent work, they argue that the best conditions for generating practical knowledge about teaching are created where partnerships between teachers and academic partners are met with a sense of educational purpose that is mutually compelling for both insiders and outsiders.

Drawing on her experience as a member of the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools, a network of schools in and around Sydney, Australia, which Susan Groundwater-Smith has convened for almost a decade, Kris Needham examines the supportive structures which have allowed this network to flourish. She suggests that the Coalition operates as a site for what Eraut has termed 'joint practice development' (Eraut 2005), wherein professional learning is empowered by both the 'head' and the 'heart'.

In her chapter, Phillippa Cordingley explores 13 years of evidence related to support for research and evidence-based practice for enhanced teacher and student learning, surveying a range of initiatives and activities that have been sponsored by the English Government over this period of time. She particularly focuses upon teachers' engagement in and use of research, concluding that a substantialist, specialist, multi-level approach, wherein teachers are supported to use research in ways consistent with principles of effective teacher professional learning, is best.

Bob Lingard completes Part I of the book with a chapter that offers a critique of recent education policy developments in Australia 2007–2010, exploring these with particular reference to the nature and scope of teachers' work. He connects with the broad project of school reform to which Susan has been a key contributor over the course of her career, and argues that the aims and goals of this project are increasingly difficult to work towards in the context of the neo-liberal education discourses that permeate western democracies at this time. He concludes that while all is not lost, a new social democratic imaginary is urgently required to underwrite a national school reform agenda that is about the promulgation of a richer, more transformative vision of education than that which currently prevails.

The book concludes with two postscripts. The first, written by Susan Groundwater-Smith herself, is a brief tribute to the late Professor Shirley Grundy, who was

to have been a contributor to this book but withdrew shortly prior to her untimely death in July 2010. Shirley and Susan were close friends and colleagues over many years, and it is a mark of Susan's generosity that she asked to make this contribution and dedication to Shirley within a book designed to honour her own work.

For once not content to allow Susan the final word, the book concludes with a final postscript from us, a call to continue and extend the project of which Susan's work has been an integral part, in support of educational ideas and orientations that swim against the tide of the current 'age of compliance'.

It is our belief that *Rethinking Educational Practice Through Reflexive Inquiry: Essays in Honour of Susan Groundwater-Smith* is not only a fitting acknowledgement of a career that has had (and continues to have) an important impact on education, but also constitutes a stand-alone extension of the education agenda about which Susan is so passionate.

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Part I
Practitioner Inquiry

Chapter 2
A Self-Reflective Practitioner and a New Definition of Critical Participatory Action Research

Stephen Kemmis

Susan Groundwater-Smith—the self-reflective practitioner in the title of this chapter—is not merely an advocate for practitioner inquiry, she is an exemplary model of the self-reflective practitioner. Ever since her days of primary teaching, when she discovered ideas and theories that could enliven and enlighten her educational work, she has continued to debate and critically interrogate not only her adversaries, her friends and the contemporary research literature, but also, and more doggedly, herself. She reveals something of this exemplary self-reflection in her *My Professional Self: Two Books, a Person and My Bedside Table* (Groundwater-Smith 2006). Only someone deeply respectful of ideas and their histories can deal with so many, with such dexterity, through so many years of confident scholarly writing, always leavening her educational scholarship with literary adornments drawn from the latest novel to impress her (as *My Professional Self*... shows), and always inviting readers into worlds made accessible by her lucid prose. She has always been a hard act to follow at a podium, and a hard co-author to work with as she so effortlessly (it seems) turns good sense into good sentences. As those who have written with her know, her writing flows from years of careful crafting. She is a practitioner par excellence of this special practice: the practice of inhaling rich observations of educational life (detailed in careful notes written up soon after), reflecting deeply on her own and others' educational experience, locating her ideas precisely in the current scholarship of teaching, and exhaling insightful writing about teaching that allows readers to see their worlds more clearly and understand them more deeply.

She has been, among many roles, a primary teacher, university teacher, professional developer, leader and mentor of research teams, professor, consultant, adviser and, at last, an eminent and distinguished scholar, also, of course, and not incidentally, a partner, a mother and a citizen of the world. And now, someone who, despite pretended retirement, continues to choreograph the living practice of the student–teachers who read her textbooks, the teachers and scholars who read her

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research books, articles and reports, and those of her friends and colleagues who have the good fortune to collaborate with her in projects in the Coalition of Knowledge-Building Schools, in work in museums and galleries, and in the variety of her research and writing projects that span the continents and bring together scholars from around the globe.

In this chapter, I will make a sally around just some aspects of Susan's work concerning practitioner inquiry, which I have also wrestled with, alongside her, for more than 30 years. She has been an outstanding advocate, model and leader in practitioner inquiry. Among other achievements, Susan has articulated and justified it for the profession, taught and nurtured it, drawn generations of practitioners into it, and given it an exemplary and organic home in the Coalition of Knowledge-Building Schools, to give just one example. While Susan was doing all this and more, I have tried, with Wilfred Carr, Robin McTaggart and many other colleagues, to find a more trenchant grounding for practitioner inquiry, in particular, in forms of action research that preserve a critical edge, and join the struggle to make all forms of schooling, at every level and location, more educational. By this I mean that I want to engender forms of practitioner inquiry—specifically, critical participatory action research—that will better support the enduring double task of education: to help individuals live well, and to help our societies create a world worth living in; that is, to initiate people, individually and collectively, into practices and forms of life that foster individual and collective self-development, self-expression and self-determination—and to initiate them into practices that enable them to strive to overcome practices and forms of life that unreasonably constrain individual and collective self-development, self-expression and self-determination.

In this chapter, then, I will give one distillation of one critical view of practitioner inquiry. I present a revised version of the definition of critical participatory action research first given in Nottingham in 2006 (Kemmis and Conlan 2006) at the annual conference of the *Collaborative Action Research Network*—an organisation with which Susan has long been associated. The definition is a little unusual: it is a single long sentence, with footnotes that gloss some of the substantial ideas the definition invokes.

After presenting the definition, I then make some connections between some of the notions it invokes and some of the intellectual projects that have characterised Susan's work—without, I hope, assimilating Susan's work to my own intellectual project of critical participatory action research, about which Susan undoubtedly has her own views, hesitations and critical reservations. *Pace*, Susan.

A New Definition of Critical Participatory Action Research

The meaning of ideas is not fixed by definitions; debates about the nature or meaning of action research or critical participatory action research will not be ended by the definition proposed here. A longstanding definition of action research, which has the advantage of brevity, is this:

> Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational *practices,* as well as their *understanding* of these practices and the *situations* in which these practices are carried out. (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988, p. 1; emphases added)

While this definition has the additional advantage of openness, it has the usual and obverse disadvantage of concise definitions: it leaves many of its presuppositions implicit.

The expanded definition proposed here aims to make some of the suppositions of 'critical participatory action research' explicit, and thus make apparent more of the theoretical, social and political commitments and underpinnings of this kind of action research. It may also reveal how critical participatory action research is oriented in the wider field of debates about the nature and significance of action research, and perhaps encourage people in the field to adopt a more encompassing view of action research. The definition may also make apparent how at least some critical participatory action researchers orient themselves towards the tasks of transformation that this kind of action research entails: transformations of work, workers and the worlds they inhabit; transformations of material-economic, cultural-discursive and social-political conditions and circumstances; and transformations of the knowledge, the skills and capacities, and the values and commitments of action researchers themselves.

The definition has six parts, each drawing attention to particular features and suppositions of this kind of action research, aiming to justify its claims to be 'critical' and 'participatory'. The definition is a single, very long sentence, with key ideas explicated in footnotes. Some readers may prefer to read the whole definition first, and then read the footnotes elaborating it. Here, then, is the definition:

Critical participatory action research

1. is research undertaken collectively by participants in a social practice[1] to achieve 'effective-historical consciousness' (including both historical consciousness of

[1] Schatzki (1996, 2002) argues that practices are 'the site of the social'—features of 'human coexistence', and that they cannot be understood solely by understanding the intentional actions of individual persons. He argues that practices are social in nature—that they are collectively formed through social action in history, and differently inflected in particular places and times. If this is so, it follows that practices must be understood in terms of action and interaction in groups and collectivities as well as in terms of the action of individuals. Further, if action research is to grasp practice in its social as well as its individual features, then it will best be undertaken as both an individual and a collective process by those whose action and interactions constitute the practice. Moreover, to embrace the perspectives of those involved from the subject or participant perspective, each in relation to the others involved, action research cannot but involve those who are participants in the practice as participants in the research process, preferably from the inception of an action research initiative to its conclusion, preferably as the agents of the research (not as 'objects' or only as observers), and preferably together, as collective agents. This kind of involvement of participants in the research process has been an aspiration characteristic of action research since its beginnings (see e.g. Lewin 1952).

Advocates of understanding social life and work from the perspective of 'communities of practice' similarly emphasise the 'situated knowledge' of those involved (e.g. Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). It follows from these insights that the study of practices entails taking into account the interlocking perspectives of those whose activities collectively constitute the practice.

an historical object and of the historicality of the person interpreting it)[2] of their practice as *praxis*[3]—that is, as morally informed, committed action, oriented by

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It is not clear, however, whose activities in fact constitute a practice—only those involved in it at the moment, in this particular location, or those who have been and will be involved in and affected by it across the whole history of the practice, wherever they are? Given that the boundaries of the groups or collectivities involved in particular practices are frequently permeable and blurred, it might be better *not* to think of action research in terms of 'projects' with 'members', but instead in terms of 'initiatives' involving numbers of people who, at different times and in different locations may take different roles in reflecting on the practice and its formation and transformation (e.g. speaker, hearer, observer, actor, absentee). Such a view of critical participatory action research in public spheres has been advocated by Kemmis and McTaggart (2000, 2005) and Kemmis (2005, 2006), based on Habermas' writings on communicative action and public discourse in public spheres (Habermas 1984, 1987a, b, 1996, 2003c), on the view that, because practices are collectively formed, a rich understanding of social practices, and legitimate transformation of the practices, practitioners and practice settings involved, can only be achieved through open, fluid and *collective* discussion and will formation. This view gains further impetus from Habermas' recognition that there is no single steering centre (and no self-regulating 'macro-subject') that can, on its own, instigate change in contemporary Western society (Habermas 2003c), but that change occurs as a result of diverse, often conflicting forces—that is, through contestation. The implication for action research, in order to enact constructive change, is that it should not only pursue self-realisation for individuals and organisations, but that it should also facilitate public debate among those involved in and affected by particular practices (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005).

[2] *Effective historical consciousness* (Gadamer 1975, pp. 267–269) is the ideal state in which an individual interprets a situation, taking into account its historical context, along with and alongside an interpretation of the historicality (the historical embeddedness of their own views in history) of their own beliefs (what Gadamer called their 'prejudices'). This dialectic of consciousness and self-consciousness, though clearly difficult to achieve, is essential in reaching a rich interpretation of history and one's own place in it—and especially for action researchers who aim to be self-conscious agents in history (particularly the situations and settings in which they act). Such understanding and self-understanding are intrinsic to *praxis* (see Carr 2006; on *praxis*, also see below).

Habermas (for a brief account, see Holub 1991) criticised Gadamer's view that it is not possible to escape the boundaries of the tradition within which an interpreter interprets the world. Habermas argued that, on the contrary, it is possible, in the process of achieving historical self-consciousness (or effective-historical understanding) to identify *for critique* aspects of one's own and others' thought that have been distorted in the traditions of thought we have inherited, and to explore ways in which these inherited ideas may now be found to be irrational, unjust, unproductive, or in some way contributing to human suffering. Following this view, *critical* participatory action research aspires, through deepening historical understanding and self-understanding, to create conditions for critical reappraisal of the structures and practices embedded in particular traditions, cultures, discourses, social-political and economic relations, and impacts of human action on environments. Critical participatory action researchers aim to identify current irrationalities, injustices, dissatisfactions and suffering in the situations they inhabit; to 'read' them as possible consequences of past and continuing historical conditions and circumstances; and to act to ameliorate or overcome such consequences by changing the practices and conditions that produce them (Kemmis and Brennan Kemmis 2003). Furthermore, critical participatory action researchers aim to 'read' (monitor and reflect upon) the consequences of their own actions in history, to determine whether their own changed practices, changed ways of understanding things, or changed conditions and circumstances do in fact produce changed and better consequences ('better' in the senses that they are less irrational, less unjust, less unsatisfactory, or less inclined to cause suffering).

[3] While *praxis* has frequently been understood as a property of *individual* action and actors, it also has a *collective* face in the collective *history-making action* of people whose actions collectively

tradition, that responds wisely to the needs, circumstances and particulars of a practical situation, and as *history-making action* that is aware that it will have consequences for all those involved and affected by it—and that this effective-historical consciousness is to be achieved not only by each as an individual but especially through collective deliberation aimed at collective self-understanding

2. as a process in which participants reflect critically[4] and self-critically[5] on

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make the future conditions enjoyed or endured by communities, nations and co-inhabitants of the earth (Kemmis 2009, 2010). In contemporary times, the significance of *praxis* has been diminished by the contemporary preoccupation with *technē* (technical, instrumental or functional knowledge, reasoning and action). This preoccupation deprives practitioners of richer understandings of the moral purpose and historical significance and consequences of their work (Aristotle 2003; Carr 2005, 2006; Carr and Kemmis 1986; Dunne 1993, 2005; Gauthier 1963; Kemmis 2005, 2010; Kemmis and Smith 2008; Schwandt 2005; Saugstad 2005).

Critical participatory action research fosters the collective reflection on the shared consequences of collective action and interactions, making possible *collective praxis*—that is, doing guided by shared understandings and self-understandings of participants generated through *communicative action* (Habermas 1984, 1987a, b, 1996, 2003c), which Habermas describes as shared practical reflection and deliberation aimed at reaching intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding and unforced consensus about what to do (see below on *communicative space*).

[4] Participants aim to reflect *critically*, unravelling problems in order to reveal their causes—that is, exploring how perspectives, social structures and practices have evolved in ways that produce some undesirable consequences. In the tradition of critical theory and its successors (e.g. Horkheimer 1972, Habermas 1972, 2003c), critical participatory action research proposes acting negatively against the identified causes of these consequences (i.e. against irrationality, injustice, dissatisfactions and suffering), as opposed to acting positively to achieve some state of being that appears ideal (in the 'progressive' Enlightenment tradition fostered by Auguste Comte's 'positivism' of the mid 19th century).

[5] The notion of reflecting *self-critically* embraces Gadamer's (1975) 'effective-historical consciousness' in the sense of consciousness of one's own historicality, but goes beyond it in the sense that it aims to discover irrationality, injustice, or causes of dissatisfaction or suffering, not only as a consequence of tradition or historically given conditions or circumstances, but also in the conduct and consequences of one's own ways of thinking, acting and relating to others. Moreover, by considering the possibility of collective agency and collective *praxis*, critical participatory action research envisages not only an 'I' who is an actor and agent but also a 'we' (for example, people enmeshed together in a particular practice) who are collective actors and agents (Carr and Kemmis 1986; Kemmis and McTaggart 1988), who can reflect together on practical situations confronting us, and make critical appraisals not only of conditions and circumstances historically given to us but also of our mutual conduct and its consequences.

In light of Habermas' (1987a, 1996, 2003c) critique of the social 'macro-subject' (a social totality understood as a self-regulating whole) and of *praxis philosophy* (that envisaged a self-steering state acting on behalf of the social totality), however, critical participatory action research can no longer regard participants as a bounded 'collective' (or as an enclosed 'project group') as if this group could act in an entirely self-regulating way without regard for perspectives of or the consequences for others (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). Against this totalising view (and taking a lead from Heidegger and others), Habermas (e.g. 1998, 2001, 2002, 2003a, c) invokes the notion of *intersubjectivity* as opening a space in which participants' perspectives and proposals for action can be mutually explored through *communicative action*. In this conception, neither the individual *subject* nor a social whole is totalised as actor or agent; instead, plurality and diversity (and recognition of and respect for others as subjects like oneself) are acknowledged and understood as 'in play' in communicative spaces where participants meet one another to reach shared understandings about the world, each other and themselves (their own ways of thinking, acting and relating).

- their *praxis* as individual and collective participants in the practice (recognising the risk that some of their actions may turn out to have untoward effects or longer-term consequences),
- their historically formed and intersubjectively shared *understandings* of the practice (recognising that, in the light of their consequences, some of their understandings may turn out to be self-deceived or ideologically distorted), and
- the historically formed cultural-discursive, social-political and material-economic fields that constitute the *conditions* of their practice and the *situations and setting* in which their practice is conducted (recognising that some of these local conditions, situations and settings may turn out to have untoward effects);

3. by opening communicative space[6]—that is, space for collective reflection and self-reflection through communicative action aimed at intersubjective agree-

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This is to adopt an *unbounded* notion of both singular and social selves, seeing the individual as a (changing, developing) participant in conversations that develop and continue through time, and social 'selves' as constituted in communicative spaces that similarly develop and continue. On this view, an action research 'project' might better be understood as a conversation-space in which proposals for action are discussed, decisions about what to do are reached, and the actions taken are deliberately (monitored and) evaluated in the light of their consequences (against criteria of rationality and the validity of knowledge in the semantic dimension; justice and solidarity in the social dimension; and in terms of the integrity, capability and identity of persons in the dimension of historical time; Habermas 1992, pp. 343–344).

[6] As suggested earlier, the notion of *communicative space* refers to spaces in which people encounter each other reciprocally, as subjects worthy of recognition and respect, as *subjects*. Communicative spaces are spaces in which people consciously try to reach *intersubjective* agreement, mutual understanding and unforced consensus about what to do. The notion of communicative space embodies the inclusive, collective, transformative aims of critical participatory action research. As an ideal (although always challenged by power asymmetries which threaten its achievement), the process of communicative action involves people together seeking understanding and consensus about what to do by speaking freely and opening themselves up to creative, responsive, democratic approaches to problems (Habermas 1987b, 1996, 2003c; Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). In an earlier formulation (Habermas 1979) of 'communicative competence' and 'the ideal speech situation', Habermas had emphasised three (sometimes four) 'validity claims'—'truth' in the sense of accuracy, sincerity or truthfulness, and moral rightness or appropriateness (and sometimes adding comprehensibility). Later (1996), after the publication of the *Theory of Communicative Action* (Habermas 1984, 1987a), and recognising that agreement about these was only possible when people were *in communication* with others, he drew attention (Habermas 1987b and especially 1996, Chap. 8) to the role of communicative action in *opening communicative space* between people—the space of *intersubjectivity* (which plays an important role in some of his more recent works, including Habermas 1998, 2002, 2003a, b, c). Opening communicative space, in turn, depends on our use of language as a tool for reaching understanding. Describing the linguistic grounding of intersubjectivity in *The Future of Human Nature* (Habermas 2003a), he writes:

> As historical and social beings we find ourselves always already in a linguistically structured lifeworld. In the forms of communication through which we reach an understanding with one another about something in the world and about ourselves, we encounter a transcending power. Language is not a kind of private property. No one possesses exclusive

ment, mutual understanding and unforced consensus about what to do—in which participants can strive together, subjectively and intersubjectively, to reach shared insights into and decisions about what to do in relation to the nature and historical formation of their practice in terms of

- how their practice has evolved over time in its intertwined (and sometimes contradictory or contested) cultural-discursive, social, material-economic and personal dimensions[7], and
- themes and issues that arise as common concerns as a consequence of the tensions and interconnections within and between their shared *lifeworlds* (that provide content and resources constituted in the shared *logos* of language and shared background assumptions in the cultural dimension, solidarities in the social dimension, and competences and capacities in the personal dimension), on the one hand, and, on the other, the administrative and economic *systems* that structure and constrain possibilities for their action in the situation[8]; and

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rights over the common medium of the communicative practices we must intersubjectively share. No single participant can control the structure, or even the course, of processes of reaching understanding and self-understanding. How speakers and hearers make use of their communicative freedom to take yes- or no-positions is not a matter of their subjective discretion. For they are free only in virtue of the binding force of the justifiable claims they raise towards one another. The *logos* of language embodies the power of the intersubjective, which precedes and grounds the subjectivity of speakers.

…The *logos* of language escapes our control, and yet we are the ones, the subjects capable of speech and action, who reach an understanding with one another in this medium. It remains 'our' language. The unconditionedness of truth and freedom is a necessary presupposition of our practices, but beyond the constituents of 'our' form of life they lack any ontological guarantee. Similarly, the 'right' ethical self-understanding is neither revealed nor 'given' in some other way. It can only be won in common endeavour. From this perspective, what makes our being-ourselves possible appears more as a transsubjective power than an absolute one. (pp. 10–11)

[7] In order to devise solutions to substantial problems and issues (like contemporary problems of sustainability in the face of global warming, or the loss of meaning and significance from the work of professional practitioners caused by the functionalist reasoning that bedevils contemporary policy processes in almost every field of human endeavour), we must look beyond immediate goals, roles, rules, functions and outcomes to the conditions that make these goals, roles, rules, functions and outcomes possible. Critical participatory action research aims to create spaces in which participants can explore the (profoundly intertwined) *cultural-discursive, social-political, material-economic and personal* origins and dimensions of problems in order to make possible the reconstruction of the collective and individual practices implicated in producing such problems (Kemmis 2005, 2006).

[8] Habermas (1984, 1987a, b) argues that, in late modernity, contemporary social *systems*, steered in the media of money and administrative power, have become 'relatively autonomous' of the *lifeworlds* in which social life is anchored (in culture and discourses in the semantic dimension; in social integration and solidarities in the social dimension; and in the integrity, capability and identity of persons in the dimension of historical time). These media-steered social systems, necessary to late modern social organisation, have become 'relatively autonomous' of lifeworlds because of the functional reason characteristic of their operation—that is, they are framed and fuelled by organisational or institutional goals, roles, rules, functions and outcomes measured principally in terms of money, profit and administrative power. Being steered by these immediate concerns, they

4. by intervening in their unfolding collective history through exploratory action to investigate their shared reality in order to transform it[9] and to transform their reality in order to investigate it[10], that is, by making changes in what they do and gathering evidence of the observable conduct and historical consequences of their actions for different people and groups involved and affected in terms of the cultural-discursive, social, material-economic and personal character, conduct and consequences of the practice,
5. with the practical aim of acting rightly (in terms of moral appropriateness) and with wisdom (based on critically interpreted tradition and experience) and pru-

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increasingly cut across the lifeworld functions of reproduction and transformation of cultures and societies, and the formation and transformation of the integrity, capability and identities of persons—lifeworld processes that are necessary to sustain cultures, societies and persons. An effect is that the integrity of cultures, societies and persons seems somehow overlooked, forgotten or even denied from the perspective of social systems *qua* system, although from its own perspective, an organisation may merely be taking a neutral stance on questions of the integrity of cultures, societies and persons.

On the other hand, given the pervasiveness of organisations in the constitution of late modern life, systems increasingly 'colonise' lifeworld relationships, bringing the content and manner of their operations into spaces like family and community life and the discussion spaces of civic society. A consequence is that people increasingly regard themselves in the roles of 'client' (in relation to the steering medium of administrative power) and 'consumer' (in relation to the steering medium of money). Habermas argues that contemporary social life is characterised by *boundary-crises* that arise at the points where organisations (systems) and lifeworlds intersect—at times when the needs on the two 'sides' are more or less incompatible. Social movements may arise, more or less spontaneously, in response to some of these boundary-crises—as in the case of the green movement which has arisen in response to various environmental crises induced by the operation of contemporary agribusiness, industrial pollution and systems of energy production and use.

Arguably, critical participatory action research has a natural 'home' in such social movements, in the organisation of will-formation and decisions about how to respond at local as well as global levels to contemporary crises (Kemmis 2000, 2001; Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). Arguably, too, critical participatory action research has a role in exploring boundary-crises at the intersections of systems (organisations) and lifeworlds, if and when systems transfer the burden of their operation to lifeworlds—for example, when participants experience a sense of loss of meaning (or incomprehensibility), justification or legitimacy, or in the form of irrationality, injustice, dissatisfactions or suffering. Acting either as participants in or observers of systems and lifeworlds, critical participatory action researchers may thematise such problems for discussion, consider alternative courses of action to address them, and take action to ameliorate or overcome them (monitoring and reflecting upon the conduct and consequences of their actions).

[9] See Fals Borda (1979).

[10] Critical participatory action research advocates *exploratory interventions*, that is, making changes during the course of individual and collective practice in order to improve it, as opposed to only passively intervening in practice after problems have arisen (Dewey 1916; Kemmis and Brennan Kemmis 2003). It aims to take communicative action into social practice, using social practice and practical and critical reflections on the consequences of practice as a source of new understandings and future reflection (Habermas 1987a; Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). Critical participatory action researchers make critical analyses of practice/*praxis* using a range of perspectives in order to create shared understandings of and orientations to social reality, with the intention of *transforming* social realities (Fals Borda 1979; Kemmis and McTaggart 2000, 2005) so that they may become less irrational, less unjust and less inhumane.

dence in response to a current issue or concern that confronts them in their particular situation[11]; and, in addition to this,

6. with the emancipatory aims[12] of eliminating, as far as possible, character, conduct or consequences that are untoward, distorted, destructive or unsustainable because they are

   - irrational (discursively unsustainable),
   - unjust (causing or supporting domination or oppression)[13], alienating or excluding (morally and socially unsustainable),
   - unproductive (materially economically unsustainable), or
   - the unjustifiable causes of suffering or dissatisfaction for particular persons or groups

and of enhancing participants' capacity for collective historical action, often in the context of social movements[14].

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[11] The aim of *practical* reason—reasoning about what Reid (1978) calls "uncertain practical questions"—is *praxis* or right conduct in response to a particular situation (wise and prudent action, frequently oriented by traditions of thought and debate about relevant issues). Practical reason views both ends and means of action as problematic, and aims to equip people (as agents) with better ways of understanding action (*phronēsis*) and greater capacities for moral action (*praxis*) (Aristotle 2003; Carr and Kemmis 1986; Carr 2006). Action researchers conduct research into their action in parallel with *doing* whatever it is they are doing in order to enhance *praxis* for both the good of individuals and the good for humankind.

[12] Critical participatory action research aims to liberate people from harmful constraints (often historically given, whether given by tradition, or by social or economic or material conditions and circumstances)—from irrationality or lack of justification in the cultural-discursive dimension; from injustice and illegitimacy in the social dimension; and from suffering and dissatisfaction in the material-economic dimension. Collaborative reflection and theorising via critical reasoning helps participants determine how a situation has arisen and engages them in political action directed towards an *emancipatory reconstruction* of the setting (Habermas 1972, 1974, 1975). In the context of education, for example, policy makers and teachers could use less prescriptive, less instrumental ways of assessing students' learning, thereby contributing to the development of less alienating, less controlled educational settings and less marginalised, less uninspired learners (Freire 1970a, b).

[13] The tenet that every person is of equal value by virtue of *being* a person is at the heart of critical participatory action research, hence its commitment to collaborative reflection and action, and to the *abolition of social injustice* (Horkheimer 1972; Habermas 2003c). For example, valuing students of minority cultures equally with students of majority cultures, as reflected in both the curriculum and in the way teachers conduct their classes, will help to build a less intolerant, less unjust school community. Young (1990) argues that injustice consists in domination and oppression—arguing that *domination* is constituted by social structures or practices that unreasonably constrain *self-determination*, and that *oppression* (in the five distinctive forms of exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence) is constituted by social structures or practices that unreasonably constrain *self-expression* and *self-development*.

[14] Critical participatory action research has the universal aim of building a better world via engagement in communicative forms of life and, sometimes, collective historical action through *social movements* (Touraine 1981; Habermas 1987a, b, 1996). Arguably, critical participatory action research initiatives in education aimed at reconstructing schools to be less irrational, unjust, unsatisfactory and unsustainable, will result in wider communities and societies which are more rational, just, inclusive, satisfying and sustainable.

An Accidental Practitioner of Critical Participatory Action Research?

In recent years, Susan has described the kind of teacher research she advocates as 'practitioner inquiry' although her writings are also to be found in the pages of volumes about 'educational action research' (e.g. the three-volume *Action Research in Education*, edited by Campbell and Groundwater-Smith 2010). She has also written (e.g. Groundwater-Smith 1988) about different kinds of action research—technical, practical and emancipatory action research (using the distinctions promulgated by Habermas 1972 and Carr and Kemmis 1986). And she has consistently maintained that practitioner inquiry should be critical and emancipatory—from her chapter in Nias and Groundwater-Smith (1988) to her recent plea, together with Nicole Mockler (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009), for teachers to be critical of the conditions of education and schooling, to be courageous about addressing the problems education confronts today, and, as professionals, being activist about making changes that can overcome some of the problems of schooling today.

I doubt that Susan has ever described herself as a 'critical participatory action researcher': the label is more cumbersome than she could accept, I think, on the grounds of style alone. But the evidence of her writings over the years—her *oeuvre*—suggests that she shares many of the commitments which I think are characteristic of critical participatory action research as I have defined it here. Perhaps, then, she might best be described as an *accidental* practitioner and advocate of critical participatory action research. Shortly, I will use the six parts of the definition presented here to explore this proposition.

Before proceeding, however, it is worth recalling that Susan has been advocating teacher inquiry for more than 30 years. In Groundwater-Smith and Nicholl (1980), she published *Evaluation in the Primary School*, drawing together ideas about and resources for teacher and school self-evaluation gathered from her experience supporting schools to conduct (self-)evaluations in the Australian Government's Disadvantaged Schools Program (which provided schools with additional resources for school programs to address the needs of disadvantaged students). Eight years later, following the burgeoning of university courses involving teachers in enquiries into their own practice, with Jennifer Nias, she co-edited and contributed to *The Enquiring Teacher: Supporting and Sustaining Teacher Research* (Nias and Groundwater-Smith 1988). And her advocacy of teacher enquiry continues in the best-selling texts for prospective teachers she has written with several longstanding collaborators (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2007, 2009—as well as the earlier editions of each). Susan has written about and taught practitioner inquiry for at least these 30 years, and she continues to support teachers in schools, universities and other institutions in the process. On the basis of this evidence, it is not unreasonable to describe her as an action researcher, on the grounds of both her advocacy and her practice. But what kind of an action researcher?

In the sections that follow, I aim to show that Susan has advocated views about practitioner inquiry that highlight matters also crucial to critical participatory action

research. Robin McTaggart and I (Kemmis and McTaggart 2000, 2005) have come to insist upon this cumbersome label to describe the kind of action research we most want to encourage; we want to distinguish it from action research which does not engage groups of people in the collective examination of their own practices, which is implemented in the service of 'school improvement' as this is defined in government policies; and which does not challenge the conditions which irrationally, unjustly and unproductively constrain teachers' understandings, their work and their workplaces. The definition of critical participatory action research I have presented in this chapter further clarifies some of the central features of my understanding of this form of action research. Using terms associated with the six parts of the definition as prompts, I will comment briefly on aspects of Susan's work that seem to me to show affinities with critical participatory action research. I will not, however, ask Susan to endorse this interpretation of her work.

Practice, Praxis, Effective-Historical Consciousness

In 2006, reflecting on her 'professional self' (Groundwater-Smith 2006), Susan demonstrated her commitment to improving her own practice as a teacher and researcher, showing an acute awareness of herself as formed in a particular history, as shaped by particular books and by her engagement with the work of Lawrence Stenhouse. She reported that the writing of the chapter had made her feel vulnerable to the gaze of readers, but she determined, through the drafting process, that she would portray herself openly despite this feeling. Her commitments, to social justice, for example, and some of her enthusiasms (for a great variety of interesting books, for instance) are on display. She also chooses a person—Stenhouse—to exemplify a guiding purpose and informing spirit for her work over the last 30 years. She locates herself as modernist in the stream of contemporary theory and literature. And through these gestures she reveals her own effective-historical consciousness—her knowledge of herself as formed by a tradition, as within the tradition, and as a contributor to the continuation and development of the tradition—as shaped by, and shaping, the tradition that valorises and supports the teacher as researcher.

She has been a self-evaluating teacher and a teacher-researcher for most of her career, before her university career as well as throughout it. What makes her so different from others within the practice tradition of the teacher-researcher, however, is that she has also been an articulate advocate for the tradition, deliberately intervening in the initial and continuing education of educators to ensure that it produces autonomous and activist professionals capable of maintaining and developing education despite the diminished conditions of schooling in 'an age of compliance' (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009). In short, Susan remains aware of her person, her profession and her work as products of history and tradition, and also as interventions into histories and traditions. In these senses, she is committed not only to *praxis* in the sense of the 'right conduct' of Aristotle, but also in terms of the collective 'history-making action' of Hegel and Marx: she acts not only

alone, but in dialogue and solidarity with others with whom she shares collective responsibility for the good of the practice of education, the good of the education profession, and the good for humankind. One demonstration of her understanding of the sweep of history and of scholarship in participant inquiry and action research—locating the historicality of contemporary action researchers—is in her editorship (with Anne Campbell) of the three volume *Action Research in Education* (Campbell and Groundwater-Smith 2010), which surveys the history and diversity of action research.

Of course Susan does not act only as a teacher-researcher and advocate of teacher research. She also acts in relation to the conditions of the profession and the practice of education. She is aware of the historicality of schooling, and intervenes to propose policy responses to the needs of the practice and the profession at particular moments. Responding at a particular moment to the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (NSW DET) consultation on the future of public education, for example, she and I proposed forms of participant inquiry and partnership with universities appropriate for the continuing professional development of teachers in New South Wales at the time (Groundwater-Smith and Kemmis 2005). In this and many other evaluations (like our evaluation of the NSW DET Priority Action Schools Program, Groundwater-Smith and Kemmis 2004) and when she is invited to advise on policies and programmes, she intervenes as a critically conscious activist professional in the history of education.

Critical and Self-Critical Reflection

On the basis of what has already been said, it is clear that Susan shares the critical participatory action researcher's commitment to critical and self-critical reflection. In 1988, for example, she advocated this commitment in her chapter in the Nias and Groundwater-Smith (1988) edited volume, especially adopting a critical view about the extent to which enquiry-based approaches in teacher education courses actually adopted a critical perspective or an emancipatory commitment to transforming teacher education and the continuing professional development of teachers. Among many, many other examples, she and Nicole Mockler provide advice and examples for teachers beginning critical and self-critical enquiry in their own schools and classrooms in Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2003) *Learning to Listen: Listening to Learn*.

Communicative Space

Groundwater-Smith and Sachs (2002) cite Gutmann and Thompson (1996) on deliberative democracy as a model for the 'activist professional' who engages in deliberations with others about how to overcome injustice and irrationality in a society.

In turn, Gutmann and Thompson (2004) acknowledge Jürgen Habermas as a key source for their notion of deliberative democracy. They say (referring specifically to Habermas 1996):

> More than any other theorist Jürgen Habermas is responsible for reviving the idea of deliberation in our time, and giving it a more thoroughly democratic foundation. His deliberative politics is firmly grounded in the idea of popular sovereignty. The fundamental source of legitimacy is the collective judgement of the people. (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, p. 9)

The ideal of deliberative democracy is also continuous with Stenhouse's (1975) notion of 'extended professionals' engaging in research into her own teaching, where research is defined as Stenhouse (1979, p. 7) defined it, namely, as "systematic enquiry made public…for criticism and utilization within a particular research tradition". This image of a profession deliberating together about how its work should be done remains at the core of the notion of the 'activist professional' (Sachs 2000, 2003) and it is continuously present or presupposed in Susan's work from her early writing to the most recent (e.g. Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009).

Not only does Susan want the voices of professional teachers involved in these deliberations. For some years now, she has also advocated 'student voice' within the deliberations about how education should proceed (e.g. Groundwater-Smith 2007). She is aware, however, of the dangers that school students can be unequal partners in these deliberations, and so she proposes a variety of precautions to ensure 'the right to say no' in informed consent about their participation in discussions of the teaching they observe, and the need for anonymity and confidentiality in reporting their views to teachers and schools.

In at least these ways, then—for teachers and for students—Susan envisages conditions in which communicative space is opened for deliberation about education and schooling, another aspect of the kind of practice characteristic of critical participatory action research.

Exploratory Action: Investigating Reality in Order to Transform It; Transforming Reality in Order to Investigate It

Teachers influenced by Susan's writings are researchers who explore possibilities for their practice through their research. She draws upon and cites with approval (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009) Dewey's *Democracy and Education* and its advocacy of exploration through a version of scientific method he describes. This kind of exploration involves active intervention to learn what consequences follow from changes made. And it is clear from accounts of the work of the Coalition of Knowledge-Building Schools (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2002, 2009) that she helped to establish, that she and her teacher-researcher colleagues in a number of participating schools are indeed investigating their school and classroom realities in order to transform them, and transforming those realities in order to investigate them. This, too, is an aspiration shared with critical participatory action research.

A Practical Aim

The practical aim of critical participatory action research is to orient and inform action—to answer the kinds of questions that can only be answered by doing something. To cite just a couple of examples in which I have been involved with Susan and others, she has written extensively to inform teachers, consultants, policy-makers and others about lessons learned from practice that suggest how a wise practitioner might proceed, and what a wise policy might be for particular kinds of circumstances and exigencies. Thus, for example, and with various co-authors, she has made practical suggestions and recommendations about what could be learned from the experience of the NSW DET *Priority Action Schools program* which provided additional funding and staff support for 72 NSW schools in especially challenging circumstances (Beveridge et al. 2005; Groundwater-Smith and Kemmis 2005). The recommendations of these and other studies Susan has conducted—often not acted upon—have the practical aim of improving the quality of educational experiences for teachers, students, schools and communities. But she remains fearless about giving the advice—as the next section suggests.

An Emancipatory Aim

In 1988, thinking about teacher enquiry in award-bearing courses, Susan questioned whether it is possible that teacher enquiry could be conducted by critical communities of co-equal participants oriented by an emancipatory aim. Although she thought that the kind of relationships between participants in award-bearing courses did not, in general, overcome the asymmetries of power between teachers on these courses (who also assessed the students) and the students, she nevertheless concluded that it might be possible to arrange things so that the effects of the asymmetry could be mitigated. The tension between the emancipatory aspiration and the presupposition of open communication is always present, as Susan noted at the time. She also thought that teacher research more generally could overcome these asymmetries in collaborative work to investigate and improve education and teaching. She writes:

> The impetus is towards empowerment of the knower to perceive the genesis and evolution of ideas in sociohistorical space, and having thus, identified them to understand their consequences upon individuals and groups, students, teachers and parents…. (p. 259)

As Susan described it, the aim of an emancipatory aspiration interest is to free the knower (a teacher, for example) from the constraints of dogma—ideas that have come to be taken for granted on the basis of tradition or custom, and that have untoward consequences for all or some people and groups in a setting or a society. She acknowledges that this is always difficult, and that attempts at emancipation always fall short of the ideal—achieving a perfectly rational and just society, for example. But, as this suggests, she nevertheless embraced the aspiration towards emancipatory.

Written about in that formal way, emancipation—as emancipation from dogma or irrationality and injustice—seems somehow elusive and idealistic. In practice, however, people do come across sources of felt dissatisfaction, unequally shared untoward consequences, and ideas that appear to justify the ill-treatment of some groups—as, for example, when they encounter the consequences of discrimination. There are ideas that harm us when they are made manifest and dangerous in action—ideas that other human beings can be treated as sub-human or non-human, for example. Susan has long been among those arguing that teachers should investigate whether their actions are based on sound ideas, and that they should strive to recognise and include those who risk exclusion.

Nowhere is the emancipatory thread in Susan's work more evident, however, than in her recent book with Nicole Mockler (2009), *Teacher Professional Learning in an Age of Compliance*. The book discusses challenges to the teaching profession in an 'audit culture'—the challenges of standardisation, the erosion of teacher judgement in the face of standards in curriculum and teaching, and the widespread use of national testing to monitor the performance of schools and teachers, for example. The book is a call to action for the profession—a call to inquiry-based professional learning as a way of understanding and overcoming the contemporary problems faced by the teaching profession. Under the pressures now faced by the profession, they argue, teachers need to think and act collectively through inquiry-based professional learning to recover and revive their educational work.

The book gives an account of some of the felt dissatisfactions experienced by teachers today, and identifies how they are the consequence of irrational arrangements made by education systems—in the form of policies and procedures which undermine the professional judgement and work of teachers—and the unjust consequences of such policies—the unequal distribution of educational opportunities and outcomes by socioeconomic status, for example. Its emancipatory aspirations are at one with those of the kind of critical participatory action research advocated by Kemmis and McTaggart (2000, 2005) as well as in the definition of critical participatory action research offered in this chapter.

Conclusion

Despite the suggestive evidence presented here, of course, I cannot reasonably claim that Susan is a critical participatory action researcher or an advocate of critical participatory action research. As far as I know, she has not described herself that way—and no doubt (given her critical cast of mind) she has reservations about my definition and some of the literatures that I have adduced in support of it. To the extent that she can be called a critical participatory action researcher, then, it may only be for the 'accidental' and contingent reason that she happens to hold some of the same views that I regard as crucial in this approach to action research.

This is not the only time we have turned out to hold similar views. We have done so on a range of matters for many years—since first I met her soon after I returned

to Australia from the Centre for Applied Research in Education at the University of East Anglia in the United Kingdom more than 30 years ago, where I had been working with, among others, Lawrence Stenhouse—the person she nominates as a key influence in her (2006) autobiographical self-reflection. (He influenced me, too.) During those 30 years, we have had some wonderful conversations, and from time to time we have worked together on very interesting projects. Most significantly, we have shared an enduring commitment to teacher research on the grounds of our mutual conviction that education cannot change without teachers and the teaching profession driving educational change—even if others (students, communities and sometimes university academics, for example) may in their turn coax or influence teachers to change. Over the years, Susan has extended that participatory principle to include students, and fostered her long advocacy for student voice in educational research—a principle that I also endorse in the interests of inclusion of those most involved in and affected by teaching as a practice.

As many others also find, conversations with Susan are explorations of things about which we agree and sometimes disagree, and of the chasms that can suddenly open when she fixes attention on some idea that had previously seemed solid enough to stand on. Such conversations are the meat and drink of an academic life. This chapter aims to be, for me, another stage in our 30-year conversation: another topic to be looked at from different angles, poked and prodded, and its fate decided.

For all of us, conversation is the point: it is in practical and critical conversations that we meet one another, share ideas, reach agreements and understandings, and decide what to do. In the case of critical deliberations, it is also to decide how to act not just in our own interests but in the interests of humankind. In a career of practical and critical deliberations, Susan has reflected deeply on education and her place in it, and on the basis of that reflection she has *acted* on behalf of students, teachers, the profession and the discipline of Education. She exemplifies the *phronēsis*—the wisdom borne of experience—of the person who has learned from life. As a teacher, as a teacher educator, as an advocate for the disadvantaged, as a researcher, and as an advocate for education, she exemplifies the virtues of the self-reflective practitioner.

May the conversations continue.

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Chapter 3
Localisation or Globalisation? The Dynamic Variations of Action Research

Bridget Somekh

Introduction

The experience of writing a chapter for this book has highlighted for me the importance of Susan Groundwater-Smith's work as an inspiration and a challenge for my own professional learning and academic work since we first met in 1986. She has on at least two occasions been the cavalry riding to my support, critically important to the success of an endeavour to which I was committed. Susan first came riding to my rescue in 1986 when she worked alongside me on a collaborative writing project using email to link students in Cambridge schools in the United Kingdom with students in Wellesley School District, MA, in the United States. The project, in which children wrote 'relay' stories, started by one group, continued by another, and so forth, was extremely ambitious at a time when the use of email in schools was in its infancy. It was part of a two-year collaborative initiative sponsored by the National Union of Teachers in the United Kingdom and the National Education Association in the United States, but my best efforts had not managed to attract sufficient funding to carry out action research with the teachers and students in the way I had planned. Susan, who was working with Jennifer Nias at the Cambridge Institute of Education at the time, joined me with her delight and passion for the project and modelled a way of working with teachers and students that was both scholarly and respectful of their contributions (Somekh and Groundwater-Smith 1988). She was inspirational and great fun to work with. In 2009, when Niki Davis and I were planning the inaugural symposium of the New Zealand Collaborative Action and Research Network (CA&RN), Susan came riding to our support in very much the same way http://nzcarnresearchsymposium.blogspot.com/. She flew from

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Australia and gave a scholarly and inspiring keynote presentation which helped to ensure the success of the event. Moreover, her advice and long associations with CARN (Collaborative Action Research Network) and its journal, Educational Action Research, of which she was an editor from 2004 to 2007, were important to the decision-making processes of establishing New Zealand CA&RN on a firm footing (Davis et al. 2009).

It is perhaps of interest, however, that Susan has used the term Practitioner Inquiry to describe her work, whereas I have always called my own work action research. Susan has been a leader in promoting the biennial Practitioner Research Conferences; I have been a coordinator of CARN with responsibility for promoting its conferences. The divergence in discourses marks differences in how we have each positioned our work, but the core values are considerably overlapping. For example, we worked together to assist Petra Ponte in organising a hugely successful combined Practitioner Research/CARN Conference in the Netherlands in 2005. We are both past editors of *Educational Action Research*. The focus for my early action research in the early 1980s was teacher–student interactions in my own classroom. Since then, like Susan, I have often worked alongside teachers and students as an academic providing external support for teachers carrying out research on their own practice. Each of us has demonstrated a preference for calling our work 'action research' or 'practitioner inquiry' while keeping our minds open to the other.

This chapter is about the commonalities between the many variations of action research and practitioner inquiry. It explores the processes by which shared values are discursively constructed to suit contexts and cultures. It uses the discourse of action research and it celebrates the energy and agency of the global practitioner inquiry movement.

Variations of Action Research as an Example of 'Globalisation from Below'

It is against this background that I want to explore the idea that variations of action research in different countries, and in different social and disciplinary settings, can be understood as an example of Appadurai's 'grassroots globalisation', or 'globalisation from below' (Appadurai 2001, pp. 16–20). If we conceptualise action research in this way, what questions does this raise?

Appadurai describes how globalisation currently manifests itself in 'a world of flows' … 'a world fundamentally characterised by objects in motion'. Among these objects, he specifies 'ideas and ideologies, people and goods, images and messages, technologies and techniques'. He uses the concept of 'globalisation from below' to describe the emergence of social forms that 'contest, interrogate, and reverse' the top–down power of globalisation, and 'create knowledge transfer and social mobilization'. Thus the process of globalisation creates opportunities for grassroots activism at the same time as creating opportunities for international corporations and powerful nation states to exercise oppressive power (Appadurai 2001, pp. 5–7). Ken

Zeichner and I used this idea in an article published in Educational Action Research (EAR) in which, based on an analysis of 46 publications describing action research projects and practices, we identified and described five 'variations' in the ways in which action research theories and practices have been remodelled in local contexts. We concluded by suggesting that 'the emerging variations of action research in many countries during the period 2000–2008 can be construed as an example of Appadurai's "globalization from below"' (Somekh and Zeichner 2009, p. 19).

If we accept this, it raises several questions: Why and how does the process of variation of action research take place? How has this process been affected by 'the world of flows' that characterises globalisation? How should action researchers respond to these variations, and does it matter if they go by a different name? Would an insistence on action research remaining 'pure' and 'uncontaminated' by variations be a form of colonial coercion? What are the advantages of local variations?

In his 2001 book, Appadurai discusses the limitations of research in the social sciences which he characterises, largely in positivist terms, as 'the routinized productions of certain kinds of new knowledge' …with 'a distinct positive valuation of the need to detach morality and political interest from properly scholarly research' (p. 15). This leads him to ask a number of questions about transforming and revitalising the taken-for-granted research ethic, to restore the 'energy of earlier visions of scholarship in which moral and political concerns were central'. To which, while reading, I was crying out yes, yes, what you are looking for already exists, it's called action research. He has since answered his own questions. In a paper published in 2006 he describes 'exploring the democratisation of the right to research, and the nexus between research and action' by establishing and working with a grassroots group in Mumbai, Partners for Urban Knowledge Action and Research (PUKAR) (Appadurai 2006). Dismissing the conceptualisation of research being 'context-free, cosmopolitan, abstract activity' as 'parochial' (p. 169)—that is, taking the opposite view from what is usually claimed—he describes and celebrates the work of PUKAR as 'action-oriented research'. PUKAR uses the method of 'documentation as intervention', to 'bring the capacity to research within the reach of ordinary citizens, especially college-age youth'. In this paper, Appadurai asserts that the 'right to research' and the 'capacity to aspire' are key components through which globalisation from below can be realised. PUKAR brings together 'early career researchers, journalists, architects, sociologists, teachers and others', to work with disadvantaged young people in Mumbai to write about 'their buildings, their streets, their families', to take photographs, make films and look for opportunities to enter into public debate and communication about their world and their city (pp. 173–175). In many ways, I find myself wanting to claim it as another 'variation' of action research. But have I the right to do that? Might there be a better way of identifying commonality of vision and practices. The Indian link jogs a memory of a conversation with an Indian friend, in which my attempt to explain a complicated family relationship-by-marriage was met with surprise—'why don't you just say cousin?' Indian families are extended and inclusive. I remember, my mother, who was born in India, always expected us as children to call her close female

friends 'aunt' and count their children as our cousins. This is the mutually respectful relationship I am looking for. I can claim 'cousin status' for action research with PUKAR, Indian-style.

Why and How Does the Process of Variation of Action Research Take Place?

Action research is dynamic because of its activist stance, its focus on the possibility of change. It is an open research process, in Stephen Corey's words:

> In a program of action research, it is impossible to know definitely in advance the exact nature of the inquiry that will develop. If initial designs, important as they are for action research, are treated with too much respect, the investigators may not be sufficiently sensitive to their developing irrelevance to the ongoing situation. (Corey 1949, p. 519)

Action research grows out of the values and purposes of practitioners and involves collecting data systematically, reflecting and critically questioning. The contexts in which the research takes place embody cultural assumptions and historical structures and practices that construct and constrain the dynamic development of the action research. The action-researcher partners' values themselves become the object for challenge and reflection as their impact on practice is explored. As their collaboration deepens, the purposes and focus of the action research typically change. Its democratic, collaborative ethic makes it impossible for action research to proceed in accordance with a pre-determined plan. Its research process is emergent.

Action research is also dynamic because the knowledge it generates is always contextualised, which makes it immediately usable—and therefore malleable—in the local context. In terms of traditional social science methodology this has been seen as a serious shortcoming, but feminist and poststructuralist theorists have shown that the ideal of context-free, objective research processes developing abstract theories, generalisable across contexts, is neither achievable nor desirable. Instead, it is recognised that the nature of all knowledge is provisional and contingent on 'the knower' and 'what kinds of things can be known' (Harding 1987, p. 3). Knowledge is shaped by identities, discourses and cultures.

I have written elsewhere,

> If it is no longer possible to establish truths which are generalisable across contexts, it is no longer a disadvantage to have a methodology which always generates contextualised knowledge. Because of its contextualised nature, knowledge generated from action research is cautious in its claims, sensitive to variation and open to reinterpretation in new contexts. (Somekh 2006a, pp. 27–28)

This process of reinterpretation of theories generated from action research in new contexts leads, Elliott notes, to some theories commanding 'a measure of universal assent'. He sees this as a result of the basic facility of human beings to 'discern similarities as well as differences in their practical circumstances' (Elliott 2007, p. 10). It has been my experience that knowledge gained through action research is always

generalisable in this way. In my book, *Action Research: A Methodology for Change and Development*, I give an example of how knowledge I had gained from working with large secondary schools in two Counties in England, during the 1980s, was seen by the senior management team in a school in a neighbouring County to give me an extraordinary understanding of their school and its needs. This demonstrated that 'knowledge acquired from action research involving close partnership with participants is quickly validated and appropriated by those in similar situations who recognise its immediate usefulness' (Somekh 2006a, pp. 3–4).

How, then, do 'variations' in action research approaches develop? One way, it seems, is when the collaborative production of action research knowledge moves to cross-cultural settings. The action research literature over the last 20 years provides evidence of how the dynamic quality of action research loosens methodological certainties. International collaboration quickly shows us that others assume different ways of doing things. This emerged clearly from the data in the Management for Organisational and Human Development project (MOHD), sponsored by the European Union between 1995 and 1997. In this international network of action research teams in Spain, Italy, Austria, England and Scotland, our action research into the management of organisational and human development used many of the same methods across the different countries, but our basic approaches had to be adapted to suit the culture of each country (Somekh 2006b). For example, the pace of change expected of schools in England was much greater than in Austria. This, together with the regime of high stakes external inspections, necessitated closer tracking of the headteacher's existing management strategies in England, compared with Austria where the researchers found more time available to plan discrete activities with teachers, with less input from the headteacher. The differences in approach can also be seen to emerge from different ideological traditions. For example, it is likely that the Anglo-Saxon 'practicality ethic' (Doyle and Ponder 1977) shaped the approach in England and the approach in Austria was shaped by Germanic respect for theory. The movement of a researcher from each country to work for 6 months with the research team in another country highlighted our awareness of differences. Yet, it was only over time that we began to understand these differences as *cultural* and *systemic* rather than individual and professional. Inevitably there were issues of differential power between team members, with my own position as co-ordinator, working alongside more experienced colleagues, sometimes becoming uncomfortable. Differences in individual experience and status, and issues arising from the dominance of English as the project's language of communication produced undercurrents of tension. It was an important moment of learning when Susan Noffke, acting as keynote speaker and critical friend at one of our international conferences, reminded us all of 'the need for dominant cultures to look in a mirror' and recognise incipient hegemonies (MOHD unpublished).

Certainties are rooted in the history of thought within a culture. The 'western' tendency to dichotomise mind and body in the process of advancing a rational argument, 'objectively', is often traced back to Plato and Aristotle, via DesCartes and the Enlightenment. In a similar way, 'western' roots in Christianity, reinvented by the Protestant Reformation and the American and French Revolutions, have

influenced the development of our cult of the individual. Li and Laidlaw (2006) write about their co-learning when they each brought different certainties to their collaborative action research project in China—the certainties of collectivism, on the one hand, and individualism on the other. For Laidlaw, the value Li Peidong placed on collectivism posed a powerful challenge to the action research question, 'How can I improve my practice?' that had been central to much of her previous work (Whitehead and McNiff 2006). The Chinese discomfort with individualism and preference for collectivism, dates back much further than the origins of the communist state in the twentieth century to its roots in the philosophy of Confucius. Simple dichotomies are not helpful in understanding how these cultural differences shape action research practices in East Asia. There has been a tendency for western action researchers to be too uncritically approving of the supposed Eastern facility to conceptualise mind and body as a unity, and too easily negative in assuming that Confucian thought leads to conformity and lack of critical and creative capacities. For an excellent exploration of Confucian thought, and its points of similarity and difference with action research theories and practices, see Elliott and Tsai (2008).

It seems, therefore, that variations of action research develop naturally and necessarily when action research 'travels' to different cultures. Rizvi shows how ideas from one culture are seldom adopted by another culture without change, but instead are remodelled through the creative process of collective imagining. Building on ideas from C Wright Mills, Appadurai, Maxine Greene and Corenelius Castoriadis, Rizvi sees the 'social imaginary' as 'a collective force that is not only specific to time and space but is also always multiple and highly contested within particular and across communities'. He calls this 'a collective sense of agency' (Rizvi 2006, p. 195). Action research travels to a new culture—or is re-introduced where it has been perhaps a decade before—and its adoption as a methodology for social renewal through mobilising the 'right to research' and the 'capacity to aspire', at the grassroots, is dependent on it capturing the attention of the social imaginary. Its sensitivity to local culture and democratic imperative help it to find a fit and create an energy point for new development. For me this process has been powerfully illustrated by the resurgence of interest in action research in New Zealand that led to the founding of the New Zealand CA&RN group in which Susan and I collaborated with Niki Davis in 2009.

Action Research—The Variations

The action research literature provides evidence of considerable variation in approaches across many cultures. Variation is manifest in different countries and within different disciplines. I want to suggest that this is something to celebrate. It is a strong indicator of the power of action research to reinvent itself according to local need; and it shows that action research is already a methodology that is contributing to the process of globalisation from below. But what I am suggesting is, I know, contentious. There is a tendency for human groups to develop a discourse

of 'regimes of truth' that demark the limitations of what is acceptable, and control what can be said (Foucault 1980, p. 131). When those come into the group who do not conform to the Discourse they disrupt certainties and create an urge to 'other' and exclude the intruder. Pring sees this as a danger that is endemic in educational research: 'These sharp divisions are frequently institutionalised, with members of one institution sniping at members of the other' (Pring 2004, p. 44). He refers particularly to the turf wars between quantitative and qualitative researchers, but it is a phenomenon that action researchers should also be aware of and guard against. Even the democratic aspirations of CARN conferences—conferences which in my experience are exceptionally open and inclusive—can sometimes be disrupted by undercurrents of hostility towards keynote speakers who seem to bring messages counter to the majority's expectations. Health, Education, Community and Social work have their own different cultures and social imaginaries and we do not always listen with equal openness of mind to those outside our own discipline. Even voices from the past history of action research—like Kurt Lewin—are sometimes discounted and ignored as we bring the values of our own Discourse to bear on the writings from the 1940s. Of course, I am not advocating abandoning the core values and practices of action research and will turn to these in the next section. First, however, I would like to illustrate the richness and variety of action research's current achievements as it appears in the action research literature.

When Susan Noffke and I embarked on editing the *Handbook of Educational Action Research* (Noffke and Somekh 2009) we wanted to represent the breadth and range of the action research traditions that had developed globally. We did not limit the contributions to those who called their work 'action research'. We invited authors whose work demonstrated the process of praxis and the values of collaborative, practitioner inquiry. Methodological and theoretical diversity places the *Handbook of Educational Action Research* in the tradition of the *Educational Action Research* journal which 'publishes accounts of a range of action research and related studies' (www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authors/reacauth.asp). Those with a specific focus on 'practitioner inquiry' are mainly located in the Professional section. Susan's chapter, 'Co-operative change management through practitioner inquiry' (Groundwater-Smith 2009), presents the work of the Priority Actions Schools Program (PASP) in New South Wales. The programme provided support for teachers' and students' knowledge-building activities in schools in receipt of additional funding to overcome social disadvantage. Its focus was on enabling teachers and students to create and store educational knowledge. Teachers modelled the process of inquiry, involving students as partners in their own development of professional knowledge. PASP had a strong structure, with academic partners working in collaboration with schools to explore and develop strategies to improve many features of their work, including pedagogy, students' learning outcomes, and teacher professional development. The schools were required to develop school learning portfolios to evaluate their work; and 'meta-evaluators', of whom Susan was one, analyzed the portfolios and provided 'pressure and support' intended to be 'relentless' but 'not draconian'. PASP provides us with insights into the commitment of Susan's support for schools; her passionate concern with social justice for children;

and her ability to bridge between external authorities and the teachers and leaders within schools.

The Handbook encompasses a wide cultural range with authors drawn from 16 countries across all continents of the world except Antarctica. Nevertheless, with an eye to the market, the publisher required us to draw mainly upon authors in North America, Australia and Europe. Its focus was too 'western/northern' to provide sufficient illustration of the variations of action research emerging globally in many cultures. The following year I had the opportunity to explore the incidence and processes of variation much more fully. For an article I was writing with Ken Zeichner for the special issue of EAR on multiple perspectives on action research, I carried out an analysis of articles about action research work in countries where English was not the first language, published between 2000 and 2008. The analysis was based on a framework of eight dimensions of action research comprising:

1. The purposes for which action research is conducted
2. The contextual conditions for action research
3. The philosophy toward teachers and their learning
4. Who sponsors the research?
5. Incentives for doing action research
6. The form of inquiry
7. The relationship of action research to other research
8. Ways of representing action research to each other

To this analysis we added the outcomes of Ken's recent work on the impact of the No Child Left Behind legislation on teachers' action research work in the United States. The resulting typology of five variations of action research, in relation to educational reform, is, therefore, partial rather than comprehensive. The five variations from the article are quoted here with brief explanations. See also Somekh and Zeichner (2009) for a fuller discussion.

1. 'Action research in times of political upheaval and transition' (Somekh and Zeichner 2009, p. 12)
   This variant of action research, which we illustrated with reference to work in Namibia, South Africa, Russia and Spain, is concerned with political struggle under oppressive regimes and the process of coming to terms with both ideological change and a degree of disappointment following the establishment of reformist regimes. 'Action research, particularly when it draws upon critical and emancipatory values (Carr and Kemmis 1986), provides a starting point for working to realize the vision' (Somekh and Zeichner 2009, p. 12).
2. 'Action research as a state-sponsored means of reforming schooling' (p. 14)
   This variant of action research, which we illustrated with reference to work in Singapore and Hong Kong, reflects a movement, during the second half of the 1990s, and into the new century, for countries in far East Asia to adopt action research as a strategy for working with teachers to reform schooling. This kind of action research is characterised by the integration of aspects of Chinese culture and Confucian philosophy with action research theories: 'It can be seen as

a response to a perceived need to encourage greater creativity and entrepreneurship…' (p. 14).

3. 'Co-option of action research by Western governments and school systems to control teachers' (p. 15)
   This variant of action research, for which we drew on publications such as Michael Apple's book *Educating the Right Way* (Apple 2001) and Stephen Ball's lecture 'Everything for sale: the commodification of everything' (Ball 2004) is well illustrated in an article by Ambrose et al. (2007) which describes work undertaken by teachers, who are part time graduate students, within the constraints of the No Child Left Behind Act in the United States. Published in EAR, this work is described in the editorial as 'intentionally minimalist'. The difference between this kind of action research and that of variant 2. arises entirely from cultural and policy differences in the established education systems in which they are located. For example, the East Asian variant is found in school systems whose students have typically scored highly in international comparative tests, and teachers' status is high; whereas American and British students have typically scored relatively poorly in these tests, and governments attempt to use action research as a mechanism to control teachers, whose status is low.
4. 'Action research as a university-led reform movement' (p. 15)
   This variant of action research, which we illustrated with reference to work from Austria, South Africa, Israel, Palestine, Thailand and mainland China, shows the important role that universities play in supporting action research as a means of educational improvement. 'Often [it is carried out] through innovative projects involving school–university partnerships; often it is through the work of graduate students who carry out action research in their own school as part of a higher degree study' (p. 15). The nature of this work changes to fit local cultures, but the politics of university-led partnerships was always an important factor: 'Universities have the benefit of standing outside the hierarchy of the education system for schools; so they have status within the system but not the power to lead its reform. They intervene, sometimes very powerfully, from the sidelines' (p. 15).
5. 'Action research as a locally sponsored systemic reform sustained over time' (p. 18)
   This variant of action research, which we illustrated with reference to the work of the Classroom Action Research Program of the Madison Wisconsin Metropolitan School District in the United States (Caro-Bruce et al. 2007) requires sustained local support over many years. As we described it: 'in some cases action research has been organized by teachers themselves as a local and teacher-directed form of professional development for individuals and has then been incorporated into reform efforts on a broader scale within school districts' (p. 18).

These variations are drawn from accounts of action research in school systems. Elsewhere, I have published an analysis of the variations in action research in Health and Social Care settings, the world of Business, and 'southern' countries, through the lens of my own experience of action research as a teacher and univer-

sity-based project leader in the United Kingdom who had been privileged to work across all these settings occasionally and briefly (Somekh 2006a, Chap. 2). My analysis focused on published accounts of action research work in each of these settings and theoretical resources embedded in their cultures. The variations between the settings were considerable and clearly culturally constructed: Action research in post-colonial 'southern' settings was strongly political and activist in pursuit of social justice; action research in health settings in the United Kingdom was very carefully theorised, reflecting the need to justify its methods in a context dominated by the medical model of natural science research; action research in care and community settings was consciously activist and participatory, often multiply authored and taking meticulous care to ensure that 'we' reflected genuine equality in research partnership. I summarised:

> [These differences] relate to deeply held values underpinning social action, which are constitutive of understandings of being in the world and the nature of knowledge. Each of these traditions is necessarily limited and therefore potentially constraining; each also contains spaces where action research can push against the boundaries and generate knowledge with transformative power. (Somekh 2006a, p. 61)

How Should Action Researchers Respond to These Variations and Does It Matter if They Go by a Different Name?

Guarding the core values and principles that underpin action research is not, of course, only a matter of turf wars. The transformative and empowering effects of action research on participants and their communities, and the quality and reliability of the knowledge it generates to inform practice and policy, depend on the unique nature of action research. It has been and remains an important counter-hegemonic movement against the disconnections of traditional social science research, about which Appadurai (2001) writes so passionately. Action research is worth defending: variations in action research, therefore, create tensions for the community. When I wrote my book on action research I believed that this tension was my personal problem, resulting from 'the shift in my vision and understanding over a period of 20 years' (Somekh 2006a, p. 6), but working recently on a paper about CARN's development over 30 years I realised that the problem had been inevitable for anyone taking on, as I did, the roles of a Coordinator of CARN and an editor of EAR over that period. CARN and EAR have always supported a range of approaches to action research.

My response to the need to adopt an inclusive approach to action research was to develop a set of eight 'methodological principles', for action research. I derived these, in the course of writing my book, from constant comparative analysis of the data from seven action research projects, which had formed the core of my work over 20 years. They were drafted and re-drafted to better match the data drawn from my own practice as I wrote each chapter. These principles were presented, for the

purposes of clarity, in the introduction; and chapter one focused on a discussion of problematic methodological issues arising from them, in order to 'destabilize' their 'certainties'.

In summary, my eight methodological principles of action research (Somekh 2006a, pp. 6–8) are as follows:

- It integrates research and action, investigating innovation.
- It is conducted by a collaborative partnership of participants and researchers.
- It involves the development of knowledge and understanding of a unique kind.
- It starts from a vision of social transformation and aspirations for greater social justice for all.
- It involves a high level of reflexivity and sensitivity to the role of the self in mediating the whole research process.
- It involves exploratory engagement with a wide range of existing knowledge.
- It engenders powerful learning for participants.
- It locates the inquiry in an understanding of broader historical, political and ideological contexts.

There may be debate about the wording and comprehensiveness of these principles, but I suggest that a set of principles of this kind enables us to remain true to the core beliefs and values of action research, while celebrating the rich diversity of local action research practices that are developing in the context of globalisation. Elliott presents a similar set, which he calls 'defining characteristics of educational action research' in a chapter reviewing action research projects undertaken at Hong Kong Institute of Education (Hui and Grossman 2008).

In summary, Elliott's six defining characteristics of educational action research (Elliott 2008, pp. 169–170) are as follows:

- It expresses a commitment to realizing an aim that embodies an educational ideal or set of values.
- The assumptions and beliefs (tacit theories) that underpin and structure customary practice are problematised.
- It involves holistic experimentation: creating and experimenting with new forms of action to change the practice and render it more consistent with the aim.
- It is a developmental process characterised by reflexivity on the part of practitioners.
- It involves reconstructing the theories that underpin and shape educational practice.
- It involves a dialogical process in which teachers in-voice a range and variety of different points of view on their practice during the course of their action research (triangulation) for example, those of their students, their professional peers, and parents.

Comparisons can be drawn between these two lists and other similar lists, no list can be definitive. But they serve an important function in encouraging debate about core principles that draw action researchers together and work against its fragmentation.

In reality, action research has always encompassed considerable variety and 'the world of flows' has only accelerated their proliferation as part of the process of 'globalisation from below'. More than a decade ago, in a comprehensive literature review of the origins and development of action research, Noffke identified 'professional, personal and political dimensions to action research'. These were not conceived as distinct categories, but used as a heuristic for analysis.

> These three areas—the professional, the personal, and the political—form the frames for this review of the literature on action research. They may seem to be distinct emphases; within the context of action research, however, all clearly deal with issues of power and control. In that sense, the public sphere of professionalism and the domain of the personal are also particular manifestations of the political. (Noffke 1997, p. 306)

These 'dimensions' were, at my suggestion, used as the organising framework for the Handbook of Educational Action Research (Noffke and Somekh 2009, p. 1). They provided a means of engaging with the main traditions of educational action research we wished to represent. As we said in the introduction, the dimensions 'are fluid with porous boundaries rather than essentialist. They reflect orientations towards action research, which, to a degree that varies between authors, are also open to the other two orientations.'

The earlier categorisation of 'three modes of action research'—technical, practical and critical, developed by Grundy (1982) and Carr and Kemmis (1986)—has been enormously powerful in the development of action research within a critical theory tradition; but critical theory, with its roots in the rationalism of the Enlightenment, is too narrow a framework to encompass the variety of action research that has developed in the wake of contemporary developments in epistemology, for example emanating from feminist theory and poststructuralism. The problem with these categories is also that they are inherently hierarchical; too often, the questions that teachers and other practitioners want to focus upon in their action research fail the test of being 'critical' and are categorised as 'technical'. These categories lead, inevitably, to the 'them and us' dichotomies of Kemmis' 'five examples of inadequate action research', in his keynote presentation at the CARN-PRAR conference in 2005 (Kemmis 2006). It is also the case that action research that begins with attention to technical-practical problems without problematising assumptions embedded in the context, often develops into a deeper and more challenging inquiry through the processes of reflexivity and *praxis*. (I am here taking the definition of praxis advanced by Kemmis and Smith (2008, p. 4): '*Praxis* is what people do when they take into account all the circumstances and exigencies that confront them at a particular moment and then, taking the broadest view they can of what it is *best* to do, they *act*.'). Orland-Barak provides evidence from Israel of apparently technical action research, mandated as part of teacher education within a top–down reform agenda, developing into much deeper and genuinely empowering action research:

> Thus the 'imposed' infrastructures of engagement provided physical and virtual spaces, mutual access in time and space, joint tasks, availability for help, and casual encounters and activities, creating opportunities for applying skills, devising solutions, making decisions, using creativity, and for developing collegial interactions in the larger professional community. (Orland-Barak 2007, p. 13)

Variations, Among 'Cousins', are a Strength in Building Collective Agency in a World of Flows

The variations in action research include many that go by another name. Some, such as 'practitioner inquiry' and 'practitioner research', spring from roots in action research and draw on the literature of action research for insights into theory and practice. These include, 'dialogic inquiry', 'practitioner inquiry', 'critical pedagogy', 'critical practitioner inquiry', 'teacher research', 'self study', 'the scholarship of teaching', 'learning study' and 'participatory feminism'.

I have always called my own work action research because I believe there is discursive power in the clash of terms from two different discourses—from the world of practical action and the world of theory and research. For me this represents an aspiration to bring together mind and body in what the poet W. B. Yeats called 'unity of being', and the Chinese symbolise in the Yin-Yang (Somekh and Zeichner 2009, pp. 5–6, 18–19).

Although I have always called my own work 'action research', I understand the enormous importance of a name as a semiotic and iconic representation of the 'social imaginary' which builds 'collective force' (Rizvi 2006). Communities form and develop around names that signal their values and beliefs. For example, for those with a background in language development and English teaching there is a special attraction to the term 'dialogic inquiry' (Wells 2009); for those building an education system after an extended period of freedom fighting the term 'critical practitioner inquiry' helps to position the work as political and activist (Dahlstrom 2003); for those wanting to use variation theory drawing on Swedish models, and signal an Eastern affinity, the term 'learning study' has useful discursive resonances with Japanese 'lesson study' (Lo et al. 2005).

Among these names that differentiate themselves from action research is PAR. 'Participatory action research' springs from two separate traditions that sometimes encounter the problem of differentiating themselves from one another. For those with a background in business and management PAR builds on the action research work of Kurt Lewin in the United States and the journal *Human Relations* that he co-founded with Eric Trist of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London (Whyte 1991). For those with a background in community development and political activism PAR builds on the 'critical pedagogy' of Paulo Freire in Brazil and the community development work of Myles Horton at the Highlander School in the United States (Flores-Kastanis et al. 2009). PAR is the term that causes me a problem, personally, as I always regard my own action research as 'participatory'. On the other hand, by co-editing the Sage *Handbook of Educational Action Research*, alongside the existing Sage *Handbook of Action Research*, I have recently been finding myself positioned as an *educational* action researcher—a term which I am happy to espouse as long as my colleagues in health, social care and community development realise that, for me, all action research is educational because of its focus on learning and the co-construction of knowledge. That is the sense in which the editors conceive of 'educational' in the title of CARN's journal, *Educational Action Research*.

Of course, the concept of 'variations in action research' has a paternalistic ring to it which is inappropriate. To answer one of my questions in the introduction to this presentation: Yes, an insistence on action research remaining 'pure' and 'uncontaminated' by variations *would be* a form of colonial coercion. Equally, there are forms of research with similar core principles and practices to action research which do not spring from roots in action research and do not see themselves as belonging under an action research umbrella. It would be a form of colonisation to attempt to try to claim them as our own. The action-oriented research of PUKAR in Mumbai (Appadurai 2006) is one such, and earlier in this presentation I suggested that we might claim 'cousin status, Indian-style' with PUKAR's 'documentation as intervention' research. I mean this in the sense that I understand Indian families to 'adopt' numerous aunts and cousins among those who they hold in special affection and intimacy, although they are not blood relations. Perhaps PUKAR would be happy to adopt CARN as a cousin-in-research in this way.

Another example arises from the recent re-establishment of action research alongside Kaupapa Maori Research (KMR) in New Zealand. Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes the process of developing KMR, in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, as one among many indigenous groups, internationally, pursing 'an indigenous research agenda' (Smith 1999). She summarises Graham Smith (p. 185) in listing four elements that are essential components of KMR:

1. It is related to 'being Maori';
2. It is connected to Maori philosophy and principles;
3. It takes for granted the validity and legitimacy of Maori, the importance of Maori language and culture; and
4. It is concerned with 'the struggle for autonomy over our own cultural well being'.

Going beyond this, Linda Tuhiwai Smith claims that KMR is a deliberately activist methodology. In what can be seen as an example of an idea travelling in the 'world of flows' and being transformed, she characterises KMR as 'a localizing of the aims of critical theory [as] partly an enactment of what critical theory actually offered to oppressed, marginalized and silenced groups' (Smith 1999, p. 186). She refutes the suggestion that the emancipatory project is over-idealistic or, indeed, that it has to be closely defined in 'western' terms:

> The notion of strategic positioning as a deliberate practice is partially an attempt to contain the unevenness and unpredictability, under stress, of people engaged in emancipatory struggles. The broader vision of Kaupapa Maori embraces that sense of strategic positions, of being able to plan, predict and contain, across a number of sites, the engagement in struggle. (Smith 1999, p. 186)

Maori people still suffer from the culturally embedded effects of British colonisation going back two centuries. However, in the last 20 years Maori people have established legal rights to present to the Waitangi Tribunal their case for recompense for breaches of the Waitangi Treaty. This has included a successful claim for rights over fishing quotas that was signed as far back as 1992. This and some later land deals have transferred considerable wealth to some *iwi* (tribes). All this made 2009 a particularly interesting time to visit New Zealand and learn about KMR.

KMR initiatives, and in particular the Te Kotahitanga research and development project led by Russell Bishop at the University of Waikato, have been successful in acquiring funding from the national government to combat Maori social and educational disadvantage. Kotahitanga means Unity in Maori. The Te Kotahitanga project is described on the website as 'a collaborative response to the rising problem of underachievement among Maori students in mainstream schools'. Maori values are embedded in the New Zealand national curriculum. Te Whariki, the early childhood curriculum, is a bicultural curriculum grounded in Maori guiding principles: Whakamana (empowerment of the child to learn and grow); Kotahitanga (holistic development of the cognitive, social, cultural, physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions of the child); Whanau Tangata (integration of the wider world of family and community in the curriculum); and Nga Hononga (supporting children's learning through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places and things)—see http://www.schome.ac.uk/wiki/Te_Whaariki.

It was during my time as a Visiting Canterbury Fellow, at the University of Canterbury in early 2009 that Niki Davis suggested that she wanted to explore with me and with colleagues the possibility of establishing a New Zealand regional CARN group. This idea grew remarkably quickly into the Inaugural Symposium of the Collaborative Action Research Network, New Zealand Region (http://nzcarnresearchsymposium.blogspot.com/).

Keynote speakers at the Research Symposium were Angus Macfarlane on the topic, '*Nau te rourou, naku te rourou.* Your food-basket and my food-basket', and Susan Groundwater-Smith on *Action Research in Education: Considering Practice Architectures*. The attendees included several who were well-placed to launch CARN New Zealand with strong backing from the education research community, including Noeline Alcorn, emeritus professor of education at Waikato, who was chair of the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) Evaluation panel for Education in 2006; and Bev Webber, publishing and marketing manager of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. This was particularly useful during discussions about the acceptability of action research for the forthcoming PBRF in 2012. It became clear that the group was already able to provide significant support to those working in institutions that held traditional views about what counts as quality in educational research.

Throughout the two-day symposium, the metaphor of the 'braided river' was used for the inter-twining flows of different research streams within New Zealand. At the CARN Steering Group meeting, at the end of the Symposium, there was considerable discussion of how to use this metaphor to bring together the common interests of various groups, including AR and KMR, in a way that was open and equitable. Linking to CARN provided a supportive framework with a well-established international network, sponsoring partnership, publications, study days and annual conferences. KMR offered political leverage within New Zealand and fitted the aspirations of CARN to support the pursuit of social justice, locally and globally. AR and KMR needed to be equal partners in a joint initiative. One could not be subsumed within the other. The new CARN logo with a river-like spiral design at its

heart suggested a way forward with a name that had the semiotic and iconic power to inspire the local New Zealand 'social imaginary':

At the end of the Symposium the proposal to establish The Collaborative Action *and* Research Network (CA&RN), New Zealand regional group was formally accepted and three New Zealand universities (Canterbury, Waikato and Otago) have since become CARN Sponsoring Partners.

In his keynote, Angus Macfarlane suggested that action research often involves processes in which participants

> are part of a community of practice—referred to in Maoridom as a whanau of interest, a collaborative approach that often employs a blend of Action Research (AR) and Kaupapa Maori Research (KMR) principles. (http://nzcarnresearchsymposium.blogspot.com/)

A whanau of interest—an extended family—with shared core beliefs and values, seems to me another way of saying, becoming cousins, Indian-style. New Zealand's CA&RN group shows how CARN is able to support localisation and the growth of 'collective agency' in pursuit of social justice through praxis. The overlapping traditions of practitioner inquiry and action research provide this kind of family support for one another. Localisation or globalisation? It is not a matter of either, or…. The dynamic nature of action research—and of practitioner inquiry—supports localisation as a powerful force, integral to 'globalisation from below'.

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Chapter 4
Inquiry-Based Professional Learning in Educational Praxis: Knowing Why, What and How

Petra Ponte and Jan Ax

Introduction

A view of teachers and pupils consistently comes across in Susan Groundwater-Smith's work that is far removed from current neoliberal thinking: thinking which is characterised by an emphasis on standardisation of education and the resultant idea that administrators and managers can determine to a significant extent what should take place in school and in the classroom. In her most recent book, written with Nicole Mockler (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009), Susan argues that:

> It is our fear that the current standards regimes and the policy contexts out of which they grow have at their hearts a desire not to build an understanding of the complexity and nuance of teaching practice or rather to celebrate the diversity of teachers and learners, but rather to standardise practice, stifle debate and promote the fallacious notion of 'professional objectivity'. (p. 8)

Standardisation, according to Susan, leads to the loss of appeal to teachers' professional judgment and continuing professional learning. The question then, of course, is whether this is such a bad thing and, if so, why. The answer to the first part of this question is, we believe, dependent on whether one holds a mechanistic or organic view of humankind. The desire to standardise stems from the first and disapproval of standardisation from the second. Repudiation of a mechanistic view of humankind rests among other things on the idea that people construct their reality by giving meaning to it and that these meanings vary from person to person, from situation to situation and over time. Even more important, however, is the fact that a mechanistic view of education ignores its most fundamental attribute, which is that education is essentially a moral endeavour. As a mechanistic view of humankind is based on a deterministic outlook on reality, it makes questions about purpose ('what for') irrelevant. The only questions that can usefully be asked are 'what' and 'how'. This is inconsistent with the idea that education is driven by interests, aspirations, desires and inclinations. These forces are knowingly constrained by judgments about good

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and bad, by morality in other words. Education as moral endeavour demands a continuous debate about purpose and method (because there are different opinions and theories on this) and a continuous analysis of reality (simply because our intentions do not always lead to the desired results). You could argue, therefore, that the complex reality of education has to be reinterpreted over and over again (Ponte 2009).

The concept of 'praxis' (Kemmis and Smith 2008; Ax and Ponte 2008) could have a role to play in the interpretation of that complex reality. Praxis is social practice that can always be judged in terms of what can be seen as desirable or undesirable. Within this framework of thinking, it is reasonable to expect that good teachers critically reflect on their teaching practice and that they are actively involved in an overt decision-making process: a process that assumes substantial professional qualifications. It is also reasonable to expect that these professional qualifications consist at least of 'knowing why, what and how'.

In current education, however, there seems to be a tendency towards a one-sided 'what and how' focus, leaving the 'why-questions' unasked. That happens, for instance, when practitioner research is appropriated by the authorities as an implementation tool or—as Kemmis (2006, p. 459) put it—when 'practitioner research becomes a vehicle for domesticating students and teachers to conventional forms of schooling'. A one-sided focus on the 'how' and 'what' is also encountered when practitioner research in teacher education settings is used as a tool for a so-called competency-based curriculum. After all, in that tradition current practice is construed to be what sets the standards. Ignoring the 'why' question limits teachers' scope for decision making and action and is to be seen as a differentiation of a much more general phenomenon that is found in many Western countries as well as in other disciplines. Below we will explore this phenomenon with a praxis model that takes most of its inspiration from the work of Weber (1946), Mannheim (1940) and Habermas (1981). We will then go on to relate our praxis model—which we have developed from empirical research—to inquiry-based professional learning in teacher education courses.

A Model for Educational Praxis

System and Lifeworld

Let us start with a Dutch example. The journalist Margalith Kleijwegt has written regularly in a weekly magazine (*Vrij Nederland*) about the Calvijn College (pre-vocational secondary education) in Amsterdam (see also Ponte 2009). It is important to know that the school is governed by a local school board. Since the 1980s, school boards have taken the place of the government as rule makers and are increasingly specifying the work that teachers and pupils have to do on a daily basis.

In the edition of the magazine of 20 June 2009, the journalist Margalith Kleijwegt describes the state the school was in six years ago: shrieking pupils, empty crisp packets and soft-drink bottles all over the place, a stench of urine in the gym,

rats, blocked toilets. The teachers seemed at the end of their tether. Many of them felt that there was nothing they could do and withdrew into their own classrooms. Now, six years later, the building has undergone a metamorphosis and some of the teaching staff has been replaced. Defeatism has given way to optimism. Pupils get extra English from native speakers, they are learning to debate, they go skating and mountain biking, and they have been on visits to Parliament and other places of interest where they have never been before. A new sports hall is being built which local community groups can use in the evening. Small businesses and mini companies offering apprenticeships are located in the school complex and the effects of the work they are doing are being felt outside in the neighbouring community. In this new school, pre-vocational secondary students can also progress to get vocational qualifications at senior secondary level and all pupils receive the extra attention that used to be reserved for the first year. All of this costs money, but there seems to be sufficient funding for the next four years, according to the journalist.

The change in fortunes did not happen on its own, but came about through sustained and joint pressure, specifically a campaign by a couple of teachers, the new principal, the journalist Kleijwegt and Felix Rottenberg (a former Dutch politician and now working as an external consultant). It was shocking to read that the biggest obstacle was the silent power struggle between the local school board, the local authority and the school management. Rottenberg realised that they only had a chance of success if the principal did not have to answer to the regional school board. The local authority came up with funding, but the local school board resisted what it saw as too much interference on the part of the local authority. The participation council was irritated by the principal's unorthodox approach, which required not only the pupils but also the teachers to be in school from 8.30 in the morning until 4.30 in the afternoon, because that was not in the 'collective labour agreement'. The teachers felt they were in a stalemate and Kleijwegt was right in our opinion to write that all parties had lost sight of the pupils, whom it was supposed to be all about.

This case offers a fine illustration of Habermas' (1981) analysis of modern society, in which he distinguished two dimensions: lifeworld and system. System is the way the world is organised; it has self-regulating dynamics with anonymous mechanisms, on which individuals have little or no influence. System is driven by economic, legal, administrative and bureaucratic subsystems. Habermas argues that in modern societies system is increasingly uncoupled from its foundations in the lifeworld, foundations that are necessary for shared, sense-making, functional-social relationships and mutual solidarity. Lifeworld is the domain where people organise their own reality, based on their own preferences and in dialogue with others. Lifeworld is increasingly being colonised by system, according to Habermas, drastically curtailing individuals' scope for action; lifeworld is being pushed more and more on the defensive. This example confirms that lifeworld (the scope that teachers and pupils have to teach and to learn together) is being increasingly prescribed by the dynamics of the system (in this case the power struggle between the school board, the local authority and bureaucratic rules). In other words: teachers' scope for action in terms of their educational reality is not only confined to the significance assigned to it by the participants (lifeworld), it is also a reality that is situated in a broader institutional and social context (system).

Functional and Substantial Rationality

In the example above, we can also see that moral questions about whose interests the various parties are acting in, where that action should lead and why the situation is as it is were in danger of no longer being discussed. We are talking about teachers' scope for decision making and action in terms of rationality. This can be clarified with the help of the distinction that Mannheim (1940), with reference to Weber (1946) makes between 'functional rationality' and 'substantial rationality'. Functional rationality concerns the arguments underpinning the way in which specific goals can be reached by bureaucracies. Substantial rationality concerns the arguments by policy makers that provide legitimacy for an action or the purpose of an action. This distinction can be understood according to Weber's way of thinking, in which he designed a system to prevent citizens from being treated unfairly and arbitrarily by officials: once rules have been laid down, they have to be implemented by bureaucrats without respect to persons. In the example above, however, we observe that where schools are treated as bureaucracies, an inevitable tension arises between those who are expected to lay down policy and set rules (substantial rationalities by state and school board) and those who are expected to behave according to these policies and rules (functional rationalities by school staff).

The distinction between two types of rationality offers a useful representation of reality, while at the same time it makes clear that the decisions and actions that teachers have to take and those that are taken by the people in authority over them do not lend themselves to being exclusively and exhaustively divided into the two categories. Teachers must have the necessary degree of substantial say, because it is they who ultimately have to reconcile in a professional manner the diverse values of the different stakeholders in education, all of which may be legitimate in themselves (Bull 1988). We could call this essential power to take decisions the substantial rational scope of the teacher. However, substantial scope is not enough. Professionals also need functional scope to be able to realise those interests in a practical sense: substantial and functional rationality are two sides of the same coin. The point here is that not only are expectations of teachers' substantial rationality inflated, so are expectations of their functional rationality, and too many policy makers believe that this rationality can also be imposed from outside.

A Praxis Model: Scope for Professional Decision Making and Action

If we now combine the distinction between substantial and functional rationality on one dimension, and Habermas' distinction between system and lifeworld on another, a scope for praxis can be represented in a model as shown in Table 4.1 (see also Ax and Ponte 2008, p. 15).

Table 4.1 A Praxis model: scope for professional decision making and action

	System	Lifeworld
Substantial rationality	1	3
Functional rationality	2	4

It can be argued that educational praxis can first and foremost be described as a reality, in which the cells do not represent separate spheres of influence. System world and lifeworld are not strictly partitioned. Individual responsibility in the lifeworld—as exemplified by the new school principle, some teachers, the journalist and the external advisor in the example—exists irrespective of system dynamics. Nor can substantial and functional rationality be separated. If we examine educational praxis in this way, it becomes clear that teachers' scope for taking decisions and action is not amenable to being pinned down in advance, and that the ultimate guiding principle for educational decisions cannot be defined and laid down by standardisation. It is about achieving a balance again and again, which fosters the wellbeing of individual pupils, the group they belong to and the society in which they function. It is about continuous reflection on 'knowing why, what and how'.

A Research Study on Inquiry-Based Professional Learning in Teacher Education

If the above framework of thinking is seen as worthwhile, then important issues are how teacher education can help student-teachers to safeguard or broaden their scope for taking decisions and action, and how current developments in this regard can be located in our praxis model. A more specific issue in this context is how and to what extent inquiry-based professional learning can be helpful. We will explore this issue with the aid of an empirical study on student-teachers' involvement in action research as part of their curriculum (Ax et al. 2008).

The aim of this study was to describe student-teachers' and teacher-educators' practical experience with action research as part of their curriculum. Student-teachers and teacher-educators on three Dutch initial teacher education programmes (case studies A, B and C) which treat inquiry-based learning as a means of professional learning were involved. The set-up of the courses in broad terms can be found in Table 4.2. The next section explains briefly each separate criterion followed by a brief summary of the results. Data were collected by interviews with student-teachers and different representatives of the course, supplemented by analyses of a number of documents. The experiences of student-teachers and teacher-educators were compared with five criteria for action research as a strategy for professional learning, as identified by Ponte (2007):

Table 4.2 General descriptions of the programmes

Course A:	
Course leading to a postgraduate certificate in education at a research-oriented university	One-year course: Student-teachers are graduates who had completed undergraduate courses in different subjects. They had to do a research assignment in the last phase of the course, which was termed 'problem-based design'
Course B:	
Bachelor of education course at a university for applied sciences	A four-year course: Student-teachers had to produce a provisional research plan at the end of the third year. The research project was developed and carried out in the final year
Course C:	
Course leading to a postgraduate certificate in education at a university for applied sciences	A four-year course: One of the purposes of the work placement in the third year was to choose a theme for their action research ('final piece of work'), which was part of the work placement in the fourth year

1. Interaction between the application and construction of professional knowledge
2. Interaction between academic and professional knowledge
3. Interaction between educational knowledge and methodological knowledge
4. Interaction between individual and collective knowledge
5. Interaction between ideological, instrumental and empirical knowledge

Interaction Between the Application and Construction of Professional Knowledge

Studying one's own practice demands a simultaneous construction and application of knowledge. 'Simultaneous' means that both the development and application of knowledge are part of one cyclical process: student-teachers apply knowledge; they gather information on it; they interpret that information and, based on their interpretations, they develop new knowledge, which they then apply again; etc.

Results: The intention of *course A* was to make a connection between the application of knowledge ('design and implementation') and knowledge-construction ('research'). The student-teacher applied knowledge (she produced a design and implemented it) and she constructed knowledge (she came to new insights into 'what works'), but there was no cyclical process of design, application and research. In *course B* there was little focus on the construction of knowledge. The student-teacher assessed the behaviour of the pupils, while his own practice remained undefined. Consequently, the intended gains could not be placed in a cyclical process of knowledge-construction and application. *Course C* envisaged action research as a strategy to educate student-teachers to become critical professionals who learn from their own practice, but it did not apply a specific model based on a cyclical process

of knowledge construction and application. The student-teacher did experience professional growth through reflecting on her experience, but in her case it was more about learning to understand a phenomenon than about learning why and how to apply knowledge she had constructed herself in other situations.

Interaction Between Academic and Professional Knowledge

Studying one's own practice is based on the idea that theory cannot prescribe exactly how to act in practice. This does not mean that learning through action research is a-theoretical and there is no general knowledge that they can use. On the contrary, without theory, the knowledge of student-teachers can get stuck at the level of uncritical experience of everyday events, without consequences for future action.

Results: Academic knowledge was conceived in *course A* as an objective anchor point against which individual student-teachers could test their own ideas about being a teacher. However, the student-teacher had brought about this interaction through independent work. As a result, she suffered from the lack of structural content in this area and did not make the most of the opportunity to do independent work. In *course B* academic knowledge was conceived as a palette of opportunities, to be considered depending on the student-teachers' experience. The link with the research was not made explicit and so it was left open whether the intended interaction would come about or not. In the case of the student-teacher in question, it did not. *Course C* emphasised the objective of achieving interaction between academic and professional knowledge in the final project. Academic knowledge was conceived as a starting point for exploration that would lead to professional growth, in which the student-teachers had to find their own way.

Interaction Between Educational Knowledge and Methodological Knowledge

Studying one's own practice demands knowledge construction on two levels. The first level concerns educational knowledge: knowledge about teaching. To construct this educational knowledge, teachers also have to construct methodological knowledge; in concrete terms this means knowledge about how to study their teaching.

Results: *Course A* feared the divide between the two levels of knowledge and the notion of 'work theory' ('What works?') represented an attempt to bring about integration. The function of the research was seen as the empirical testing of the 'work theory'. The student-teacher lacked methodological knowledge but had good subject knowledge: 'I made the best of what I had and was satisfied with the result'. *Course B* saw the two levels of knowledge as rather separate matters. While the first did have some bearing on the second, practical integration was not well developed. The student-teacher experienced learning to do research and learning to teach as

two separate activities therefore. *Course C* was explicitly striving for interaction between educational knowledge and methodological knowledge ('How can a theoretical notion be applied in practice?'). The student-teacher's views were somewhat ambiguous. While she did take the interaction between the two levels of knowledge as a starting point for her research, she also indicated that she did not consider methodological knowledge to be so important for her future work as a teacher.

Interaction Between Individual and Collective Knowledge

Studying one's own practice demands that one constantly makes connections between individual knowledge and collective knowledge. The first thing to note about collective knowledge is that it is knowledge which is described in such a way that it can be shared with others. Shared knowledge is therefore necessarily abstracted knowledge, which is open to debate (Laurillard 1993).

Results: Student-teachers in *course A* were not systematically encouraged to share their knowledge with fellow student-teachers and present or future colleagues. In its cooperation with the teaching practice schools, the course had a difficulty in making a connection between the development of individual knowledge by the student-teachers and the development of collective knowledge in the schools. For the student-teacher, the whole process was a strictly individual matter. In *course B* too, the student-teacher had to follow an individual path. This was seen as a shortcoming but there were no plans to do anything about it. Bringing interaction between individual and collective knowledge was considered important on *course C* and sharing knowledge with colleagues was encouraged through the compulsory research presentations. Less effort was made to facilitate interaction during the actual research activities.

Interaction Between Ideological, Instrumental and Empirical Knowledge

Studying one's own practice cannot be geared solely to instrumental knowledge (the strategies and means which we have at our disposal), but also has to address ideological knowledge (knowledge about 'what ought to be the case'). To fathom out the practical significance of this knowledge, student-teachers must constantly make a connection with empirical knowledge, that is with knowledge about the actual situations in which they are engaged in daily practice (Knowledge about 'What is the case', see also Biesta 2009).

Results: *Course A* paid little explicit attention to the relationship between the different areas of knowledge. The student-teacher had to make a connection between standards of good teaching, the instruments to realise them and how that worked in actual practice. However, it was unclear what was meant by 'standards of good teaching'. Whether the student-teacher had made any progress by producing her

design remained unclear therefore. *Course B* restricted professional standards to a good fit between the student-teachers' professional knowledge and the context in which they were gaining experience. The meaning of different beliefs and views about education in practical terms was hardly touched upon. *Course C* considered it important that student-teachers acquaint themselves with and reflect on the three areas of knowledge and how they are related to each other. Student-teachers developed their own understandings in the process, but the course did not provide any clear structure through systematic interaction between the areas of knowledge.

The case studies described are not, of course, representative of all teacher education courses, neither in the Netherlands nor abroad. Inquiry-based learning was still in its infancy in the courses. Nevertheless, they did help us to explore the questions that we posed at the beginning of this section, namely: How does inquiry-based professional learning in teacher education courses help student-teachers to safeguard or broaden their scope for taking decisions and action, and how can current developments in this regard be located in our praxis model?

Knowing Why, What and How: Broadening Teachers' Scope for Decision Making and Action?

In summary, we can say that the findings of our research show the danger of a mechanistic interpretation of action research, certainly when accompanied by a 'neglect' of the interactions between the areas of knowledge, the levels of knowledge and academic and professional knowledge. Action research is then at risk of becoming an empty, formal, procedural skill, making courses vulnerable to the accusation that with action research they are taking yet another step away from the substance of the core qualities of the teaching profession. This danger can be located in our praxis model as an overemphasis on cell 4 (see Table 4.1), or an overemphasis on lifeworld and functional rationality.

Overemphasis on Lifeworld

It became evident that the action research carried out in the three case studies mainly focused on lifeworld—that is the domain where teachers organise their own reality—without making a connection to system. Student-teachers, in other words, were not really challenged to reflect on the extent to which and the way in which their practice was determined by, for instance, economic, legal, administrative and bureaucratic mechanisms. Nor were they challenged to reflect on how they wanted to relate to each other as professionals in the future. Furthermore, their action research was primarily something that they did on their own. For example, all three courses left the students to find their own way more or less, with minimal contact with their supervisors. The student-teachers also had very little contact with their

fellow students while they were doing their research. Finally, their reports reveal that they hardly collaborated at all with those who formed part of the situation to be changed—in this specific situation the pupils and their teachers.

One might expect that student-teachers who undergo this form of preparation for their profession come away with the idea that 'you do it on your own' and 'you work on the basis of your own terms of reference'. In practice though the touchstone for many teachers just starting out seems to be mainly just a matter of 'managing to survive' (Tickle 2000) and finding out 'what works' as soon as possible. The fact that they have to discover that in isolation means that many of them will seek support from rules that are to hand, and in this day and age they are increasingly externally standardised rules. It is highly likely then that they will accept external standardisations as a fact of life: 'That's just the way things are done in education' and 'That's my profession'.

Overemphasis on Functional Rationality

Another thing that stands out is that the courses educate student-teachers mainly in terms of functional rationality, that is in terms of knowing 'what and how' and not knowing 'why'. None of the three courses placed systematic emphasis in the research on questioning educational quality for teaching and the teaching profession: what is a good school, good teaching and a good teacher? These questions presuppose not only personal preferences and knowledge of external rules, but also active involvement in the educational discourse and knowledge of educational theories, educational philosophies as well as educational research. It is obvious that teacher education courses are not able to offer the whole canon of educational theory or to discuss the areas of dispute between all educational traditions and paradigms. Nevertheless it is remarkable how far the courses have distanced themselves from this canon of knowledge, replacing it mainly with independent work procedures. This means that they are not—to quote Sachs (2003, pp. 89–90)—educating them to become 'activist professionals founded upon, among other things, shared inquiry into practice, which provides a way for teachers to come to know the epistemological bases of their practice' (see also Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009, p. 22).

If these student-teachers were to do action research during their working lives in the future, it is highly likely that they would focus on the way in which specific goals—laid down by others (school boards, government)—can be reached. They would be less inclined to use action research to critically balance the wellbeing of individual pupils, the group they belong to and the society in which they function.

Conclusion

Our findings as outlined above allow us to conclude that an overemphasis on life-world leads to the *marginalisation* of teachers and that an overemphasis on functional rationality *belittles* them.

Courses that aim to encourage student-teachers to safeguard or broaden their scope for taking decisions and action are faced with the challenge of constantly attempting to integrate the four cells of our praxis model. In recent decades many universities have shown that this can be done successfully (see for instance the examples and studies in the *Educational Action Research Journal*). As Groundwater-Smith (2007) put it, these universities offer 'safe places for unsafe ideas':

> A place where consensual values need to be rendered more problematic; a place where students at every level, are learners not clients; a place where academics are also deep learners as expressed in and demonstrated by their research and scholarship; and a place where matters of merit and quality count—centrally, in relation to questions of truth. (p. 58)

The question is whether 'safe places for unsafe ideas' can be seen as a condition for or consequence of inquiry-based learning. The answer will lie somewhere in the middle: the one is not possible without the other. But with her afford to put inquiry-based learning on the 'agenda' Susan has certainly not allowed herself—or the teachers with whom she is working—to be *marginalised* by an one sited life-world perspective. She is not afraid to critique the system if professional learning is in danger of being colonised by bureaucrats, neither she has allowed herself, nor the teachers with whom she is working, to be *belittled* by a one-sided lifeworld perspective. She does not hesitate to critique political naïf ideas about learning without any democratic relevance for the wider society.

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Chapter 5
Patterns of Partnership: Student Voice, Intergenerational Learning and Democratic Fellowship

Michael Fielding

Introduction

For more than a decade, Susan has been urging us to listen to the voices of the students in our schools. Her 1999 paper with Toni Downes concludes by arguing that

> if we are truly attached to the enterprise of improving the conditions of living and learning for the young people then it is not merely a matter of whim and choice that we work closely with them. It is essential that we engage with them: and they engage, in turn, with our mutually constructed research. (Groundwater-Smith and Downes 1999, p. 7)

Building on a wealth of experience (e.g. Groundwater-Smith 2007) ten years later in her presentation to Sydney South West Region, NSW DET PAS Principals' Partnership Program she acknowledges that, despite her best efforts and those of many other engaged scholars from all over the world, much of the progress of the intervening decade has been 'a simulacrum without the substance or quality of what might have been intended' (Groundwater-Smith 2009, p. 4). Characteristically, this does not dampen her commitment. In up-beat mode she urges us to

> interrupt these conditions and build a more positive and participative model where students may collectively work with their teachers to engage in the mission of school improvement.

Indeed, as she sets out unequivocally on the opening page of her address:

> If consulting young people is to be seen as a powerful means of enhancing teacher professional learning then it cannot be some kind of short term, tokenistic strategic tool, but rather a way of living the life of the school where trust and openness are valued and celebrated and where all who participate in it see themselves as members of a decent and civil society. (Groundwater-Smith 2009, p. 1)

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In this tribute to Susan's work, I want to explore some possibilities that take seriously her call to resist the demeaning trinkets of tokenism and move in whatever way circumstances and commitment allow to a deep and demanding mutuality, to a form of joint work between teachers and students that take participatory models of democracy seriously.

In *From Student Voice to Democratic Community* below I begin by looking briefly at the macro-contexts that have such a profound influence, not only on what it is possible to achieve within the various social and political arrangements in which we work, but also on the ways in which policy narratives seek to frame the limits of our practical imagination. Whilst the hegemony of neo-liberalism is pervasive and even totalising in its ambitions, it remains vulnerable not only to the power of dispositions and values energised by motives other than those typical of a market model of human flourishing, but also to the alternatives that history offers, to the plurality of histories it so strenuously denies. In its myopic insistence on the pre-eminence of the present and its extension into a future bright with multiple opportunities for ever-increasing consumption there is no place for or interest in an immediate past it sees as discredited or more extended vistas that deny the imperatives of commodification.

Having affirmed the need for real alternatives, in *Patterns of Partnership: How Adults Listen to and Learn with Students in Schools* I then develop a typology of participation and partnership that explicitly includes democratic aspirations. If we are to heed Susan's rallying cry to 'build a more positive and participative model of teachers and student working together' (Groundwater-Smith 2009, p. 4) we need not only to develop our understanding of the different kinds of opportunity opened up by different kinds of relationships and different configurations of power, we also need to begin to get a feel for what an explicit commitment to democratic ways of learning, working and living together might look and feel like.

From Student Voice to Democratic Community

The range of 'student voice' work that has developed in many countries across the world in the last 15 years has been quite remarkable. Thus there is:

- *Peer support*—Activities that suggest young people benefit, both socially and academically, from listening to each other's voices whether individually, e.g. buddying, coaching, mentoring and peer teaching, or more collectively, e.g. prefects, student leaders and class and schools councils
- *Student/teacher learning partnerships*—In which students are given responsibility for working alongside teachers and other adults in a developmental capacity, e.g. student-led learning walks, students as co-researchers and lead researchers, Students as Learning Partners (SALP), student ambassadors, and student lead learners

- *Student evaluation of staff/the school*—Activities in which students express their views on a range of matters, sometimes after collecting and interpreting data, either on individual members of staff, schools teams or departments, the school as a learning community, or the wider community to which the students belong, e.g. students as observers, students as informants in teacher consultation about effective teaching and learning, students on staff appointment panels, students as governors, student focus groups and surveys, students as key informants in the processes of external inspection and accountability, junior leadership teams, and student action teams identifying key community issues to be addressed

Listening to the voices of young people, including very young children, is now something that is not merely espoused, but actively advocated, by government departments and their satellite organisations, both in the context of formal education and also within an increasingly integrated multi-professional framework of childhood services. There has also been very substantial grass-roots interest in student voice from teachers, from young people themselves, and, as exemplified so creatively by Susan's work, from university researchers.

In many respects this might seem surprising, since these kinds of developments appear to outstrip their equivalent explorations in the more adventurous decades of the 1960s and 1970s. However, if we reflect on the slide from public service to private profit, from engaged citizen to querulous consumer in the light of neo-liberalism's global ambitions, another reading of the rise and rise of student voice begins to emerge. In order to try to understand and bring out key distinctions here the table below contrasts two paradigmatically different ways of both conceiving and developing student voice. Whilst it is unlikely that any school opts exclusively for just one of these standpoints, the dominant perspective tends to not only crowd out the other's claims to time and serious consideration, but also distort or re-articulate it in conveniently affirmative ways.

The high performance, neo-liberal market perspective presumes a predominantly individualistic view of human beings and puts a lot of emphasis on individual choice. Individuals are encouraged to see themselves as consumers or customers who are required to constantly re-invent themselves in an unending pursuit of material and instrumental gain. They thus need to make informed choices about opportunities for learning within the school, often connected with their future life chances within the jobs market. At a collective level, a school committed to this way of working sees its main task as one of maximising its position in competitive league tables by producing better outcomes for students. Student voice is important because in listening to students the school becomes a more accountable and more effective learning organisation and thus better at meeting its core responsibilities. At an individual level, the main concern underpinning this approach is with certain kinds of instrumental outcome; at a collective level the main concern is how best to utilise all perspectives in order to improve results.

High performance schooling *through* **market accountability**	
Individual perspective	*Collective perspective*
Personalised learning *Driver* Individual ambition *Dominant model* Consumer choice *Key question* What job do I wish to have?	**High Performance schooling** *Driver* Fully informed accountability *Dominant model* Learning organisation *Key question* How can we learn from everyone to achieve better outcomes?

I have three major concerns about such a model. Firstly, in the high-pressure context of results and target driven imperatives, the tendency is for benign intentions to emerge as malign outcomes; too often invisible hands of economically driven expectation surreptitiously constrict educational aspirations into a narrowly quantifiable, significantly diminished form of schooling. In its diametrically opposed, but paradoxically complimentary, forms of misadventure either staff marginalise some student voices rather than others and set agendas that are exclusively professional and performative in their concerns; or students are used as disciplinary agents of control, either by misguided senior leaders or subliminally through their osmotic internalisation of government understandings of what counts as good teaching and learning. As Michael Sandel has recently reminded us:

> markets are not mere mechanisms. They embody certain norms. They presuppose, and also promote, certain ways of valuing the goods being exchanged. …Markets leave their mark. (Sandel 2009a, p. 7)

Secondly, however benign a reading one gives a neo-liberal model of educational reform it remains a victim both of the atomistic individualism and the psychological, even quasi-moral, obligations to obey the imperatives of perpetual consumption which lie at the heart of its presumptions and aspirations. Thus, for example, dominant approaches to personalisation are not just vulnerable to concerns about the superficial nature of their justification, their predilection for hyperbole and its attendant dishonesty. They are also susceptible to concerns about their individualistic conservatism, their cultural insularity and their self-induced historical amnesia and their profound disregard for the common good (see Fielding 2008). Personalisation is not just intellectually bereft. It illustrates with alarming fidelity Sandels' observation that 'Often market incentives erode or crowd out non-market incentives' (Sandel 2009a, p. 7).

Thirdly, it betrays a deeply mistaken view of democracy. Sandel again:

> Democratic governance is radically devalued if reduced to the role of handmaiden to the market economy. Democracy is about more than fixing and tweaking and nudging incen-

> tives to make markets work better…(it) is about much more than maximising GDP, or satisfying consumer preferences. It's also about seeking distributive justice; promoting the health of democratic institutions; and cultivating the solidarity, and sense of community that democracy requires. Market-mimicking governance—at its best—can satisfy us as consumers. But it can do nothing to make us democratic citizens. (Sandel 2009b, p. 4)

Not only do 'markets leave their mark' in the form of a distorted and impoverished encounter between all those involved in contemporary schooling, they prohibit the 'more positive and participative model' for which Susan's work is arguing and on which the future of democracy and democratic education depends.

In contrast to a market-led, high-performance model of schooling a person centred, democratic approach to education presumes quite different intentions and processes. This perspective also starts with individuals, but its understanding of what it means to be an individual is quite different.

Person centred education *for* **democratic fellowship**	
Personal perspective	*Communal perspective*
Person centred education	**Creative Society**
Driver Personal development	*Driver* Shared responsibility for a better future
Dominant model Relational dialogue	*Dominant model* Learning community
Key question What kind of person do I wish to become?	*Key question* How do we develop an inclusive, creative society together?

It sees individuals as persons, not as isolated, self-sufficient beings, but as essentially relational. As John Macmurray once said, 'We need one another to be ourselves' (Macmurray 1961, p. 211). A person centred perspective does include the responsibility to make choices, but they are choices taken within the context of deeper aspirations than those of the market. They concern fundamental questions to do with how we become good persons and the means of answering those questions are essentially through dialogue with others whom we care for and respect. At a communal level, a school committed to this way of working sees its main task as one of developing an inclusive, creative society through a participatory democracy which benefits everyone. Student voice is important here, not so much through representative structures (though it will have these and operate them well), but rather through a whole range of daily opportunities in which young people can listen and be listened to, make decisions and take a shared responsibility for both the here-and-now of daily encounter and for the creation of a better future. Rather than the instrumental staff capture and control of young people's perspectives or the converse use and abuse of young people as surrogate agents

of control, here student voice becomes part of a process of mutual learning that is dialogic and emergent in its processes, dispositions and intentions. At an individual level the main concern underpinning this model is how one lives a good and fulfilling life; at a collective level the main concern is how best to co-create, with adults and with other young people, a good society, a democratic fellowship and a better world. 'Fellowship' is a very old notion that if appropriately linked to the values of democracy thereby combines the essential synergy between justice and care for which I shall be arguing in a moment. It insists on the essential link between the political and the personal, between how we go about making decisions and forming judgments about the common good whilst attending and celebrating the lived diversity of those actual persons whose aspirations and fulfilment is both the point of politics and the means of its realisation.

Another important hallmark of the person centred democratic tradition is the acknowledgement and celebration of its distinctive and diverse histories, of its continuities and contestations so elegantly articulated by William Morris in his *Dream of John Ball* when he reflects on

> How men (sic) fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name. (Morris 1968, p. 53)

For me those continuities involve the participatory rather than the representative traditions of democracy, traditions which see the partnership between young people and adults as a form of radical collegiality, as a form of inter-generational learning. Within both the state/publicly funded and the private sectors of education these traditions have always been in the minority, yet, it seems to me that writers like Lawrence Kohlberg, who pioneered the Just Community School movement in the USA in 1970s, are correct in their insistence that 'the educational aim of full individual human development can be reached only through an education for full participation in society or in a human community' (Kohlberg 1980, p. 34) and that it is the duty of schools in a democracy to provide just such an education. Why? Because representative democracy privileges those who are already politically mature. In Kohlberg's view, unless young people experience participatory engagement in a rich way at school, when they leave they are likely to avoid opportunities for participation and public responsibility, not seek them. For him, and for me,

> The most basic way in which the high school can promote experiences of civic participation is to govern itself through a process of participatory democracy. …The only way school can help graduating students become persons who can make society a just community is to let them try experimentally to make the school themselves. (Kohlberg 1980, p. 35)

Ironically, it is mainly to the nooks and crannies of the past, to the marginalised narratives of alternative traditions that we must look for inspiration, not to contemporary visions of future schooling that mistake the means of hyper-flexibility and instant accessibility for the ends of democratic living and learning in a just and creative society.

Patterns of Partnership: How Adults Listen to and Learn with Students in Schools

The impressive range of student voice activity alluded to earlier has much within it that deserves substantial support, providing it is guided by emancipatory values and motivations which make clear both the nature of the power relations and the orientation of the dispositions and intentions involved. One way of approaching such matters which Susan has explored at various points in her work is to go beneath the surface features of these activities and begin to ask questions about the nexus of power and purposes that too often get forgotten or put aside in the heat of advocacy. Perhaps the best known of the typologies that help us to differentiate in a searching and discriminating way are from the field of youth participation; for example Roger Hart's 'ladder of participation' (Hart 1992) and the equally interesting and useful, but less well-known 'pathways to participation' developed by Shier (2001). Within the school sector some of my own work over the last decade has developed a typology rooted in similar concerns and aspirations and more recently I have been increasingly convinced of the need to not only ground a differentiating tool within the complexities and specificities of school based contexts but also name and explore participatory democracy as a legitimate and increasingly urgent aspiration.

The typology—*Patterns of partnership: how adults listen to and learn with students in schools*—suggests six forms of interaction between adults and young people within a school and other educational contexts. These are:

1. Students as data source—in which staff utilise information about student progress and well-being
2. Students as active respondents—in which staff invite student dialogue and discussion to deepen learning/professional decisions
3. Students as co-enquirers—in which staff take a lead role with high-profile, active student support
4. Students as knowledge creators—in which students take lead roles with active staff support
5. Students as joint authors—in which students and staff decide on a joint course of action together
6. Intergenerational learning as participatory democracy—in which there is a shared commitment to/responsibility for the common good

In each of these ways of working the power relations are different, thus not only enabling or prohibiting the contributions of one side of the partnership but also influencing the potential synergy of the joint work, thereby affecting the possibility of both adults and young people being able to listen to and learn with and from each other. There is one other matter that seems to me important in all this and it concerns the inadequacies of developing an account of collaborative ways of working, of patterns of partnership, which frames its concerns purely in terms of power relations and wider contexts of social justice. Issues of power, of rights, of justice are, of course, immensely important, some would argue of foundational importance,

but they are not enough. Justice is never enough: it is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition of human flourishing. Justice, and indeed any form of politics, is for the sake of something else, for the sake of creative and joyful relations between persons. Thus, in addition to under girding a typology of collaborative ways of working with overt and insistent reference to power there is also a need to include explicit reference to relationships, to ways in which people regard each other, to dispositions and orientations to each other as persons movingly illustrated by Michael Ignatieff when he argues that

> Giving the aged poor their pension and providing them with medical care may be a necessary condition for their self respect and dignity, but it is not a sufficient condition.
> It is the manner of giving that counts and the moral basis on which it is given: whether strangers at my door get their stories listened to by their social worker, whether the ambulance man takes care not to jostle them when they are taken down the steep stairs of their apartment building, whether a nurse sits with them in the hospital when they are frightened and alone. Respect and dignity are conferred by gestures such as these. (Ignatieff 1984, p. 16)

In a moment I will give examples of practices that illustrate my 'patterns of partnership' in three different school contexts—the classroom/the unit, team, or department/and the whole school. In order to ground and illustrate the importance of what I shall call 'the fellowship dimension' of my typology—and, by implication, any other—I shall take one of the three examples from each of the six strands and paint a fuller picture of what a fellowship dimension would bring to the partnership.

Before I do so, just a little more about what I mean by the fellowship dimension. In sum, my argument is that, just as Michael Ignatieff argues for the human necessity of dignity and respect and its transformative effect on the lived experience of those who both give it and receive it, so I am arguing that those very dimensions together with that of care also apply to a particular conception of teaching and learning and with an equally transformative effect. Elsewhere I have argued for what I call 'the dialectic of the personal' and suggest six cumulative aspects of the transformational effects of care within the contexts of teaching and learning (Fielding 2000, pp. 405–408). At the heart of the argument is a relational anthropology of care which traces the intensification of skills, the elicitation of a wider and deeper response from both learner and teacher, the development of an increasingly acknowledged, celebrated and creative mutuality, and the eventual widening of educational horizons. It is these kinds of considerations that underpin my advocacy and illustration of a fellowship dimension. Basically, I am arguing for education as the practice of humanity, of human becoming; for the instrumental to be not only subservient to the wider human purposes, but transformed by them.

1 Students as data source Staff utilise information about student progress and well-being		
Classroom	Unit / team / dept	School
▪ Lesson planning takes account of student test scores + other data	▪ Samples of student work shared across staff group	▪ Student attitude survey

In the *Students as data source* strand staff work hard to utilise information about student progress and well-being. There is a real-teacher commitment to pay attention to student voices speaking through the practical realities of work done and targets agreed. It acknowledges that for teaching and learning to improve there is a need to take more explicit account of relevant data about individual students and group or class achievement. At unit/team/department level this way of working might express itself through, say, samples of student work being shared across a staff group, either as a form of moderation, or, less formally as part of a celebration of the range of work going on. At whole school level, an example would be the now much more common practice of conducting an annual survey of student opinion on matters the school deems important.

A fellowship reading of the classroom example might draw attention to and encourage a teacher to go beyond test data and draw on her emerging knowledge and understanding of the student's range of involvement in multiple areas of the curriculum, in a multiplicity of school and non-school contexts, and on her developing knowledge and appreciation of the young person in both formal and informal contexts.

2 Students as active respondents Staff invite student dialogue and discussion to deepen learning / professional decisions		
Classroom	Unit / team / dept	School
▪ Engaging with + adapting explicit assessment criteria	▪ Team agenda based on students views / evaluations	▪ Students on staff appointment panels

In the *Students as active respondents* strand, staff invite student dialogue and discussion in order to deepen their approach to student learning and enhance the professional decisions they make. Here staff move beyond the accumulation of passive data and, in order to deepen the learning of young people and enrich staff professional decisions, they feel a need to hear what students have to say about their own experience in lessons or their active engagement in contributing to its development via, for example, assessment for learning approaches. Students are discussants rather than recipients of current approaches and thereby contribute to the development of teaching and learning in their school. At unit/team/department level, this active respondent role might express itself through, say, every fourth meeting having a significant agenda item based on pupil views/evaluations of the work they have been doing. At whole school level, an example would be the inclusion of pupils in the appointment process for new staff.

A fellowship reading of the unit/team/department classroom example might include the presence, either in person or via their work or evaluations, of students in the team meeting; it might involve each teacher bringing artefacts or recordings or rich verbal accounts to the meeting; it might involve recent collected items

from a suggestions box, listening post or video booth facility; it might involve selected items from individual and class blogs. The key thing here is that personal knowledge of the student and rich narratives which articulate a holistic, vibrant knowledge of the young people provides the trigger for the discussion or agenda item for staff.

3 Students as co-enquirers Staff take lead role with high-profile, active student support		
Classroom	Unit / team / dept	School
▪ How can we develop more independence in learning?	▪ Student evaluation of, e.g. History unit of work	▪ Joint evaluation of current system of Reports

In the *Students as co-enquirers* strand, we see an increase in both student and teacher involvement and a greater degree of partnership than in the previous two modes. Whilst student and teacher roles are not equal, they are shifting strongly, if not in an egalitarian, then in a more strenuously interdependent direction. Students move from being discussants to being co-enquirers into matters of agreed significance and importance. While the focus and the boundaries of exploration are fixed by the teacher the commitment and agreement of students is essential. At a classroom level, this might involve, for example, a shared enquiry into and development of more independent ways of student working. At unit/team/department level, this kind of approach might express itself through student evaluation of a unit of work, as, for example, undertaken by a group in a girls' secondary school calling themselves the 'History Dudettes'. At whole school level, an example would be a joint staff-student evaluation of the Reports to Parents system.

As a classroom example of a fellowship reading I recall witnessing a wonderful infant school teacher ask her children what they felt independence in learning would look like if they saw it in a classroom. The ensuing discussion was simply recorded to, in effect, create an observation schedule for the subsequent video recording of their work together. Teacher and children then sat down and looked at the audio–visual recording of their joint work through the lens of their prior discussion, delighted in what they thought laudable and resolved to further develop ways of working that they thought would enhance their adventure and interdependence as learners together. In the teacher's view, not only was this an important catalytic event for the class, it also revealed to her aspects of children's learning and her teaching she would have been unlikely to have understood so deeply had she not involved her class as co-enquirers in what was, in effect an elegant piece of classroom-based action research. It was a deeply relational undertaking, not just a piece of committed action research: the relationships both energised the enquiry, enriched its developed, and ensured its conclusions would not just be noted but enacted in future ways of working.

4 Students as knowledge creators Students take lead role with active staff support		
Classroom	Unit / team / dept	School
▪ What seating arrangements assist learning?	▪ Is the playground buddying system working?	▪ What is the cause of low level bullying in class?

Students as knowledge creators deepens and extends the egalitarian thrust of the co-enquiry approach. Partnership and dialogue remain the dominant ways of working, but here it is the voice of the student that comes to the fore in a leadership or initiating, not just a responsive, role. It is students who identify the issues to be researched and students who subsequently undertake the enquiry with the support of staff. At classroom level, this has sometimes expressed itself through student-led research into what kinds of seating arrangements actually assist the learning processes in different years. At unit/team/department level, a good example comes from a Student Year Council who were concerned that their playground buddying system was not working in the ways they had hoped. At whole school level students in an innovative secondary school used photo-elicitation as part of their enquiry into the causes of low-level bullying that went largely undetected by staff.

A fellowship reading of the unit/team/department classroom example would bring out the fact that these are issues raised in the Year Council by students speaking (1) on behalf of others who had been responsible for the development of the buddying system (2) on behalf of young people who continued to experience difficulty in the playground from unkind and vindictive behaviour of their peers. It would also include (3) testimony from students themselves. The understanding of persons and relationships which raised the matter for reconsideration provide an insistence and a persistence that transcends text-book need to evaluate any new system after an appropriate period of time. The knowledge created and the action taken exceeded the requirements of good practice; they exemplified empowerment evaluation that placed the felt experiences of persons at the heart of their methodology, their evidence, and their agreed way forward.

5 Students as joint authors Students and staff decide on a joint course of action together		
Classroom	Unit / team / dept	School
▪ Co-construct e.g. a Maths lesson	▪ Develop a 'Research Lesson' on behalf of dept	▪ Joint student + staff Learning Walk

The *Joint authors* model involves a genuinely shared, fully collaborative partnership between students and staff. Leadership, planning and conduct of research

and the subsequent commitment to responsive action are embraced as both a mutual responsibility and energising adventure.

At classroom level, this might express itself through the co-construction of, for example, a Maths lesson. At unit/team/department level, this might take the form of a Research Lesson in which, say, three staff and three students co-plan a lesson, observe it, meet to discuss the observation data, plan version two in the light of it and repeat the process. And all of this endeavour is undertaken on behalf of the team/department and their students. At whole school level, this kind of approach might express itself in a jointly led Learning Walk. Here a focus or centre of interest is agreed and the school (and any other participating institution) becomes the site of enquiry within which the focused Walk is undertaken (NCSL 2005).

A fellowship reading of, say, the school level example can be illustrated by a partnership of schools committed to a particular set of values and aspirations meeting to share and develop their work on an agreed theme. The first round of the Learning Walk in the host's school enables participants to observe and reflect on particular kinds of practice that form the common theme of the enquiry. The second round is hosted by the second school and so on. What lifts these kinds of development from a purely instrumental to a fellowship mode are not only the felt presence of a strong set of shared values and the deep mutuality of the process, but also the interpersonal as well as the professional ways in which participants work and learn together. Not only are all those taking part treated as equals, they stay with host families. During the Learning Walk visit, these interpersonal ties bind and deepen relationships and gradually inform and extend the nature of the understandings that emerge.

6 Intergenerational learning as lived democracy Shared commitment to / responsibility for the common good		
Classroom	Unit / team / dept	School
▪ Students + staff plan lesson for younger students	▪ Classes as critical friends in thematic conference	▪ Whole School Meeting to decide a key issue

Finally, the *lived democracy* approach extends the shared and collaborative partnership between students and staff in ways that (a) emphasise a joint commitment to the common good, and (b) include occasions and opportunities for an equal sharing of power and responsibility. At its best it is an instantiation and explicit acknowledgement of the power and promise of intergenerational learning.

At classroom level, it might involve staff, students and museum staff planning a visit to a museum for younger students. At unit/team/department level, this might take the form of classes acting as critical friends to each other in the wider context of a thematic or interdisciplinary project within and/or between years. At whole school level this might express itself through the development of whole School Meetings that are such an important iconic practice within the radical traditions of both private education, for example the work of A. S. Neill at Summerhill and David Gribble

at Sands Schools in England, and public education, for example Alex Bloom at St George-in-the-East Secondary School, Stepney, London (Fielding and Moss 2011), Howard Case at Epping House School, Hertford, England (Fielding 2011, in press), and the work of Lawrence Kohlberg in the USA (Kohlberg 1980; Fielding 2011, in press). Here the participatory traditions of democracy find their fullest expression with key matters in the school decided on an equal basis by all Meeting members.

It is, of course, possible to approach this sixth pattern of partnership from the standpoint of market models of democracy. Here, whilst plural in form it is often individualistic in intent. Thus, planning a lesson for younger students or acting as critical friends for other classes could primarily be exercises in individual skill development rather than lived contributions to the common good. In contrast to this predominantly instrumental approach, the participatory traditions argue for democracy, not only as a way of meeting individual needs and arriving at collective decisions and aspirations, but also as a way of living and being in the world.

Fellowship readings of lived democracy foreground the importance of rich involvement of all participants in pursuit of communal aspirations. Thus, the kinds of School Meetings for which I am arguing are not those that attend with forensic energy to matters of procedure or the minutiae of form. Rather they are those which acknowledge that democratic living requires more than procedural fidelity. It transcends justice: it is more-than-political; it is a way of life within which democratic fellowship is both the raison d'être and the means of its realisation. Democratic community, with the daily Meeting at its centre, is important because its explicitly egalitarian form enables a deep and demonstrable reciprocity, thereby providing both existential and practical testimony of the need for and presence if not of love, then of care, of kindness, of human fellowship and the reciprocal needs of recognition. Indeed, for some key figures in the radical traditions, the main virtue of the Meeting with its egalitarian openness and mutuality had less to do with the procedural exploration of individual and collective intention than its capacity to enable us to engage the person behind the persona, to help us to 're-see' each other, to unsettle presumption and so reaffirm freedom as the centripetal value of democratic community.

We are, of course, a long way away from such realities, but, as Peter Moss and I have argued elsewhere (Fielding and Moss 2011) with as much passion and acumen as we can muster, now more than for at least three decades we need to return with respect and joy to the radical traditions, to the prefigurative practices of education which hold up to us more generous, more fulfilling possibilities of the realities of democracy as a way of working, living and being together.

On the Necessity of Interruption

We live in interesting times, as difficult and dangerous as they are full of promise and hope. We are generally not well served by dominant approaches to student voice that, whatever their surface attractions and however bright their talk of transformation, remain the creatures of an economic and political world-view that insists there-is-no-alternative to a status quo that is intellectually impoverished and morally destitute.

In his beautiful essay 'Against the Great Defeat of the World' John Berger argues that

> The culture in which we live is perhaps the most claustrophobic that has ever existed; in the culture of globalisation…there is no glimpse of an *elsewhere,* of an *otherwise.* …The first step towards building an alternative world has to be a refusal of the world picture implanted in our minds…. Another space is vitally necessary. (Berger 2002, p. 214)

Susan is right when she urges us to 'interrupt' dominant approaches to student voice and 'build a more positive and participative model' (Groundwater-Smith 2009, p. 4). She will not agree with everything I have suggested in this essay, but I hope she sees some of her own commitments in it and enjoys the debate it is intended to promote.

Patterns of partnership –
How adults listen to and learn with students in school

Instrumental dimension	**Patterns of partnership**	*Fellowship dimension*
High performance schooling *through* **market accountability**	**6. Intergenerational learning as lived democracy** ▪ shared commitment to / responsibility for the common good	**Person centred education** *for* **democratic fellowship**
	5. Students as joint authors ▪ students and staff decide a joint course of action together	
	4. Students as knowledge creators ▪ students take lead roles with active staff support	
	3. Students as co-enquirers ▪ staff take a lead role with high-profile, active student support	
	2. Students as active respondents ▪ staff invite student dialogue and discussion to deepen learning / professional decisions	
	1. Students as data source ▪ staff utilise information about student progress and well-being	

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Chapter 6
Cooperation, Collaboration, Challenge: How to Work with the Changing Nature of Educational Audiences in Museums

Lynda Kelly and Pauline Fitzgerald

Staff at the Australian Museum have worked with Susan Groundwater-Smith since 2003. A chance encounter at an educational research conference at the University of Technology, Sydney, marked the beginning of a most productive, rewarding and fun partnership with Susan. Beginning with work on our own professional development as we were challenged to think about our own pedagogical practices, through to embracing the voice of students and educators has meant that the Museum continues to provide valued learning experiences for a whole range of audiences that visit our physical and online sites. Susan has been instrumental in this shift, always providing a high level of intellectual stimulation and challenge for Museum staff, along with a range of techniques and ideas that we still use in our own creative workshops today. As well, Susan has become a much valued and loved friend and mentor to many of our current and former staff members.

Since the publication of George Hein's seminal work, *Learning in the Museums* (Hein 1998), museums have endeavoured to provide constructivist learning experiences for educational audiences. However, the nature of contemporary educational practice has necessitated that museums develop deeper and more sustained relationships with their audiences which, by doing so, presents many challenges for museums. A key component of this change is the need for ongoing and sustained consultation in an equal, respectful and two-way relationship, where both the audience and the museum are transformed in some way. This represents a major shift for both museums and museum professionals, many of whom have long been used to a one-to-many relationship with their audiences, rather than the many-to-many model currently being championed by a range of museum thinkers (Cameron and Kelly 2010; Freedman 2000; Heumann Gurian 2010; Russo et al. 2008).

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Background: Museum Learning and Audience Research

A large range of people visit museums: from the very young to the very old; and across different groups: families, friends, schools, couples. Museums are exciting places for visitors as they tell stories about the objects they hold and the research they undertake in a variety of ways. Museums are unique contexts for learning, often called 'free-choice' learning environments (Falk and Dierking 2000). Museums have the opportunity to shape identities—through access to objects, information and knowledge, visitors can see themselves and their culture reflected in ways that encourage new connections, meaning making and learning. Museums have developed from being repositories of knowledge and objects to having a '…multifaceted, outward looking role as hosts who invite visitors inside to wonder, encounter and learn' (Schauble et al. 1997, p. 3). Falk and Dierking (2000, p. 225) suggested that museums '…need to be understood and promoted as integral parts of a society-wide learning infrastructure' as they are an important part of a broader educational environment and complement other forms of learning. Museums are considered to be informal learning environments (Falk 2004; Hein 1998; Kelly 2007), described as '…self-directed, voluntary, and guided by individual needs and interests—learning that we will engage in throughout our lives' (Falk and Dierking 2002, p. 9).

Museums have always seen themselves as having an educational role with the earliest museums founded on the premise of 'education for the uneducated masses' (Bennett 1995), 'cabinets of curiosities' (Weil 1995) established to '…raise the level of public understanding…to elevate the spirit of its visitors…to refine and uplift the common taste' (Weil 1997, p. 257). More recently, there has been a conceptual change from thinking about museums as places of education to places for learning, responding to the needs and interests of visitors (Bradburne 1998; Cameron and Kelly 2010; Falk 2004; Falk and Dierking 2000; Kelly 2007). Weil (1999) stated that museums need to transform themselves from '…being *about* something to being *for* somebody' (p. 229, emphasis in original).

Audience research is a discipline of museum practice that provides information about visitors and non-visitors to museums and other cultural institutions, influencing the ways museums think about and meet the needs of their audiences and stakeholders. Audience research is also a strategic management tool that provides data to assist museums more effectively plan and develop exhibitions and programmes; to meet their corporate goals; and to learn as organisations. McManus (1991, p. 35) pointed out that '…audience evaluation is fundamental to all aspects of museum planning. If changes are to be made in any avenue of institutional endeavour they need to be informed by a comprehensive description of the audience and its likely behaviour'.

Over the past 15–20 years, increasing emphasis has been placed on research into museum learning and visitor experiences across a range of audience groups. This paralleled the move towards a body of research that is more qualitatively based, answering complex questions, rather than quantitatively focussed on narrow organisa-

tional problems (Kelly 2005). The Australian Museum[1] has been active in audience research for over 15 years, and is considered a world leader in this area. Over the past seven years, in response to a variety of internal staffing changes and new exhibitions coupled with external pressures to provide more visitor-centred experiences, the Australian Museum has developed an ethos where consulting young visitors is considered an integral part of its audience research practice through developing networks and partnerships with these audiences (Kelly 2005; Kelly et al. 2002; Kelly and Groundwater-Smith 2009), primarily via the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools (Groundwater-Smith and Kelly 2010).

Why consult young people? It is increasingly understood that young people, in order to productively participate in social and academic life, need to be active agents in that life. Unlike the adults who surround them today's young people have been born into a digital world. They know it, they understand it and they can navigate within it. The emergence of Web 2.0[2] now means that individuals have more control over how, where and when they learn and consult a wide range of information sources in their own time and space (Kelly and Russo 2010). Old models of teaching and telling are no longer sufficient. As Cornu (2004) has observed in relation to schools, knowledge is now networked and requires an understanding of a collective intelligence over and above individual enterprise. The internet, and more specifically Web 2.0 has opened up a whole new way of engaging audiences, with social media[3] now giving access to people—where those with common interests can meet, share ideas and collaborate. Seely Brown and Adler (2008, p. 18) feel that the most profound impact of the internet is '…its ability to support and expand the various aspects of social learning' and therefore, the ability to solve problems together (Kelly and Russo 2010).

The same holds true for museums, which have such a vital role to play in developing enjoyable and engaging learning among their visitors. Young people can provide legitimate insights into the educational enterprises that are designed for them, whether these be within or outside schools; in real time or in the digital space. It is generally agreed that improvement in engagement can come about when the views

[1] The Australian Museum, Sydney, was established in 1827 and is Australia's (and one of the world's) oldest natural history and anthropological museums. The mission of the Australian Museum is 'Inspiring the exploration of nature and cultures.' The primary functions of the Museum are to make information, collections and research available to a wide range of audiences through undertaking scientific research and managing a vast range of collections in the areas of zoology, mineralogy, palaeontology and anthropology. As well, public communication and learning through physical exhibitions, public programmes, publishing, regional outreach and online delivery of services are ways the Museum communicates with a wide variety of audiences. Annually, the Museum attracts between 250,000 and 400,000 visitors to the College Street site and over 15 million visitors to the website http://australianmuseum.net.au/. Accessed 30 April 2010.

[2] 'The term "Web 2.0" (2004–present) is commonly associated with web applications that facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centred design and collaboration on the World Wide Web.' http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0. Accessed 30 April 2010.

[3] 'Social media is a term for the tools and platforms people use to publish, converse and share content online. The tools include blogs, wikis, podcasts, and sites to share photos and bookmarks.' http://socialmedia.wikispaces.com/A-Z+of+social+media. Accessed 30 April 2010.

of young people are systematically collected and interrogated (Falk and Dierking 2000; Piscitelli and Anderson 2001). When we consult young people and treat them seriously, whether designing the learning spaces, the organisation of the learning, or the learning experiences, it is possible to develop a product or process that will have greater relevance for them and one with which they will wish to engage. Designing for learning must not only relate to re-conceptualising places and spaces when developing or redeveloping facilities and programmes, but equally importantly, re-examining old and sometimes 'tired' learning environments (Groundwater-Smith and Kelly 2010). Paradoxically it is the case that young people are rarely consulted and, as a result, learning experiences are often designed *for* them and not *with* them.

What is sought is a consultative model that is flexible and responsive and accounts for the various technological convergences, new knowledge and better understanding of an interactive pedagogy (Valenti 2002). Designing for positive learning outcomes is currently being led by those who are challenging the conventions that are institution-centric and turning to those that are learner-focussed. This chapter presents a snapshot of the groundbreaking work of the Australian Museum, in partnership with Susan Groundwater-Smith and the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools, who have been working together since 2003 in consulting and collaborating with a range of educational audiences, including both young people and teachers. A key component of this work was the close involvement of Museum staff, who have now taken on board many of the techniques, as well as the mindset developed through this partnership, when consulting with other audiences.

The Genesis of the Partnership: *As We See It: Improving Learning at the Museum*

In 2003, Museum management in consultation with public programme staff decided to review the kinds of learning experiences being offered, focussing on questions such as how visitors make, or not make, meaning from the objects that are displayed, the forms of display, the accompanying text (whether print or digital), the physical settings and staff who are available to provide assistance of one kind or another. From these questions the study *As We See It: Improving Learning at the Museum* was conceived to engage both Museum staff and young people in a process to reflect on ways current Museum practices impact on their learning.

This study was the first project undertaken between the Museum and the Coalition, and consisted of two phases. The first, focussing on the Museum's own practices, involved a range of education and interpretive staff gathering photographic images which they felt assisted or inhibited visitor learning in the Museum. Their images were collated as posters which conceptually linked the images and provided additional text that acted as signposts for the viewer. A series of discussions and workshops were held with staff participants to share reflections and come to a collective understanding of what an ideal learning experience could look like from the Museum's perspective. In the second phase, students from a range of schools from

the Coalition visited the Museum and were given disposable cameras to document what they felt helped and hindered their learning. The students also made posters which they then presented to Museum staff at a series of visits undertaken to their respective schools.

This phase of the project was considered so useful and engaging for Museum staff that further collaborations followed over the next few years. These consultations came to be known as *Kids' Colleges* and, to date, three have been held—exhibition development (2006), digital learning (2007) and climate change (2008), with a *Teachers' College* held in 2009. As the first two colleges have been described elsewhere (see Kelly and Groundwater-Smith 2009; Groundwater-Smith and Kelly 2010), this chapter will focus on later projects, as well as a reflection about how the Museum has applied the principles underlying *Kids' Colleges* to a different context.

2008 Climate Change *Kids' College*

The Museum's third *Kids' College* was held in December 2008 and was designed to gain an insight into the understandings and perspectives held by young people around the issues of climate change and sustainability. The information elicited informed the development of the Museum's *Climate Change: Our Future Our Choice* exhibition on show at the Museum from May to August 2009 (and currently at Sci-Tech, Western Australia).

Twenty-two students from eight schools in the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools network participated in the consultation, along with a range of Museum staff including education officers, audience researchers, exhibition planners, designers and scientists. The participants spent a full day at the Museum, with activities undertaken including the following:

- An outline of exhibition development to date.
- Voting for an exhibition title.
- Cloud storm answering the question: *When you hear the words climate change what words, thoughts, images spring to mind?*
- Sharing a pre-event task asking a parent, a teacher, a younger child and a friend: *What are your questions about climate change?*
- Testing interactives planned for the exhibition.
- Visiting a Museum scientist in their workspace to learn about their area of research.
- Creating a two-minute news story on an issue relating to climate change.
- Discussion of how individual schools are addressing issues of climate change.
- Exploration of the understanding of a carbon footprint.
- Fact finding: *What have you heard about climate change at a local, national and international level and what are your information sources?*
- Writing a postcard to a politician and a message to the Museum.

For Museum staff, participating in this event provided an invaluable insight into the interests and expectations of young people who may visit this exhibition. The power of hearing first hand could not be overstated, and Museum staff achieved a greater awareness of the knowledge and understanding that young people have regarding the challenging issue of climate change. The opportunity to test some of the exhibition components allowed for adjustments to be made and the best possible options delivered across a wide range of audiences, not just young people. The input of participating students informed the development of the exhibition reflecting the importance attached to the contribution of young people to Museum exhibitions and programmes. Significantly, one of the participating students now writes the *Cut the Carbon*[4] blog on the 'Climate Change' section of the Museum's website.

Feedback from the students about the day was very positive. They clearly enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to express their ideas in a respectful, attentive environment, as illustrated in the following comments:

> Everything you are doing is great. I think the world leaders' game was a really good idea and it will intrigue people in the Museum. The key to help climate change is education and this is what the Museum is doing. Keep up the good ideas and work.
>
> Great job!!! It was really cool to meet one of the scientists and go and see where everyone works and what they do. The new climate change exhibition will be a success. We all like interactive things.
>
> Keep going with the research and the actions on trying to reduce climate change. Also I think that today was a really good idea and I think the museum should continue holding more days like today.

The *Climate Change: Our Future Our Choice* summative evaluation found that the exhibition was highly appealing to teenagers, especially the interactive and provocative elements, while providing them with new ideas for action. Feedback on the specific interactives that *Kids' College* participants helped design showed that teenagers understood the intended objectives and messages of each. Overall, teenagers surveyed considered the exhibition worth visiting, they enjoyed the experience, learned from it and would recommend it to their friends.

2009 Teachers' College

As a key audience group and decision-maker in museum visiting, teachers have often been overlooked in audience research, yet their role in the visit is critical (Griffin 2004, 2007; Robins and Woollard 2003). Studies of how teachers both view their role in a museum visit and how they engage with students have found some tension between these two functions (Griffin 2007). Teachers often feel out of their comfort zone and focus on the logistics of the actual visit, rather than on student learning.

[4] http://australianmuseum.net.au/Cut-the-Carbon/. Accessed 30 April 2010.

As Griffin (2007, p. 39) notes: 'The major issues with regards to teachers' facilitation of learning in museums are the overriding sense of stress over organisational and management issues and the lack of understanding of the appropriate pedagogical approaches.' Similar issues were found in a study of art and design teachers in London, where the teachers 'often perceived a distinct change in their role when they took students to museums and galleries…characterised as moving away from the teaching activities of the classroom (demonstrative, informative, activity-based) toward more passive and organisational roles (supervisory, observational, pastoral)' (Robins and Woollard 2003, p. 4). Griffin (2007, p. 39) recommended that 'The best pathway may be to develop closer collaboration between teachers and museum educators.'

Given the considerable usefulness of previous *Kids' Colleges*, the engagement of Museum staff in the process, and a desire to develop a deeper relationship with teachers, a decision was made to offer teachers from the Coalition an opportunity to participate in a *Teachers' College* in November 2009. Modelled on the highly successful *Kids' College* events held over the previous four years the aim of this consultation was to explore the ways in which the Museum could contribute to the teaching and learning taking place in classrooms around New South Wales (NSW) and beyond. It was felt that by combining the riches of the Museum, both in terms of its collections and expertise, with the skills and knowledge of the participating teachers, the Museum would achieve a better understanding of the ways in which resources could be developed to enhance the teaching and learning of *both* students *and* teachers.

The format of the day was similar to previous *Kids' Colleges* involving an intense full day programme of activities:

- Introduction to the Museum and its long history
- Sharing stories of participants' personal Museum experiences, good and disastrous, funny and tragic
- Ranking eight statements regarding Museum learning
- Developing a shared understanding about learning in museums
- Group visits to various Museum exhibitions, programmes and collections
- Planning a learning experience and sharing the ideas developed
- Final thoughts and lessons for the Museum via sending a postcard with the title *You are the key*

Teachers responded enthusiastically to the programme and provided valuable insights into the diverse learning environments in which they operate. The day had a positive impact upon the participants and represents just the beginning of an opportunity to engage with teachers to provide the best possible learning experiences for their students. Museum staff felt that *Teachers' College* had a positive impact upon the participants and that they had a great deal to offer in the way of advice. Staff reported that they had benefitted in terms of getting close to their audience with many of the informal conversations encouraging a broader discussion of practices than would otherwise emerge. It was also an opportunity to learn about how

the Museum could better engage teachers and students, as well as networking and making connections to enable further discussion and consultation to take place. Overall, staff felt that *Teachers' College* stimulated new ideas for programmes—because the participants came from such a range of schools and settings (from early childhood to senior secondary) they were able to identify matters that they would like to see the Museum engage with, in particular in the area of Indigenous education.

The opportunity to consult with teachers across the broad spectrum of state and independent schools, K-12 and a range of geographic locations and socio-economic circumstances was enormously valuable. To gain an insight into the daily reality of their learning environment will greatly assist the Museum in developing future learning resources that will be relevant and engaging while meet the needs of both students and teachers. These creative, enthusiastic educators eagerly offered their ideas and opinions and their passion for the Museum's potential was inspiring. The day also had a positive impact upon the participants and represents just the beginning of an opportunity to engage with teachers to provide the best possible learning experiences for their students. Some of the teachers' comments on their postcard to the Museum included the following:

> Students will have a brighter future and greater opportunities to own their learning and really understand and become engaged with their learning by being able to come to the museum.
>
> Education is the key and the Museum is a real and concrete way of making education relevant. Providing the opportunity of working with teachers collaboratively is real education.
>
> By taking ideas from teachers (the educators) you are helping to stimulate children's development in all ages. We too are constantly learning from you, therefore we are both 'opening the door with the key' for children. Thank you.
>
> Thank you for the wonderful experience today. The Museum is always a place of inspiration and wonder. It revs us up as educators to see just what we can do for our students and ourselves. Leaving here as excited as I arrived!

Consulting one's constituency, especially a group of peers, is always challenging. The temptation is to first inform and then consult. This can have both positive and negative outcomes. By informing it is possible to cut across misconceptions and lack of knowledge, however, it can be the case that providing a high level of information at the outset will orient participants in a particular fashion and may predetermine the outcomes. The choice in *Teachers' College* was to develop an interactive structure that would allow both functions to occur. Much information was shared through the visits to various sections of the Museum and through the interactions with Museum staff. It does seem clear that working with teachers gives an insight into the conditions within which they operate and the many competing demands that they face as they seek to provide authentic and worthwhile learning experiences for their students. In the main the Museum played the role of listener. It will now be incumbent upon it and its staff to make decisions about the ways in which the voices of teachers can inform and enhance its educational practices in developing learning power across the spectrum.

Applying Lessons from the Partnership: Pacific Cultures Consultation

Many of the principles and procedures of *Kids' Colleges* were employed when undertaking front end evaluation for a proposed new exhibition on Pacific Cultures planned for the Australian Museum. In this instance Museum staff members visited two Coalition schools while a third visited the Museum. Schools were selected on the basis of their high proportion of students with Pacific Island heritage and included a primary school, a girl's secondary school and a boy's secondary school. A focus group was also held on site for community groups.

After a brief introduction to this project outlining the Museum's intention to develop an exhibition to showcase their extraordinary collection of more than 60,000 objects from the Pacific region participants were asked to explore three key questions:

- What stories should we tell?
- Which objects from our collection should we include?
- How can we link our collection to a contemporary context?

The students were very forthright in their opinions and some of the key messages to emerge from this consultation which will need to be considered in the ongoing development of this exhibition were the strength of the connection participants have with their culture and how immersed they are in the practicing these customs. They considered this exhibition to be an opportunity for them to showcase their culture and portray themselves in a positive light. Several students made mention of the perceived negative stereotype young Pacific Islanders have in the community. For older people this exhibition was seen as a way to educate a younger generation and help them to 'hang on' to their culture, for example:

> Try to get across the point to contemporary/younger Pacific Islanders that this is what they have to be proud of, that they belong to this culture whether or not they know much about it or 'practice' aspects of it. It's about connectivity, community, origins and pride.

All participants responded with overwhelming enthusiasm and provided very useful information and direction for the exhibition project team. The message that came through from all groups was one of passion for their culture and gratitude that the Museum was asking them for their advice and opinions:

> Please continue to consult Pacific communities about your exhibition. We appreciate you including us in your planning and we will also ensure that our input is relevant and applicable.

> Museum, thank you for being concerned about Islanders and what we have to share, including our history and how we came to be.

> Thanks for coming to our school and wanting our opinion and ideas! Yay!

Once again the benefits of this experience were significant for both the Museum and the participants as demonstrated in the following quotes:

> I think that this is a great idea. I believe it will make Islanders of our generation appreciate their culture more. The more the exhibition looks like their culture; there will be more of a personal impact on them.

> I reckon that people who work with you should go to more schools and talk to other students and take some ideas about what could go into the Museum. Make sure when people say some cultural things, they pronounce it properly. Keep the audience happy and satisfied with the time they've spent at the museum. More awareness of the Pacific culture and customs. Thank you!

Conclusion

The relationship built with the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools has been of great help to the Museum over a number of years and hugely rewarding for the staff that plan and participate in the events. It has provided an insight into the K-12 schools environment across NSW and allowed the Australian Museum to be truly consultative. This ongoing consultation has informed the development of exhibition spaces and programmes and helped to define the future direction of the organisation. The ongoing association between the Museum, the Coalition schools, teachers and students has been successful as the relationship has an authentic purpose and continuity. All partners take on collective responsibility through the promotion of consultation, collaboration and democratic decision making. Overall it continues to be an exercise of trust, with continued benefits to all.

For the Museum it is a privilege to share in the enthusiasm and energy of the teachers and students from participating schools. It has had a strong and positive impact on the staff members fortunate enough to be involved in these events. The organisation as a whole has benefited from having 'an ear to the ground' with students and teachers and the conditions under which they operate. The diversity of the Coalition schools allows the Museum a snapshot into the variety of learning environments facing students in NSW. The Museum has learned new ways to engage young people in exhibitions, programmes and website development processes and an appreciation of the perspectives and depth of understanding displayed by young people in their responses to these. As one staff member stated:

> The idea of interactive discussions led by a table leader allowed for ideas to be shared in a comfortable atmosphere. The sense of excitement and shared passion was obvious. The teachers' loved sharing their experiences and this was supported by encouraging staff.

The teachers see the relationship as a great way to both reward some students and to develop others. For those who participated in *Teachers' College* the benefits are best summarised in their final messages to the Museum:

> A place of possibilities, presentations, people and panorama. I have appreciated your openness, willingness to share and listen and your helpfulness.

> Today you have provided me with a key to unlock my mind so that I can now try to unlock the hearts and minds of my students.

> This experience has opened my mind and eyes to what a museum experience should be.

For the students, attending a *Kids' College* event is a very exciting opportunity. Spending time behind the scenes of the Museum interacting with the scientists is

a highlight for many. Their feedback indicates they feel welcomed, valued and respected as well as having great fun! They appreciate being listened to and their views acted on:

> I had the greatest time I've ever had. I learnt so many things so that I would recommend that they continue to get together like this because it is a great idea, but there should be more than three people from each school.
>
> …a great experience because it shows how small a creature can be while still being really significant to us. It opened up another choice of what I can do in the future.
>
> The kids were very proud to have been involved in the day. They came back with self-esteem brimming. I printed the photo for the kids and just gave it to them. The smiles were amazing. T was still laughing at the awesome day she had. It was such a privilege for these kids to be involved in such a review; they would never have had this opportunity in their local high schools.

The reciprocal nature of the relationship is clear, as is the notion of cooperation and collaboration. However, the nature of contemporary educational practice has necessitated that museums develop deeper and more sustained relationships with their audiences which, by doing so, presents many challenges. A key component of this change is the need for ongoing and sustained consultation in an equal, respectful and two-way relationship, where both the audience and the museum are transformed in some way. The impact of the partnership with the Coalition is best illustrated through the feedback the Museum receives after hosting these events, as reported throughout this chapter. This spirit of learning together will ensure the relationship grows, deepens and continues to benefit all involved. As one student participant concluded:

> The whole thing I thoroughly enjoyed! I love all of it and getting the chance to have my say. If I had to choose a favourite part of it all I would most definitely say being taken on a tour of the Museum and just being able to state our opinion with meaning.

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Chapter 7
Creating Spaces for Practitioner Research: Strategic Leadership to Create a Third Space for Practitioner Enquiry in an Authentic Professional Learning Community

Greg Elliott

As a practitioner, I am often bemused by the gap between educational theory and educational practice which occurs to me as an inability of teachers to hear the message of the researchers and an inability of the researchers to see the reality of the comprehensive, high-stakes classroom. It is a case of practitioner deafness compounded by researcher blindness. In such a stalemate, the researcher and the teacher remain estranged and impaired.

Practitioner enquiry has the potential to cure both of these impairments in three ways:

- By situating both the research and the practice within the same community of professionals
- By conducting enquiry into questions of immediate relevance and importance to that community
- By establishing a recursive process for improvement and reflection

My own understanding of practitioner enquiry has been shaped and refined through the influence and insights of Susan Groundwater-Smith, as the founder of the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools. As a de facto mentor to me, I am grateful to her for having given me the tools to look with fresh eyes at data located within the life and work of educational communities.

This chapter will tell the story of a learning community which has worked to create space for sustainable practitioner enquiry and how that activity has strengthened the professional learning community (PLC). It will also consider the strategic posture taken by the college leadership which allowed for and nourished the 'learning projects' as they have come to be known. Further, this article will suggest how the strategy may be enhanced so as to grow and improve the benefits flowing through to the experience of learning in the school. Specifically, the leadership and strategic principles which have underpinned this movement in professional learning will be described and interrogated. The argument will be made that strategic vision empow-

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ered by a leadership mandate and enacted in a third space of professional dialogue, are required for the full benefits of sustained practitioner enquiry to be enjoyed by the learning community.

The Learning Projects

St Mary Star of the Sea College, a comprehensive, Catholic secondary school for girls on the New South Wales south coast has practitioner-based action research as a mainstay of its professional learning and learning improvement agenda. The case represents an example of what Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009) refer to as 'inquiry-based professional learning', defined as action research or teacher inquiry which takes teacher professional learning as one of its primary aims. They suggest that at its best, such an approach is:

1. Focused upon transformation, of both self and school
2. Collaborative, with opportunities for teachers to build authentic collegiality
3. Ongoing, rather than solely project based
4. Capable of engaging teachers in creating knowledge about and for practice
5. Encompassing of opportunities for teachers to develop and hone their professional judgement

The product of the research at St Mary's is an annual college 'Learning Project Portfolio', containing the collection of individual action research studies produced by teachers. These studies cover the broadest spectrum of college enterprise, with an emphasis on the wisdom to be distilled from student voice data. These projects are conducted over the course of a school year, with supervision from an academic critical friend. They are published and shared as a contribution to the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools.

Developed as an agency of the Centre for Practitioner Research at Sydney University, the Coalition has grown to include schools from across the three sectors of secondary education in Australia: the public, Catholic and independent sectors. The work of the Coalition has been widely documented over the years (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2003, 2009). The diversity of this movement is exceptional when you also consider that the schools involved in the Coalition range from culturally diverse and economically challenged city schools to wealthier, independent, schools across disparate geographic regions. The aim of the Coalition is to share and cooperate on projects that enhance learning for students and teachers. Two of the central values of our Coalition are the primacy of student voice and the imperative to reflect together.

The Context

St Mary Star of the Sea College is a Catholic, independent high school for girls in Wollongong, Australia. Accredited Australian schools are mandated to deliver a state-based curriculum. All schools in Australia are funded to some degree by state

and federal governments; however, independent schools do not belong to a central bureaucracy and can be considered autonomous in terms of policies and procedures.

As an independent school, St Mary's has a system of governance that resembles a company, in that there is a board of directors, who appoints a chief executive officer (the principal) and which sets the strategic direction for the organisation. The board is also responsible for the sound financial management of the college, and has oversight of the annual budget. The operation of the college, its budget and programs is delegated to the CEO—the Principal.

St Mary's is a low-fee independent school (by relative measures) and draws students from across the socio-economic spectrum. The 1,150 students come from a diverse and broad geographic region, south of Sydney. As a comprehensive high school, the student population represents a normal distribution of academic performance. The college enjoys an excellent reputation in the local community and beyond, with most of our graduates receiving first-round offers to university immediately after completing their senior schooling.

As an independent school, recruitment and employment are local matters determined by the Principal and an appointment panel. The criteria for employment always contain a minimum tertiary qualification, determined by legislation, as well as a willingness to support the Catholic ethos and tradition of the school. There are 84 full-time teachers who have been employed for between 1 and 28 years. This mixture of experience is a source of synergy in terms of professional learning and collegial support.

Leadership at St Mary's

St Mary's has been owned and operated by Australia's first order of Catholic nuns, the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, since its foundation in 1873. The impact this religious congregation of women has had on Australian schooling is extraordinary and exemplary (Walsh 2001). Originally established to support the poorest women and children in society, the Sisters soon grew a reputation for operating high-quality schools with sound educational outcomes and excellent spiritual, cultural and civic formation of their pupils. With little or no funding the Good Samaritan schools of the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, like most Australian Catholic schools, met the diverse needs of large numbers of students. Discipline, management of students and staff and good order were paramount in order to assure these standards. The leadership structure in these schools was explicit, formal and largely autocratic. The Catholic worldview which shaped these schools and the women who ran them, was by its nature hierarchical, somewhat dogmatic, and attempted to balance compassion with strong discipline.

This industrial era model of leadership persisted in religious congregational schools well into the current era. As schools like St Mary's moved to lay principalship and entirely lay teaching staff, this older model has been replaced with more enlightened ways of leading which better meet the needs of contemporary learning communities. This transition has presented all congregational schools with chal-

lenges and tensions, as they leave behind the security, predictability and clarity of following a benevolent leader without question. This shift in leadership and in the expectations the community is one of three tiers of change confronting schools like St Mary's. Parallel with this change has been an increased focus on public accountability, high-stakes testing and reporting and national education agendas. The third tier of this monumental change has been the generational shifts brought about by an ageing teacher workforce, and a vastly connected and technologically expectant student population.

Leadership Shift

The ambiguity that comes with community-based decision making, collaborative leadership and continuous improvement has, at times, brought about a yearning for the past in traditional schools such as St Mary's.

In the face of these shifts, St Mary's continues to be a highly structured enterprise, within which systems and structures are long established and translated and supported by nominated leaders. In this regard, the college could be described as conservative. This conservative approach to leadership, which may even be critiqued as oligarchic, has been a source of both security and tension over the college's recent history.

The management structure of the college is similar to most comprehensive high schools in Australia, with responsibility for leadership and management devolved to assistant principals. Leadership of subject faculties is the task of subject coordinators, with pastoral care leadership being the role of year coordinators.

Over time, leadership has been highly valued at St Mary's, although it has mostly conceived of in terms of nominated positions of responsibility, and less so in terms of teacher-leadership as defined by Crowther et al. (2009). Crowther's model rests on the agency of the teacher as practitioner leading growth and change within the classroom which percolates through to systems and structures. By embracing an action-research approach to professional learning, St Mary's aimed to move to a more dynamic and distributed model of leadership, whilst also encouraging the agency and development of individual teachers as leaders. Crowther et al. (2009, p. 19) describe this change thus:

> [teacher leadership is]…well suited to a post-industrial world where hierarchy in organisational relationships will decrease in importance, and the capacity to help communities enhance their quality of life of life through the creation of new knowledge will increasingly become a priority.

As a legacy of the hierarchical model of leadership, left by the Sisters, the college did not have a strong culture of participation, collaborative planning or consultative leadership. Although teachers would not have regarded their role in the organisation as disempowered or disenfranchised, they would have been as equally unlikely to engage in work which interrogated the college's structures and practices and posited

significant change or innovation. The consequence of this was a professional community with a clear ethic for student learning, but a very passive approach to existing practice; collectively and individually. This was evident in the infrequency with which teachers observed each other teaching, and the relative absence of teacher initiated innovation. A further consequence was that there was little or no succession planning for nominated leadership positions. In my experience of interviewing potential candidates, not only was it difficult to garner interest in leadership, but there was a prevailing humility among teachers which I interpret as a lack of confidence and a lack of leadership development or the development of leadership thinking. This may have been due to the absence of exposure to leadership of learning, or to strategic and holistic thinking about the management of learning at the college.

After the transition of the college from religious to lay leadership in 1999, a slow process of cultural and systemic change began. As a member of the leadership team at this time, I became part of a process which would eventually result in the creation of a PLC wherein members were empowered and enfranchised. Key to this process were the following:

- The clarification of college values and mission
- The development of a strategic plan
- The slow growth of a leadership culture which may be described as invitational (Fink and Stoll 1996)

Strategic Planning

The first attempts at formal strategic planning, after a century of congregational leadership, were less than ideal, but certainly they allowed the college to take significant steps in the direction of teacher leadership. As previously mentioned, the college is incorporated as a company under the fiduciary and strategic guidance of a board of directors. These directors, drawn from the local business community and some educational administrators, have varying degrees of experience in learning and teaching in the high school context. For three cycles of strategic planning, covering almost ten years, the board determined the shape and goals of strategic plan which the college leaders and staff had to execute. There remained a gap between the ‘plan’ developed and delivered by the board, and the operational reality for the leadership team. For each of these plans there was some degree of consultation, and this level of collaborative planning increased with each cycle.

The latest plan, to be published in 2010, has for the first time, consultation and participation as a central principle. Further, it will place the experience of teachers, and their action research at the centre of the plan. To create a preferred future for our students, it is the intention that both teacher and student voices are honoured and valued. As the principal has said, at a staff meeting in March 2010, “There are no people more expert in how to create a preferred future for our students than our teachers.”

The Learning Project Portfolios, developed in a growing culture and stance of practitioner enquiry, make a most valuable contribution to both the strategic planning and the development of teacher agency. The learning projects, and the conversation they engendered, have become a distinct space within the professional organisation of the college; a space not defined by a hierarchically determined agenda, or a deterministic approach to organisational learning.

The Notion of Creating a Research Space as a Third Space

We can apply this notion in the experience and contribution of action learning at St Mary's. In the organisational geography of the college, we needed to create, or rather co-create, a 'third space' which did not confine the participants in terms of the dominant and pre-existing paradigms of learning and thinking about learning.

> Third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority…new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom…the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. (Bhabha 2004, p. 211)

Bhabha was writing as a critique of post-colonialism, and used the term to refer to the uncomfortable and generative production of new understandings which are created outside and sit apart from both the status quo and the cultural imperatives. These spaces are at the edges of the hegemony. They are characterised by uncertainty, and a cooperative acceptance that the future is not necessarily constrained by the past. They are naturally occurring phenomenon at times when existing paradigms and norms are unsatisfactory. In Bhabha's conception, third spaces become a locus of new power and authority. To some extent, Bhabha's third spaces are counter-cultural places of discourse characterised by challenge, enquiry, empowerment and creativity. Inquiry-based professional learning has become a third space at St Mary's. As we inquire into the phenomenon of learning and the craft of teaching, the learning projects have brought into the organisational geography a new place for questioning, for dialogue and for the creation of new knowledge and new understanding. Unlike Bhabha's theory though, this space is not in opposition to the status quo, but does provide the venue for healthy uncertainty and critical questioning of practice. The space is promoted and nurtured by the college as a vital component in the ongoing development of both teachers and organisational wisdom. As a Good Samaritan college, we are considered to be a school in the Benedictine tradition. Long before Bhabha's notion of the Third Space was developed, the Benedictine philosophy offered the notion of conversation, or the willingness to engage and to be open so as to be transformed. The notion is described in the Ten Hallmarks of Benedictine Education from the Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities. Although it is expressed in distinctly religious language, such openness to the serendipity of community inquiry is, in essence, the heart of quality action learning.

> The aim of life for Benedictines is the same as it is for all Christians—to be transformed in every part of one's life so that God's very image, in which each has been created, becomes palpable and transparent. The Benedictine word for this way of life is conversatio, the process of letting go in day-to-day life of self-centered preoccupations and false securities so that the divine life at the core of one's being becomes manifest in a trustworthy pattern of living. Conversatio is a commitment to engage in practices that over a lifetime bring about conversion into the likeness of Christ and, in particular, Christ's giving of self for others. This transformation proceeds according to small steps; and it is tested in unexpected ways over a lifetime. To come to fruition conversatio requires stability, discipline, faithfulness and resilience.
>
> Benedictine colleges…attempt to call all members of the community to move out of their comfort zone for the sake of learning and integrity. We are not afraid to focus on habits of mind that will require many years to develop. In curricular and co-curricular programs we seek to challenge realities we often take for granted, to foster intellectual and personal breakthroughs, and to cultivate habits of mind that will transform students, faculty and staff alike, nurturing deep learning and generosity over a lifetime. (Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities n.d.)

The process of strategic planning, continuous improvement and organisational learning at St Mary's is framed by this reverence for challenging assumptions and entering into generative dialogue with our experience and with each other in order to be authentic in our response to the needs of the time.

Invitational Leadership

Several times in this chapter, I have described the classroom as a high-stakes environment. The forces both local and national, brought to bear on the activity of the teacher in the classroom, combined with the future and fortunes of the consequential stakeholders; the students, make the professional life of a teacher at best complex and at worst fraught and fractured. In such an environment, a values model of leadership is necessary to build a community wherein professionals are equipped and empowered to meet these complex challenges. I have long believed that invitational leadership, as described by Fink and Stoll (1996) provides a framework for leading the human enterprise of the college which is well aligned with our religious foundations and which creates an atmosphere and a set of structures that liberate teachers in their work, whilst uniting them with a clear and common purpose.

The four essential elements of invitational leadership are not just personal qualities, or leadership attributes, but can become the drivers for policy, structural improvement and cultural change. The word 'invitational' itself suggests openness to the possibilities inherent within the members of the community, and ties in firmly with a Benedictine view of both *conversatio* and hospitality.

Optimism is the first element of invitational leadership and relates to both an interpersonal style, as well as a posture taken when facing complexity. Indeed, the premise underpinning action research as a learning model is that we can improve; learn more, teach better, create new knowledge. This is even true in circumstances where a deficit of practice is not apparent.

Respect is the second element as has become a common theme in recent relational models of leadership such as that of van Quaquebeke and Eckloff (2010). These researchers found that it was a trait highly valued by subordinates, and translates as a mode of interaction which leaves the other with a sense of being appreciated and valued. It has also been conceived of as presence in the leadership. When overlaid with the notion of a third space for inquiry, respect is a necessary posture for the college leaders as they negotiate and engage with the challenge and uncertainty that begins the process of action learning. They must also maintain this respect as the research produces new and sometimes uncomfortable questions and possible directions. An example of this was in the published portfolio for 2009, wherein a teacher-researcher interrogated our pastoral care practices. Her findings cast light on an area of college life which we had hitherto been proud of and felt assured was well catered for. After listening carefully to the voices of students and counsellors, she found:

> …there needs to be better communication between teachers about their students. Greater knowledge of the concerns of individual students is needed. KLAs (Department Heads) also need to be more aware of student issues. Personal communication, not email, is preferred. Time constraints mean that teachers do not talk with colleagues about their students often enough and this is seen as a barrier to efficient follow-up of a student's needs. (St Mary Star of the Sea College 2009a, p. 63)

In a previous era of leadership, such a powerful critique would not have been possible. The respect required of invitational leadership, and the values of *conversatio* and hospitality, now result in a climate where a teacher can confidently enter a space of research and inquiry where no question is too sensitive to be asked. Assured of the respect of the college leadership, she can participate in such conversations, and in fact, enhance her own profile as a leader and researcher in this learning community.

The third feature of invitational leadership is trust, which according to Fink and Stoll (1996, p. 109) creates the following reality in communities:

> If one accepts that behaviour is based on individual choices and people are able, worthwhile and responsible, then invitational leaders trust others to behave in concert with these preconceptions. In turn, invitational leaders through their relationships, policies and practices behave with integrity.

In the example cited above, the creation of a space within which such questions could be asked is evidence of the climate of trust that has been nurtured through this project. Naturally, trust is a reciprocal process, requiring a degree of explicit and implicit communication about the shared mission and ethical standards of the organisation. This has been established over time and grows out of the college's values.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, invitational leadership requires intentionality, which I have come to understand as clarity of purpose married with a sense of momentum and energy. It is my experience of the learning projects that the key to sustainability is a clear mandate for research and inquiry coupled with constant clarification of purpose and direction within a clear statement of our ethic of learning. The leaders engaged in the project work constantly to encourage and celebrate

the research, keep it on track, and assist with resourcing and goals clarification in an ongoing way.

Participation in the learning projects has provided the teacher-researchers with a voice and with some control over, not only their practice, but the agenda for quality learning in the college. It has worked to enhance the profile of these teachers as leaders and researchers in their own right. Unlike traditional forms of leadership development, professional learning which resides in and grows out of action research allows teachers to participate in a deeply significant and valuable process of strategic development. As Freedman et al. (2009, p. 85) explain "when a person is involved in decision making with a group of people over whom he or she has no hierarchical power on a problem for which there is no known answer (as occurs in Action Learning), the person can develop every leadership competency". Australia's current debate around teacher professionalism and the establishment of national standards for teaching, alongside proposals for performance-based pay structures have all shone a light on teacher practice and the status of the profession. As an educational leader and teacher, I have witnessed my colleagues struggle to balance the pressure concomitant with high stakes testing with the ethical need to continuously improve the engagement and learning of their students. Classrooms become the battleground of public policy, and community expectations cycle up without abatement. In such a climate, old models of leadership and the limited conception of the role of the teacher are inadequate and could result in the disempowerment of teachers as leaders and professionals.

The College as a Professional Learning Community

In some respects, the term professional learning community represents an ideal aspired to by most schools and colleges, in that it is a title which denotes professionalism, a clear focus on the learning of all members and a sense of belonging and shared vision. The degree to which those are idealised in schools is a matter for investigation and evaluation. One could assume that the epithet 'Professional Learning Community' is applied to a range of schools and institutions which may not come close to the three values indicated in the title.

Hord (1997) conducted a review of schools and colleges to determine the common features of PLCs, focusing on those that were adaptive, evidence based and showed improvement and growth over a series of measures. In so doing, she developed a set of criteria which have since been used by others in the assessment of specific PLCs (Louis and Marks 1998; Rasberry and Mahajan 2008). The criteria point to both the phenomenological aspects of PLCs, as well as to their cultural and human features.

Hord's (1997) report found that:

> In the schools that were characterized by professional learning communities, the staff had worked together and changed their classroom pedagogy. As a result, they engaged students in high intellectual learning tasks, and students achieved greater academic gains in math,

> science, history and reading than students in traditionally organized schools. In addition, the achievement gaps between students from different backgrounds were smaller in these schools, students learned more, and, in the smaller high schools, learning was distributed more equitably. (pp. 26–27)

Such findings, though confined to the United States of America, are significant in that they may hold the key to bridging the gap between theory and practice. The five critical attributes that are common to professional learning communities, according to Hord, are as follows:

- The collegial and facilitative participation of the principal who shares leadership—and thus, power and authority—through inviting staff input in decision making.
- A shared vision that is developed from an unswerving commitment on the part of staff to students' learning and that is consistently articulated and referenced for the staff's work.
- Collective learning among staff and application of the learning to solutions that address students' needs.
- The visitation and review of each teacher's classroom behaviour by peers as a feedback and assistance activity to support individual and community improvement.
- Physical conditions and human capacities that support such an operation.

These will be used as the structure for a summative analysis of St Mary Star of the Sea College as a PLC.

1. **The collegial and facilitative participation of the principal who shares leadership—and thus, power and authority—through inviting staff input in decision making.**
   St Mary's has taken important and sometime painful steps, to move out of the era of what Busher and Saran (1994) call structural functional leadership. The aim of this model to is assure consistency and compliance. As history has shown, changing the leader is in some ways the least challenging aspect of this shift. The expectations and preparation of the teachers have had to move as well. The current leadership of the college understands that the complexity of the educational enterprise and the skill and motivation of the educators requires an open-systems approach to decision making, which, at its best, is invitational and authentic.
   The strategic planning processes marked the beginning of this movement, though in a highly regulated and deterministic way. Practitioner-based action research has opened up new ways of seeing, and new knowledge which flows directly into decision making and planning. It has also been instrumental in shifting the expectations of teachers about their role as co-creators of a preferred future for the students of the college.
   The fact that the college has created and nurtured a third space within which this critique and co-creation can occur is stunning evidence of participative decision making.

2. **A shared vision that is developed from an unswerving commitment on the part of staff to students' learning and that is consistently articulated and referenced for the staff's work.**
   The values clarification process, which has been a starting point for each major cycle of planning and review, has allowed al stakeholders, including students and their parents, to express those things which are most highly valued. By actively seeking the intersections between the story and charism of the college, and the needs and dreams of its students and staff, we constantly affirm that which is at the heart of this enterprise.
   The college now has a clear ethic for learning. This ethic is the genesis of each of the learning projects, and reverberates through policies and structures across the college. Naturally, such an ethic must be arrive at collaboratively, and embedded in practice. This has become known as our Academic Care Charter: ten statements about this community's commitment to learning (St Mary Star of the Sea College 2009b, see Appendix 1).

3. **Collective learning among staff and application of the learning to solutions that address students' needs.**
   The learning projects and the annual Learning Project Portfolio are powerful sources and products of learning for the teachers at St Mary's. But, as significant as these documents are, it is the discourse, the argument and the questioning that takes place within this research space that points most convincingly to organisational learning. As a community of professionals we have grown to value educational inquiry, uncomfortable questioning and the investigation of new knowledge and new directions.
   Celebration has always had a life-giving and life-sustaining function in Benedictine Communities. This creation of teacher learning for the sake of student learning is celebrated and honoured at every stage, with colleagues presenting their research to each other in formal and informal settings. Our reputation as a community of learners extends beyond the gates of our school. Students themselves are very accustomed to participating in research and sharing, with confident and trust, their insights and reflections about their own experience of learning. Their cooperation is easy to garner as they see the efforts of their teacher-researcher being translated into an improved learning environment for them.

4. **The visitation and review of each teacher's classroom behaviour by peers as a feedback and assistance activity to support individual and community improvement.**
   Alongside, the learning project has been implementation of a lesson study approach called 'Master Classes' (Elliott 2007). The process involves teachers opening their classroom to (usually) three colleague observers who observe and measure specific elements of the teaching and learning. These could be quite concrete (such as timing on-task behaviour) to impressionistic (the degree to which the teacher used her voice effectively). After the observation, time and space is set aside for a structured de-briefing and analysis, and the discussion and collation of learning distilled from the lesson study. These are often used as

a means to test the efficacy of innovations resulting from the learning projects, and form an important milestone in the iterative process.

I have been fortunate to attend these sessions as an observer, thus adding another lens to the enquiry. For my part, I see teachers, including the master teacher for the session, working through their perceptions to understand the distance between teacher intention and student experience. In a way, this is the most critical metric: the gap between the educational intention, generated by curriculum and professional practice (the teaching), and the change that actually takes place within the student (the learning). Our aim is to use these tools to narrow the gap.

It is custom and practice that one of the observers then opens her or his classroom for the next master class. Thus the college achieves a sustainable cycle of lesson studies, as well as promoting a culture of openness, reflection, inquiry and feedback.

5. **Physical conditions and human capacities that support such an operation.**

Unlike Bhabha's conception of third spaces, which are created spontaneously in the face of unsatisfactory realities, the research spaces created within the organisational geography at St Mary's are clearly established, resourced and nourished. This is achieved at some considerable expense to the college, and is another example of why a leadership mandate is necessary for the establishment and sustainability of such spaces.

Towards the end of each calendar year, teachers are invited to submit research proposals to the supervisor of research. These can be on virtually any topic of substance which aligns with our Academic Care Charter (Appendix 1). A list of current and completed research topics can be found as Appendix 2.

When a teacher has her or his research proposal approved, an allocation of time is added into the teaching schedule for the following year. This amounts to about 70 hours of relief from face to face teaching across the course of the school year. The college generally approves between seven and ten projects per year, which, in real terms, equates to the cost of employing an additional teacher.

The researchers are supported through regular contact with their research supervisor, as well as milestone interviews with a critical friend from University. Further, material resources and administrative support are provided to the researchers upon request.

It has been our intention, since the inception of the learning projects, to remove impediments and encourage engagement. This has assisted in the uptake and the sustainability of the program.

It is my assessment that the college meets Hord's (1997) criteria for an authentic PLC. This marks an entire transformation in learning, leadership and participative culture at the college. This has been a momentous journey of growth and learning. However, as with all undertakings in the action learning sphere, there is no destination per se; no arrival at the gates of an ideal learning community. There are several tenets of both Hord's PLC criteria and Groundwater-Smith and Mockler's characteristics of inquiry-based professional learning that bear further exploration and innovation.

As this meta-research unfolds, I see opportunities for growth and an improvement in the authenticity of the learning. Based on this analysis, the college, through its new strategic plan, will attempt the following three enhancements to the Learning Projects:

1. Build in opportunities for collaborative and team-based research, and slowly move away from the norm of the individual researcher working to answer individual research questions.
2. Use the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools to develop communities of inquiry interrogating questions of a similar ilk in different settings.
3. Create an actual physical space for discourse and research, known as 'the third space', within which teachers and other stakeholders can engage in cooperative enquiry into the science of learning.

Conclusion

The experience of St Mary Star of the Sea College has shown that it is possible to create an authentic PLC. The outcomes of such a venture go well beyond the limits of the research questions. There are two most powerful by-products of inquiry-based professional learning at the college. This revolution in professional learning has brought to birth a new space wherein teachers and stakeholders co-create a preferred future based on quality evidence. This same process has invested in teachers a new creative agency that fits well with Crowther's definition of teacher leadership. We have moved from the early experience of teachers learning and learners teaching, to a state where learners are leading and leaders are learning.

Appendix 1

St Mary Star of the Sea College—Academic Care Charter

> The strong should have something to strive for and the weak nothing to run from. (Rule of St Benedict Ch. 64)

Teaching Styles and Methods Teachers at St Mary's use a variety of styles and methods to engage all learners and to meet diverse learning needs. They plan and tailor their teaching to match the content, student ability, available technology and other situational factors which affect learning.

Learning Styles and Needs Teachers at St Mary's recognise and cater for students who learn in different ways. They facilitate optimal learning experiences that nurture emotional well-being and personal achievement.

Authentic Learning Experiences Teachers at St Mary's create authentic learning experiences which engage students in the development of significant and life-centred knowledge and skills. Their lessons promote problem solving, critical thinking and a love of learning.

Reflection in Learning Teachers at St Mary's build reflection, assessment for learning and evaluation into the learning process. They explicitly teach the skills of listening, questioning, goal setting and planning.

Assessment Teachers at St Mary's measure student learning in a range of meaningful and equitable ways. They create assessments of high quality which support learning for all students and they provide feedback which is timely and constructive.

A Positive Learning Environment Teachers at St Mary's create positive learning environments with a balance of challenge and support, where every student's right to learn is protected and promoted. They create stimulating lessons where students feel secure enough to take learning risks.

Expectations Teachers at St Mary's expect all students can learn and all students can achieve personal excellence. They communicate this expectation to their students and encourage and support them to be motivated and optimistic learners.

Relationships Teachers at St Mary's model and promote empathetic relationships with students based on mutual trust and respect. They engage with all students in a way that is purposeful and is directed to all students' growth and well-being.

Appendix 2

Research Questions Treated by the Learning Projects 2008–2010

2010

1. How will the implementation of 'Click View' (software that allows streaming of video) affect the learning of students and teachers at St Mary's College?
2. How can we recognise and nurture the potential of gifted and talented students in the religious education subjects?
3. What transformative behaviours can the school community undertake to better embrace the Benedictine value of stewardship?
4. Does e-learning increase student engagement in religious education at St Mary's?
5. Are we able to fulfil students' expectations in year-9 religious education?
6. What can the college do better to increase student resilience upon entering high school?
7. How can the college's practices and pedagogies empower students with special needs to maximise their learning and reach their full potential?

2009

1. What elements of visual and navigation design create a successful and engaging learning experience for students in an e-learning situation?
2. Does Google kill research skills?
3. What has been of the impact of interactive whiteboards in a one-to-one laptop learning environment?
4. Increasing engagement and deeper understanding in mathematics in junior classes—a pilot study.
5. Positive psychology: its implications for St Mary Star of the Sea College—a proposal.
6. Significance in the classroom: A focus on learning and teaching strategies that promote inclusiveness for all students.
7. Teaching twenty-first century skills to the information-age student—measuring the correlation between competencies and content knowledge and skills.

2008

1. Measuring the efficacy of self-directed learning of mathematics in a one-to-one laptop school.
2. Analysing student perceptions of connected learning.
3. Bridging the gap—what does an analysis of student performance and perceptions in senior English tell us of our preparation for senior demands in English?
4. Studies of Religion (SOR)—a distinct teaching challenge. What are the self-concept issues faced by teachers of studies of religion?
5. The emerging analytical mind—does our assessment program meet the intellectual needs of our students? Would a more engaging program enhance their engagement and learning?
6. Fostering students creativity through imaginative curriculum and quality—the creative and performing arts.
7. Art & Growth—how can we address the distance between students' experience of theory and practice in Visual Arts?
8. Get Moving! How can Personal Development Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) programs stimulate physical activity as a lifestyle choice for all students?
9. Dancing through the universe—how can dance, music, drama and poetry be employed to assist students' learning complex concepts in science?

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Chapter 8
The English Masters in Teaching and Learning: A New Arena for Practitioner Inquiry?

John Furlong

> *The last time she saw them, they were trying to put the Dormouse into the teapot.*
>
> (*Alice in Wonderland,* Lewis Carroll)

All new teachers in England are about to get the opportunity to study for a Masters degree—the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL). At least that was the plan until the 2010 election; whether that commitment is to be honoured by the new Coalition Government, in these straitened economic times, remains to be seen. Whatever the future, it seems that the outgoing new Labour government was, in its later years, persuaded by the extensive evidence of recent British as well as international studies—the EPPE project (Sammons et al. 2008), the VITAE project (Day et al. 2006) and the ESRC Effective Classroom Practice project (Sammons and Ko 2008) and particularly the McKinsey Report (2007)—that 'quality of teaching' is *the* key driver of pupil outcomes. As a result, the MTL was new Labour's final and perhaps most ambitious strategy to raise the quality of teaching in this country.

The idea that teaching should become a Masters-level profession was first publicly initiated by Gordon Brown in his Mansion House speech on the 20th of June 2007, just seven days before he became prime minister. It was a wide-ranging speech, but on education he said:

> Across the globe, as everybody knows, education standards are rising. Other countries will not stand still and are pushing forward and they are pushing forward the frontier of what a 21st century education can offer. […] In Finland every teacher has to have a Masters degree and 10 people apply for every place on a teacher training course. (Brown 2007)

Just six months later, the Children's Plan made a formal commitment to the ambitious goal of having all teachers achieve a Masters-level qualification over the course of their career. As the plan noted:

> This will represent a step change for the profession that will bring us in line with the highest performing education systems in the world. (DCSF 2007a, para 4.24)

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Hailed as 'the MBA for teachers', the MTL was launched in April 2010—just one month before the general election. Significantly, as set out in various policy documents such as 'Being the Best for our Children' (DCSF 2008), 'The National Framework for MTL' (TDA 2009) and the subsequent update in September 2009, the MTL is based on many of the principles that research has established as important in professional development: it is to be school based, it is to be personalised and it is to be supported by a 'coach' from within the teacher's own school as well as by a tutor from a nearby higher education institution. Its primary focus is to be on improving the learning experiences of children and young people but at the same time it ambitiously re-visions schools themselves, aiming to develop their capacity to be major contributors to high quality professional development.

What is important about these principles is that many of them are precisely those that have been urged by Susan Groundwater-Smith and her various collaborators over the years in their work on continuing professional development (CPD) through practitioner inquiry (Nias and Groundwater-Smith 1988; Groundwater-Smith and Sachs 2002; Groundwater-Smith and Dadds 2004; Campbell and Groundwater-Smith 2007; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009). Although not explicitly referenced, Groundwater-Smith has consistently urged the need for professional development that is school based, that is personalised, that is collaborative; she has also been one of the few contemporary academics who has shown in practice how schools themselves, working in collaboration with others, can develop the capacity to support these sorts of advanced professional development opportunities for their staff (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2001; Groundwater-Smith 2006).

Does that mean therefore that (if it survives both the cuts and the change of government) the MTL will provide a new arena in which to embed practitioner inquiry and 'the knowledge building school'? Might England be the first country to find ways of moving practitioner inquiry beyond its traditional position as a relatively small scale, almost 'counter cultural' teachers' movement, available to the few, to becoming a truly national system of professional development, available to all? Alternatively, will the MTL mean that the principles that Groundwater-Smith and others have advocated for so many years, like Alice's Dormouse, are to be uncomfortably squeezed into something else.

In this chapter I will argue that, despite the many positive aspirations behind by MTL, the principles of high quality CPD advocated by Groundwater-Smith and her colleagues are unlikely to be realised in full. This is because their conception of practitioner inquiry is based on a very different understanding of professionalism from that which underpins the new MTL. Practitioner inquiry, I will argue, is based on traditional notions of 'individual' professionalism; it is the individual who has the expert knowledge, the autonomy and the responsibility to act in a professional manner in his or her classroom. By contrast, the MTL is based on a more 'managed' vision of professionalism where the professionalism of the individual has to be harnessed to the requirements of the school and beyond that, the government. This is the 'new professionalism' that was pursued by successive Labour governments over the last 12 years through a variety of different educational policies and with varying degrees of success. Rather than providing a new arena for practitioner in-

quiry, rather than reasserting the importance of individual teachers as key actors in the education of young people, the MTL, I will argue, represents the final and most ambitious attempt by new Labour to realise its vision of the 'new professionalism', where the intellectual and practical interests of individual teachers were to be linked to those of the state. Whether this ambitious strategy will be endorsed by the new Coalition Government, and even it is, whether it will be successful, I will argue, remains to be seen.

Practitioner Inquiry and Individual Professionalism

Traditional debates about the nature of professionalism have revolved around three interrelated issues: knowledge, autonomy and responsibility. The idea that an occupational group such as lawyers, doctors or teachers has a specialised body of knowledge is central to any traditional definition of professionalism. Professionals are seen to base their practice on a body of technical or specialist knowledge that is beyond the reach of lay people; that is why, again traditionally, all of the professions have insisted on long periods of initial training and education.

Closely related to the idea that professionals utilise specialist knowledge is the argument for autonomy—this is because professionals are seen as working in complex and unpredictable situations. 'As professionals work in uncertain situations in which judgment is more important than routine, it is essential to effective practice that they should be sufficiently free from bureaucratic and political constraint to act on judgments made in the best interests (as they see them) of their clients' (Hoyle and John 1995, p. 46). Of critical importance here is the suggestion that professionals make judgments on behalf of their clients, *as they see them*. It is for the professional to interpret those interests. To draw a distinction utilised by Hoyle and John, they do not act as an 'agent' of someone else (e.g. the government); they act as 'principal', making their own judgments.

This brings us to the final dimension of a classical conception of professionalism—that is responsibility. Exercising judgment in relation to clients' interests does not simply demand the application of specialist knowledge, it also entails values. Professionals need to balance their own and their clients' interests through 'a voluntaristic commitment to a set of principles governing good practice and their realisation of these through day to day professional activities' (Hoyle and John 1995, p. 104).

Two issues in this classical understanding of professionalism are worthy of emphasis. Firstly, the three concepts of knowledge, autonomy and responsibility are seen as closely related. It is because teachers as professionals face complex and unpredictable situations that they need a specialised body of knowledge; and if they are to utilise that knowledge, it is argued, then they need the autonomy to make their own judgments. Given they have that autonomy, it is essential that teachers act with responsibility—collectively they have a need to develop appropriate professional values. The second feature to note is that central to this conception of professional-

ism is the individual: it is the individual teacher who has the expert knowledge, it is the individual teacher who needs the autonomy to make complex judgments in particular contexts and it is the individual teacher who has to take responsibility in exercising moral judgment.

Interestingly, although this traditional conception of professionalism has come under very extensive challenge in recent years it still carries considerable weight within the teaching profession itself and indeed much more broadly. Significantly, it is this notion of professionalism that underlies much of the work on practitioner inquiry which Groundwater-Smith and her colleagues have supported and developed.

'Practitioner inquiry' is of course an umbrella term; it covers a range of different research methodologies—action research, practitioner research, collaborative research—and, as Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009) note, historically, these different approaches have also been interpreted somewhat differently in different parts of the world—in the United Kingdom, in the United States and in Australia. However, they all share in common a commitment to many of the features of a traditional conception of professionalism. Teaching is seen as complex and situationally specific, demanding specialist knowledge; practitioner inquiry is presented as a strategy whereby teachers can improve their practice by improving their specialist knowledge about their own teaching. It involves 'a central commitment to the study of one's own professional practice by the researcher himself or herself with a view to improving that practice for the benefit of others' (Dadds and Hart 2001, p. 7).

But good teaching does not only depend on specialist knowledge; as in the classical version of professionalism, teacher autonomy is also seen as essential. This is because teaching situations are understood as highly complex, depending on situationally specific judgements. As a result, practitioner inquiry focuses on the development of 'local' knowledge. As Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2007, p. 26) put it:

> it is assumed that the knowledge needed to understand, analyse and ultimately improve educational situations cannot be generated primarily outside of those contexts and transported from outside to inside for direct implementation and us. Rather practitioner inquiry is built on the assumption that practitioners are knowers, that the relationships of knowledge and practice are complex and distinctly non-linear and that the knowledge needed to improve practice is influenced by the contexts and relations of power that structure the daily work of teaching and learning.

The centrality given to localised knowledge in this vision of teacher expertise in turn leads to the insistence that teachers need autonomy both in their day-to-day practice and in determining their own agenda for professional development through practitioner inquiry.

> …authentic inquiry based professional learning requires conditions where teachers determine the agenda and focus of the research in line with *their* concerns and *their* students' interests. (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009, p. 29, emphasis added)

In other words, teachers do know best.

Finally, as in the classical notion of professionalism, there is throughout the practitioner inquiry movement a strong commitment to ethics and the moral dimension of teaching. This is particularly strong in Groundwater-Smith's own work. For

example, in 1988 she wrote that 'action, to be worthwhile, must carry within it the seeds of emancipation. That is to say there should be a continuous, relentless interrogation of sedimented social practices with the intention of changing those which result in inequality and injustice' (Groundwater-Smith 1988, p. 257). More recently she has argued that, in her view, teachers not only have a *duty* to behave morally, they also have a *right* to behave morally (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009).

The model of the professional teacher for Groundwater-Smith and her collaborators is therefore very similar to classical interpretations of professionalism described by Hoyle and John (1995)—it is based on expert knowledge, on autonomy and moral responsibility. Crucially it is also fundamentally based on an individualised conception of professionalism. Although there is a strong emphasis on collaboration and the sharing of ideas and findings, especially in Groundwater-Smith's work on 'knowledge building schools', at heart, it is the individual teacher who has to develop their own expert knowledge, who needs the autonomy to act in a way that is appropriate in the complex situations that they face and who therefore needs to develop the moral courage to act in a just manner. As I will argue below, it is these principles that, until now at least, put practitioner inquiry at odds with aspirations pursued by new Labour in England—with its commitment to the development of the 'new professionalism'.

New Labour and the Challenge to Individual Professionalism

The challenge to the autonomy of the teaching profession in England began under the Labour governments of the 1970s; during the 1980s and 1990s, when Margaret Thatcher was in power, those challenges gained in strength and ferocity. But it was not until the coming to power of new Labour under Tony Blair's leadership that an attempt was made not merely to challenge teacher autonomy but actively to develop an alternative vision of teacher professionalism. That vision was called 'The New Professionalism'. From its initial statement in a Green Paper of 1998 up until the present day, the 'new professionalism' has set its face against the notion of individual autonomy amongst teachers. As the Green Paper said: 'The time has long gone when isolated, unaccountable professionals made curriculum and pedagogical decisions alone without reference to the outside world' (DfEE 1998, para. 13). Instead, it argued that 'modern teachers' needed to accept accountability; take personal and collective responsibility for improving their skills and subject knowledge; seek to base decisions on evidence of what works in schools in this country and internationally; work in partnership with other staff in schools; and welcome the contribution that parents, business and others outside schools can make to its success.

Being professional, from this point of view, is not therefore something that can be achieved by the individual teacher; it is not based on individual knowledge, individual autonomy and individual moral responsibility. Instead, teachers need to

sign up to accepting a more collectivised, a more accountable, and in short a more externally 'managed' vision of their own professional expertise.

The reasons for this move to a more externally managed professionalism are, as Groundwater-Smith and Sachs (2002) state, to be found in the rise of the 'audit society' (Power 1997). In new Labour discourse this has been expressed as the need for the 'modernisation' of all aspects of society, including education, as the United Kingdom responds to the twin pressures of globalisation and technological change (Giddens 1999). But achieving this 'new professionalism' has not been straightforward; it has been a 'policy journey'. Ideas and policies have changed and developed over time even though the direction of travel has remained the same. Following that journey has been something that I have undertaken in a succession of articles I have written or co-written in the last five years.

In 2005, (Furlong 2005) I examined the changes that were introduced by new Labour in relation to initial teacher education. Under previous Conservative administrations, initial teacher education (or initial teacher training as it was rebranded) was seen as a key strategy in the development of the teacher work force. If the professional knowledge and values of *individual* teachers were important, and Conservatives thought that they were, and if initial teacher education programmes were central in their development (and many Conservative critics of the time again argued that they were), then the government needed to control the content of those programmes as tightly as possible. That control reached its high point in 1997 with the issuing of a national curriculum for initial teacher training (DfEE 1997). However, under new Labour, detailed specification of content was slowly relaxed; instead they developed a more streamlined 'standards' that could be achieved through a range of different training routes (DfES/TTA 2002). This went hand in hand with a growing emphasis on practical training in schools and the development of employment-based routes into teaching, with 'on-the-job' training for an increasing proportion of new entrants today: some 18% of new entrants to the profession enter in this manner and that figure could rise further in the future. The reason for these changes I argued was because the government had started to change its understanding of teacher professionalism. The early formation of individual teachers was no longer as important as it used to be. As a result, it was sufficient for teacher training to become a straightforward technical matter.

In a 2007 paper (Furlong et al. 2008) I and colleagues documented how those changes had been achieved; in particular we demonstrated how the term 'partnership' in teacher education, between universities and schools, had been downgraded from an epistemological and pedagogical concept to one of governance. Partnership no longer described how different complex forms of professional knowledge, from university and from school, were made available to new teachers; it became simply a term of management where different partners—schools, universities, local authorities, private training providers—could all work together in a coordinated but entirely interchangeable way. Again, we argued that these changes were possible because the government no longer aspired to manage teacher professionalism through initial teacher training. Instead, that was to be managed through a variety of other mechanisms that were increasingly affecting schools.

In 2008 I continued my exploration of the 'new professionalism' in a special issue of *Oxford Review of Education* reflecting on Tony Blair's ten years in office (Furlong 2008); here I examined what those new school-based mechanisms were. If initial training, with its emphasis on the development of individual teachers was downgraded as a form of professional formation, then other areas of professional practice needed to be managed instead. In that paper I described how teacher professionalism was increasingly managed through achievement targets. Targets setting was central to Tony Blair's strategy throughout his period of office, with targets themselves changing, and becoming more challenging and more sophisticated over time. As the DfES said at the time:

> Targets are an essential part of the process for raising standards. They show what we need to achieve, provide a clear focus for improvements, particularly in teaching and learning, and are an important means of measuring progress. (DfES 2003, p. 1)

First, those targets were linked to national strategies for the teaching of reading and numeracy in the primary school and then to a broader range of subjects in the early years of secondary schooling. Later, issues of social inclusion were added through the 'Every Child Matters' agenda (HMSO 2003). By mid 2004 a focus on personalisation had emerged (DCSF 2007b). As national policies changed so did the achievement targets that were set for schools. Moreover, in a bargain with teacher unions which included the introduction of significant numbers of non-teaching staff in schools and more protected preparation time, these school achievement targets were linked to the performance management of individual teachers and performance related pay. In order to move onto the main career salary grade, a 'career threshold' was introduced; to pass it, teachers had to demonstrate that they had consistently achieved new national standards in their classroom performance. So, while the substantive focus of targets changed and developed over time to keep abreast with changing policies, the aim to manage teacher professionalism through targets remained central throughout most of Tony Blair's ten years in office. At the end of his period, I argued that he had achieved his goal to redefine teacher professionalism, to move it from an individualised concept to one that was managed by schools on behalf of the government in relation to nationally defined agendas. It was, I suggested, Tony Blair's 'big prize' in education policy, a prize that took nearly ten years to achieve.

The New Professionalism Re-considered? The Vision of the MTL

But that is not the whole story. Towards the end of Tony Blair's period in office it was increasingly clear that taken alone, this target-based strategy was not sufficient. Despite some improvements, the hoped-for year-on-year rises in measured achievement were not fully realised. Fuelled by the 'post PISA' analysis and by international reports such as the OECD's 'Teachers Matter' (OECD 2005) and then

by the McKinsey Report (2007), the focus to increase school achievement shifted from targets to 'teacher quality'. As the OECD report put it:

> All countries are seeking to improve their schools and to respond better to higher social and economic expectations. As the most significant and costly resource in schools, teachers are central to school improvement efforts. (OECD 2005, p. 1)

As a first response, the government began to experiment with increasing 'quality' by the recruitment of 'high flyers' into the profession with the establishment of the 'Teach First' initiative (a development of Teach for America). But the influence of these high flyers was and remains small, more symbolic than real. More significantly, following a visit to Finland by Lord Adonis, the then schools minister, the new prime minister, Gordon Brown, was convinced that the answer was to make teaching a Masters-level profession; all teachers should have the opportunity to study for a Masters degree at some stage during their careers. If teachers in Finland, which was so successful in competitive international assessments such as PISA, had this opportunity, was this not the key to success in raising teacher quality? The MTL was conceived. As the Government said in a 2008 publication, 'Being the Best for our children: Releasing talent for teaching and learning' (DCSF 2008).

This proposal represents a significant investment in the future development of the school workforce and, it is anticipated, will help to deliver the very best teaching and learning to children and young people (and as a consequence raise standards in education and narrow gaps in attainment), boost the status of the teaching profession still further and bring England into line with the highest performing education systems in the world.

As has already been stated, in headline terms at least, the MTL was to be a very different approach to raising achievement from that which went before. In the past a key emphasis had been on developing 'strong and effective leaders' in schools. These strong and effective leaders were head teachers, whose responsibilities and financial rewards increased substantially in the Blair years and, in support of such leaders, the government also established a new body—the National College of School Leadership.

For ordinary teachers, the vision was rather different; the majority of CPD was to be short and sharp, focused explicitly on the achievement of national targets, a point made clear by the minister for schools in 2005:

> Professional development needs to be linked to performance management and school development priorities. That way we can be sure the right areas are targeted and that you get the most effective development for you. And I think it's only right that we should keep a relentless focus on standards. (Smith 2005)

The contrast with the vision presented in the TDA's national framework document for the MTL is very marked:

> World class teaching is characterised by a sophisticated understanding of effective classroom practice, highly skilled professional expertise and high quality engagement with children, young people and their parents and carers. The MTL will develop and build on these characteristics. (TDA 2009, p. 3)

Once again, it would seem that the ordinary classroom teacher was emerging as *the* key figure in the raising of achievement—someone who was highly skilled, who

had access to sophisticated forms of professional knowledge, and who was able to deploy that knowledge in complex and uniquely different classroom settings.

As Graham Holley, chief executive of the Training and Development Agency for Schools, the body responsible for developing the new degree, put it:

> The single factor that makes the greatest different to the attainment of children and young people is the quality of teaching they receive. The principles that underpin the masters mean that schools will be better placed to meet individual pupils' learning needs and teachers will be able to take a practice-based qualification that is tailored to their personal and professional needs in their schools. (TES 2009, p. 2)

And in line with this changing vision, the MTL has been developed with a number of key principles in mind, principles that draw on what is known about the conditions for effective professional learning for teachers:

- There is to be a focus on early professional development.
  For the majority of participants, the MTL will be undertaken early on in their career. As the McKinsey Report (2007) makes clear, teachers gain the bulk of their teaching skills in the first years of their training and practice, although frequently the support given to them at this stage of their careers is inadequate. Hobson et al. (2006) in the *Becoming a Teacher* project also report on the importance of early professional development and its role in new teachers being attracted to particular schools that offer it and in teacher retention.
- It will be largely school based.
  Again, the McKinsey Report (2007) demonstrates that if professional development is to be effective, it needs to be done in the context where teachers are to teach. It notes that effective systems create a culture in schools in which peer coaching is embedded, enabling teachers to develop continuously.
- It will be personalised.
  A key factor in motivating teachers to take up school-based CPD appears to be their involvement in the process of determining what CPD is available and what form it takes (Robinson and Sebba 2004; Furlong and Salisbury 2005). At present, however, less than half the teachers in the Hustler et al. (2003) survey reported involvement in this planning. Specifically, in relation to early career teachers, it would appear that the greater the level of involvement of teachers in selecting their professional development activities, the greater the outcomes they derived (Moor et al. 2005).
- School-based work will be supported by a coach.
  A review of collaborative CPD (Cordingley et al. 2003) provides strong evidence for the role of coaching in changing teachers' practice, with teachers becoming more focused in their aims and versatile in their approaches (Harvey 1999; Kohler et al. 1999), reporting benefits of modelling (Kimmel et al. 1999) and increases in confidence and enthusiasm. The strongest evidence comes from Showers and Joyce's (1996) review of research on coaching, which concluded that the most effective outcomes are achieved when the 'coach' is the person teaching the pupils and the observer, the one being 'coached', since they are learning from watching a colleague teach. Similarly, studies of mentoring (e.g.

> Freiberg et al. 1997; Furlong and Maynard 1995), a process with some similarities to coaching, note that benefits accrue as much to the mentor as the mentee. Furlong and Salisbury (2005) in their evaluation of Best Practice Research Scholarships reported that mentors were key to providing expert knowledge and support in dissemination, and Moor et al. (2005) noted that mentors provide a vital role in helping to spread teachers' early CPD to others in the school.

Compared with what has gone in the past, the headlines of the MTL signal a very different approach to professional learning form the recent past. Does that mean therefore that after 12 years in office, the Labour government had abandoned its commitment to the 'new professionalism'? Was there to be a return to a more individualised conception of teacher professionalism? And if that was the case and given that many of the principles on which the programme was and is being developed are similar to those advocated by Groundwater-Smith and her various collaborators, does that now mean that the time has at last come for a national scheme that will allow the development of forms of practitioner inquiry? In the final part of this chapter I will try and demonstrate why, if we look behind the headlines, this is not likely to be the case. Rather than abandoning the principles of the 'new professionalism', I will argue, the MTL is just one more (albeit ambitious) further iteration in its development.

The MTL—Behind the Headlines

Behind the very positive headlines of the new Masters degree there have been a number of very important tensions, tensions, I will argue that will in practice make it hard to deliver some of its aspirations. During the degree's development, there have, for example, been tensions with the trade unions, trying to protect their recently won agreements on teacher workload. As a result, the MTL has had to be presented as something that will not increase the demands on already busy teachers. As Chris Keats, leader of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, commented:

> In accordance with our mission to safeguard teachers' conditions of service, I believe we have got a quality product that doesn't impose burdens on either the individual or the school involved. If there hadn't been concessions around the practice-based approach, the schools might have struggled. (Masters of the classroom 2010, p. 2)

There have been further tensions around the need to develop a Masters-level qualification that, although delivered and validated locally, is a national scheme with a common agreed programme, a common timetable and the ability to accommodate to teacher mobility. Inevitably this has raised difficulties within university validation committees, jealously guarding their autonomy vis-à-vis a government agency and vis-à-vis other universities.

A further difficulty has been around the role of the 'coach'. Coaches are to be key contributors to the day-to-day realisation of the MTL scheme within individual

schools; yet, given the current level of qualifications within the profession, many of these coaches themselves will not have Masters degrees. How to manage the differential input of the school-based coach and the university tutor is something that as yet has to be resolved. If the experience of initial teacher education is anything to go by, there may well be considerable difficulties here; difficulties that individual MTL teachers themselves may be left to resolve.

And of course there is the issue of funding the new degree in an economic downturn. Even prior to the election, funds had only been secured for two years and that was done at the expense of the TDA closing down all other forms of advanced CPD for teachers. Even if funding levels remain the same, the MTL will be the 'only show in town' for government-funded advanced courses for the foreseeable future.

But the greatest tensions, and those that are most significant for the purposes of this chapter, have been in relation to the development of a Masters degree based on principles of personalisation and practice-based learning while still accommodating demands of government agendas. The National Framework for the New Degree (TDA 2009) would appear to have been written with two different voices.

On the one hand there is a progressive commitment to make sure that the new degree is indeed tailored to individual learning needs. It aims to:

> 'Be a personalised professional learning journey'; 'build on ITT and previous professional learning'; 'be centered in practice-based learning, with the range of professional learning opportunities agreed by the teacher with their coach and tutor to meet their personal professional career and school needs'; 'provide opportunities to work through cycles of planning, trying out new ideas and approaches, reflecting on evidence about impact on pupil outcomes to shape the next phase of learning and drawing on coaching and tutoring contributions, as appropriate at each stage of the cycle'; 'provide each teacher with the opportunity to develop skills of enquiry, together with diagnostic skills to identify children's and young people's needs'. (TDA 2009, p. 6)

This in turn has major implications for the development of capacity within schools:

> These conditions for effective professional learning require that capacity is built in schools to provide practice-based learning opportunities where teachers learn from and with each other and draw on a wide range of expertise both within and beyond the schools. This requires a shift from the ways in which schools and higher education institutions work together in initial teacher training to a more collaborative approach with schools and HEIs working together as equal partners, jointly responsible for the development and delivery of the MTL programme. The focus of the MTL partnership must be on building capacity in schools to further develop a culture of professional learning in the workplace that provides continuous personalised learning opportunities for teachers. (TDA 2009, p. 3)

At the same time, however, the programme has to: 'align with induction and performance management requirements'. Specifically, the new degree is required to address national 'Professional Standards for Teachers' (TDA 2010), while at the same time meeting the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA) national criteria for a Masters-level qualification. The professional standards are written in performance terms—'know the assessment requirements and arrangements for the subject areas they teach'; 'know and understand the relevant statutory and non-statutory curriculum frameworks including those provided through the national strategies…'. The QAA requirements on the other hand demand something

very different, for example, a 'systematic understanding of knowledge…much of which is at or informed by research at the forefront of their discipline' (QAA 2010). Aligning these two very different conceptions of professional knowledge will present real problems for coaches, tutors and assessors.

But it is in the area of content that the MTL poses the biggest challenges. The content is to be in four areas: teaching and learning; subject knowledge; learning and development needs of children and young people; management and leadership. And these are to be addressed in terms of three phases, developing in breadth, depth and 'embeddedness' over time.

Yet if, for example, we look at the first content area, 'Learning and Teaching', it is clear that the new Labour government, despite its headline commitment to the personalisation of learning, retained its aspiration to use the new degree in order to address its own agenda. Programmes must, for example, include work on the national strategies and on personalisation—two key new Labour policies. In the section on 'Assessment for Learning', programmes have to consider, amongst many other things: 'qualitative and quantitative evidence of attainment; statistical significance; baseline data and measures of progress; use of assessment data for setting personalised targets; the use of assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching'. The commitment to performance data and its key role in teaching and learning remains unaltered.

The same contradictions exist in other content areas as well: a formal commitment to a 'personalised learning journey' but an insistence that students continue to address nationally defined priorities. Once it is up and running it is likely that these contradictions will be experienced on a day-to-day basis by students, coaches and tutors; they are particularly likely to be felt within the assessment, specified as a series of 'learning outcomes' for each of the three phases of the degree.

Conclusion

The development of a Masters-level qualification based on the principles of practitioner inquiry is not new; in a small number of key centres across the English speaking world, many practising teachers have had the opportunities to work in these ways in the whole or at least in part of their degrees for many years—indeed, Groundwater-Smith's first book focused on how to embed practitioner inquiry in undergraduate teacher education programmes (Nias and Groundwater-Smith 1988). At the same time, courses which focus on providing students with the opportunity to develop the advanced skills needed to implement and develop government-defined priorities are also not new; this is the stock in trade of large numbers of CPD programmes funded by the TDA and similar government agencies across the world. What is less common is the aspiration to bring these two very different approaches together at national level.

In reviewing the plans for the MTL, I would suggest that there was a genuine recognition on the part of the new Labour government that the re-engagement of

the individual teacher is essential for the provision of quality teaching. They came to realise that without that engagement, without teachers' personal commitments, there are inevitably limits to what can be achieved in terms of raising pupil achievement further. There was, I would suggest, a genuine belief that taken alone, national strategies and targets cannot do all that was required. But at the same time, there was an insistence that national policy priorities remained in place. The ambitious hope of the MTL is that, by giving teachers opportunities to examine these national priorities for themselves, in their own classrooms, they will, over time, develop the personal commitment needed to make them effective. They need to learn, for themselves, how personalisation can work in their classrooms; they need to know for themselves how to use performance data to increase measured student achievement. In this sense then the MTL does not imply the abandonment of the principles of the 'new professionalism'; it does not imply a move back to traditional notions of individual professionalism. Rather, I would suggest, the MTL implies a new strategy whereby individual teachers, through a more personalised learning experience, are given the opportunity to develop for themselves a commitment to national policies; to realise them in their own day-to-day practice in their own classrooms.

Whether the MTL will survive in these times of harsh economic cuts in education; and, with its 'one size fits all' philosophy, whether it will be seen as appropriate to the educational values of the new Coalition Government—all of this remains to be seen. And even if it does survive, whether such an ambitious plan for the 'reformation' of the teaching is achievable is hard to predict; there are many challenges (practical, epistemological and economic) before we can assess its achievements. But if it is a success, then we will have moved, not to teacher professionalism 'in an age of compliance', to borrow a phrase from Susan Groundwater-Smith's most recent book, but teacher professionalism as 'managed commitment'. My own guess though is that, before it is pushed into the teapot, the Dormouse will wake up and protest; we will see.

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Part II
Teachers' Work and Learning

Chapter 9
Becoming and 'Being' a Teacher: Understanding Teacher Professional Identity

Nicole Mockler

Susan and I have been 'partners in crime' for over a decade. We met in 1998 when I was a young teacher involved in my first practitioner research project, to which Susan acted as academic partner. Her reputation, however, preceded her: when I was an undergraduate education student at the University of Sydney in the early 1990s, her work was spoken of often, usually in hushed and revered tones. The image I had developed of this 'Professor Groundwater-Smith', aloof and standoffish, bore little resemblance to the actual Susan, who appeared at our first meeting brimming with boundless enthusiasm, lashings of Victorian jewellery and tales of the Orkney Islands.

Since 2002, Susan and I have jointly co-authored over 20 works, including three books (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2007; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2003, 2009), and Susan was instrumental in encouraging me to undertake doctoral work in education and set my sights on a career in academia. This task of writing a paper for her has been an unexpectedly difficult one—my desire to create something worthy of the enormous impact Susan has had on me, as a colleague, mentor, and most importantly, a friend, has seen me push half-formed ideas around for months. In the end it seemed fitting that this chapter should be derived from my doctoral work, of which Susan was such an enthusiastic supporter, and thus complementary to the work that we have done together over the years, related to teacher professional learning and practitioner inquiry.

So in this chapter I report upon a three-year study of the formation and mediation of teacher professional identity, using life-history methodology. The chapter begins with an overview of the field of teacher professional identity before turning to outline the methods and broad findings of the study. It concludes with a discussion

This chapter is jointly dedicated to Susan and 'Skye', who, in the knowledge that her time was limited, gladly and willingly gave some of it to me and my study. Vale.

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of ‘identity anchors’ and the implications of these findings for pre- and in-service teacher professional learning and development.

Introduction: Teacher Professional Identity

The field of teacher professional identity emerged in the late 1980s, linked closely to the research fields of teacher professionalism and teachers’ work and lives, and also in tandem with the broader field of identity development, which has also flourished over the past two decades. Various social theorists such as Giddens (1990, 1991), Castells (1997) and Bauman (2004) have suggested a rationale for the increased focus on identity formation related to the breakdown in civil society structures and the rise in social uncertainty which characterised the latter part of the twentieth century, which in turn has seen the emergence of the construction of the self as a reflexive project (O’Connor 2007, p. 258). Thus in the fields of sociology (Bernstein 1996; Melucci 1996; Pecheux 1982; Wenger 1998), philosophy (Derrida 1981; Hall 1996; Laclau 1990) and critical theory (Hooks 1989; Huggins 1987; Rich 1983), in particular, the formation and mediation of identity has emerged since the 1980s as a central concept.

At the same time, a turn towards qualitative methodologies has occurred in educational research, particularly those employing what might be referred to as critical or postmodern research paradigms (Guba and Lincoln 2008). A number of significant qualitative studies employing life history or other similar research methods were undertaken in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which focused particularly on the construction of teachers’ work in the context of their lives more broadly, for example, Jennifer Nias’ study of the work and lives of primary school teachers in the United Kingdom (1989), and Kathleen Casey’s study of women teachers working for social change (1993). Additionally, since the mid-1990s, this field of scholarship relating to teachers’ work and lives, exploring, for example, issues such as the emotions of teaching, the connection between teachers’ life experience and their professional practice and impacts of the current socio-historical context upon teachers’ professional selves has grown, contributed to by both theoretical and empirical studies and represented in the growing body of work by scholars such as Hargreaves (1994, 2000), Ivor Goodson (Goodson 1992; Hargreaves and Goodson 1996) and Day (1999, 2004).

The Problem of Clarity: Defining Teacher Professional Identity

The study of identity within education, similar to within other fields, is subject to a lack of clarity regarding definition. The abstract and somewhat intangible nature of the concept of identity has contributed to this lack of clarity, as has perhaps the ubiquitous nature of identity within the human condition, which has sometimes

seen writers overlook the need to provide a definition for something perceived to be commonplace and subject to common understanding. This lack of clarity is reflected in the frequency of works which seek to review, classify and clarify the field (e.g. Beijaard et al. 2004; Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Day et al. 2006).

This difficulty with defining teacher professional identity emanates not only from the concept's intangible and abstract qualities, but also from its complexity, which to some extent stands in opposition to the development of a definition. In the same way as other abstract concepts require more *description* than *definition* in order for their true sense to be conveyed, perhaps it is so too with the multifaceted, multifarious concept of teacher professional identity. When we move from an attempt to find commonality between definitions of teacher professional identity proffered to an attempt to identify commonalities in the key characteristics ascribed to teacher professional identity, the field immediately assumes a more coherent and streamlined form and becomes more useful as both a theoretical and practical tool.

Describing Teacher Professional Identity

Discussions of teacher professional identity generally fall into Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) 'soft' category, where identity is conceptualised as ever-shifting and emergent as opposed to a stagnant or fixed package of attributes to which teachers can subscribe. Informed by the work of symbolic interactionists such as George Herbert Mead and his followers (Blumer 1969; Goffman 1959; Mead 1934), who made a break with earlier conceptualisations of identity as stable or fixed (Mead 1930), these conceptualisations of teacher professional identity recognise:

- The shifting and multiple nature of teacher professional identity
- The complex circumstances and conditions under which teacher professional identity is formed and mediated
- The role of narrative in the construction of professional identities

Teacher Professional Identity as Shifting and Multiple

This notion of a plurality of identities connects not only with the work of symbolic interactionists, but is also reflected in some of the later sociological literature in which identity, on a purely conceptual level, is construed as temporal (Bernstein 1996; Wenger 1998), multiple and coexisting (Castells 1997), shifting and fragmented (Melucci 1996). Hall captures the essence of these ideas when he writes:

> Identities are never unified, and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation. (Hall 1996, p. 17)

For some, the plurality is taken one step further with a suggestion that identity can be *both* stable and shifting at the same time. For Melucci (1996), for example, identity is both fragmented (through the coexistence of a range of different identities within the individual) and unified (through the unresolved tension between self-perception and perception by others); constant (through the permanence of our being) and shifting (through ever-changing experience and evolution); and self-directed and other-directed.

MacLure (1993), Reynolds (1996), Cooper and Olson (1996) and Day and Hadfield (1996), all write of the fragmented and sometimes dissonant and divergent nature of teachers' professional identities. Day and Hadfield argue in a similar vein to Melucci, based on their empirical study of 300 teachers across 100 schools, that teachers' identities are neither fundamentally stable nor shifting, but rather that the stability or otherwise of teachers' professional identities is shaped by context and such factors as career stage and experience:

> Teachers will define themselves not only through their past and current identities as defined by personal and social histories and current roles but through their beliefs and values about the kind of teacher they hope to be in the inevitably changing political, social, institutional and personal circumstances. (Day and Hadfield 1996, p. 610)

Teacher Professional Identity as Mediated

Teacher professional identity is seen to be mediated by a range of factors both internal and external to the self, and while there is little specific agreement as to the nature of these factors, the process of identity formation is understood as a complex act of negotiation.

Sachs, for example, draws upon the work of sociologists such as Castells and Wenger, to argue that professional identities are formed through discourse, embedded in policy and enacted through professional practice (Sachs 2001, 2003). She identifies two key and 'competing' discourses at work in education, namely the democratic discourse, which she sees as emerging from the profession itself and the managerial discourse, emerging from various framing systems and structures of education, focused on accountability and effectiveness for schools and teachers. Her argument is that these discourses frame and pervade teachers' practice on an individual and collective level such that particular identities emerge from, and indeed are fostered by them:

> The managerialist discourse gives rise to an entrepreneurial identity in which the market and issues of accountability, economy, efficiency and effectiveness shape how teachers individually and collectively construct their professional identities. Democratic discourses, which are in distinct contrast to the managerialist ones give rise to an activist professional identity in which collaborative cultures are an integral part of teachers' work practices. These democratic discourses provide the conditions for the development of communities of practice. (Sachs 2001, p. 159)

The interaction between structure and agency in the negotiation of teacher professional identity is a recurring theme in the literature. Drawing upon the work of soci-

ologists such as Archer (1996, 2000, 2007) and Giddens (1984), it is understood that teachers respond to their professional context through internalising some aspects of the external and also through impacting upon the external and contextual out of their own experience. This dialectic process of 'reconciliation' (Wenger 1998) represents a reflexive negotiation (Archer 2007) of personal and professional identity, and in the context of the mediation of teacher professional identity, is seen to be about the interaction of teachers' personal histories and experiences with the context of their professional environment (Nias 1989; O'Connor and Scanlon 2005; Sumsion 2002; Zembylas 2005). Likewise, the interaction between context and identity is neither simple nor uni-directional, but rather an intricate and iterative process, unique to the individual, leading MacLure to conclude that

> …each teacher also partially constructed that context according to his or her *biographical project:* that is, the network of personal concerns, values and aspirations against which events are judged and decisions made. (MacLure 1993, p. 314, emphasis in original)

Finally, drawing upon Bernstein's notion of 'retrospective' and 'prospective' identities (Bernstein 1996), where 'retrospective' identity is said to be formed out of narratives of the past which in turn inform understandings of the present and the future, while 'prospective' identities are future-oriented and informed by ideas of what can and might be, so too can teacher professional identity be seen to have a temporal dimension in which hopes and aspirations play a part. As Day et al. have argued,

> Teachers will define themselves not only through their past and current identities as defined by personal and social histories and current roles but though their beliefs and values about the kind of teacher they hope to be in the inevitably changing political, social, institutional and personal circumstances. (Day et al. 2006, p. 610)

Day et al.'s findings suggest that teachers' professional identities can be 'positive' and 'negative', 'stable' and 'unstable' and mediated by biography, experience and context, and that the disposition of these identities impacts directly upon the quality of interactions with students.

Teacher Professional Identity as Constructed Through Narrative

Identity, understood as "the means by which individuals reflexively and emotionally negotiate their own subjectivity" (O'Connor 2008, p. 118), is formed through the process of reflexive practice and framed and expressed both to the self and others via language. In attending to the 'process' as opposed to 'characteristics' approach to teacher professional identity, it is clear that narrative plays a critical role in the construction and representation of identity, both through the "reflexive inner dialogue" (Archer 2007, p. 63) and "internal conversation" (Archer 2003) through which it is formed and the external narratives and "stories to live by" (Clandinin et al. 2006; Connelly and Clandinin 1999) that form part of its external expression and in turn frame and shape professional identity. As Drake et al. write:

> Stories, as lived and told by teachers, serve as the lens through which they understand themselves personally and professionally and through which they view the content and context of their work, including any attempts at instructional innovation. (Drake et al. 2001, p. 2)

The idea of identity as discursive practices is likewise advanced by scholarship which focuses on the processes of identity formation. MacLure, for example, establishes identity as a set of discursive practices within which individuals locate themselves, in turn using identity for "discursive purposes" (MacLure 1993, p. 313):

> …identity should not be seen as a stable entity—something that people have—but as something that they use, to justify, explain and make sense of themselves in relation to other people, and to the contexts in which they operate. (p. 312)

Zembylas similarly utilises the idea of discursive practices in relation to identity, claiming that "teachers are constituted through, and constitute themselves within, discursive practices and power relations" (Zembylas 2005, p. 945), and arguing that the mediation of teacher professional identity is contingent upon teachers' consent or resistance to the various discursive practices represented by emotions in teaching.

Context and Method

Given these complex circumstances and ideas about the construction and mediation of identity within professional and other spheres, the current study was devised to examine the conditions and factors that impact upon the mediation and formation of teacher professional identity over the course of teachers' lives. By way of containment, and to ensure that the researcher's 'gaze' was not expanded beyond reasonable and manageable contexts, the context of secondary education was chosen as a focus.

Life history methodology was employed in the study, wherein eight teachers at varying points in their careers and from varying educational contexts were purposively sampled and participated in 'prolonged interviews' (Denzin 1970). Given that this study was to focus on aspects of 'being' a teacher, the approach taken by some life history researchers in educational settings (e.g. Casey 1993; Munro 1998) wherein the initial interview begins with the prompt "tell me your life story" was not taken here. Rather, a focus area was chosen by the researcher for each 'round' of interviews at the outset, and a series of open-ended questions was developed for each round, with the exception of the first round, developed iteratively out of the data collected in the prior round. The participant matrix depicted in Table 9.1 highlights the context of each participant in the study.

Table 9.1 Participant matrix

	Beginning	Mid-career	Middle manager	Senior executive	Principal
Government	Liana		Georgiana	Liz	Katherine
Non-government	George	Anna	Skye		Marcus

Data collection for the project lasted approximately 30 months, with each participant engaged in interviews for approximately 12 months on average.

In addition to being prolonged, interviews were also in-depth and semi-structured in nature. The schedule of questions for each interview was used very flexibly, with the sequence of questions changed to suit the flow of the conversation, additional questions and prompts added where relevant and, in the best circumstances, with the quality of interaction reaching what Mason (2002, p. 67) termed "conversation with purpose". Each interview was approximately 30–40 minutes in duration, with some extending beyond this time, and, in a small number of cases, some lasting for less.

Prior to the first interview, participants were given an outline of the focus areas for each interview, and each participant was also reminded of the focus area for the upcoming interview prior to each round. While this technique is aligned with the general orientation of critical research, it was used specifically here to encourage and allow participants to engage in reflection and preparation for each interview in the hope that they would not feel 'ambushed' as they might without prior notice. Interviews were structured in such a way as to gather data from participants on the following broad focus areas:

- Motivations for becoming a teacher
- Pre-service teacher education experiences
- Early career influences
- Perspectives on teaching and learning
- Influence of school and system contexts
- Experiences of professional learning and development
- Attitudes towards images of teachers in public discourse/s
- Changes in professional self-image and perceived influences and effects, both internal and external, upon those changes

Interview transcripts were returned to participants between interviews and each interview began with a reflection on the transcript and the previous interview itself. When all interviews were completed with each participant, a biographical account was constructed by the researcher in consultation with the participants, such that participants were satisfied at the conclusion of the process that their biographical account, based on the data collected, was an accurate and reasonable depiction of their professional lives. These biographical narratives were then used for comparison and further analysis.

Professional, Personal and Political Domains in the Construction of Teacher Professional Identity

Data analysis pointed to three key domains of experience through which teacher professional identity can be seen to be constructed and mediated. A brief description of each of these is provided followed by a broader discussion of their reflexive and

recursive interaction in the ongoing formation and 'anchoring' of teacher professional identity.

The Domain of Personal Experience

The domain of 'personal experience' includes those aspects of teachers' lives which stand outside the professional context, including personal history, family life, ethnicity and gender, which can provide framing constructs for the decisions and actions of people over the course of their lives. The data indicated that the domain of personal experience was significant on a number of fronts, both in relation to entry into the profession and then over the course of teachers' careers, although the ways in which this domain manifested and influenced varied greatly from participant to participant.

For two of the participants (Georgiana and Skye), family influence was particularly significant in terms of their entry into the profession, albeit for varying reasons. For another three (Marcus, Liana and Katherine), while their decision to enter teaching was made very much independent of family, family was seen to be particularly important in terms of framing their decision. Participants' own school experiences were in some cases important in terms of the decision to enter teaching and for others, the kind of teacher they were determined to become. George, Liana and Marcus were all drawn into teaching at least partly as a consequence of their own successful and happy school experience, while Katherine's entry to the profession was in reaction to a less-than-happy experience as a student herself.

For a number of participants, key events in their personal lives had impacted upon their orientation to teaching in significant ways, shaping their sense of themselves as teachers. The death of a close family member, marriage and in the case of two participants, a profound spiritual experience had all provided catalysts for a re-evaluation of self and career, and a re-orientation towards that which was regarded as 'important' in their work. Gender and ethnicity also emerged from the data as key influential variables, both in relation to participants' motivations for entering teaching and over the course of their careers. For three of the female participants (Liz, Georgiana and Katherine), the issue of teaching being a 'good job for a girl' played a framing role for their decision to enter teaching, while for Skye and Marcus, the desire to actively counter gender stereotypes guided many of the decisions they had made over the course of their careers. Ethnicity emerged as highly significant for two of the participants in the study. Interestingly, while four of the eight participants come from non-Anglo-Saxon backgrounds, for the two participants whose parents or grandparents emigrated to Australia prior to their birth (Anna and George), ethnicity did not emerge at all in discussions as an influence on self and identity, while for the two participants who emigrated to Australia as children, ethnicity was central to their discussions, particularly of early life and motivations for entering the teaching profession. Particularly significant for both Georgiana and Katherine was the intersection of ethnicity with family influences in entering the profession.

The Domain of Professional Context

The domain of 'professional context' includes those aspects of teachers' lives which relate to them as teachers, including pre-service education, socialisation into the profession and the school and system contexts and cultures they work within. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, the domain of professional experience emerged from the data as the most significant of the three domains in the framing and structuring of teachers' professional identity, and a number of key trends were highlighted in relation to this dimension of teachers' lives and work.

Socialisation into the teaching profession, beginning at the outset of pre-service education and stretching into the first three to five years of teaching, emerged as a highly significant time for both beginning and experienced teachers alike. There were high levels of consensus among participants regarding the importance of the practicum experience in forming early versions of their professional self-image and cementing their decision to become teachers.

Regardless of the positive or negative nature of the experience, the data points to how critical the first few years of teaching are in terms of developing professional self-image and orientation to the profession. For all eight participants this was the case, and even those participants who are many years into their careers and/or in leadership roles were cognisant of the importance of these years in their formation as teachers. Closely linked to the culture of their initial school, for four of the participants the early years of teaching were a predominantly positive experience, while for the remaining four a significant negative element was present.

The culture and nuance of particular schools in which participants had worked (especially over extended or particularly significant periods of time) emerged as highly significant in shaping teachers' professional self-image, and while contextual factors (such as a school's place within or outside of a system or network of schools) were seen to be important in some cases, this varied greatly from participant to participant. The immediate school context emerged as highly significant in different ways for all participants, as it was against this backdrop that the lived experience of being a teacher was played out. Teachers' professional self-image was impacted upon by the range of opportunities for growth and development that were either opened up to them or conversely closed off for them by their school environment, and these opportunities can be observed to be closely linked to both school leadership and school culture.

For some participants, significant individuals within their schools had fostered their talents and interests in unforeseen directions, pointing to the importance of leadership and mentoring in the development of strong and conscious identities. The system or sector context of the school was significant for participants on both practical and ideological fronts. In practical terms, awareness and understanding of the impact of the broader context of their school was much stronger for participants in senior leadership roles, although orientations to the 'system' varied from participant to participant according to the context.

Three final elements emerged within the professional context as significant in the shaping of participants' professional identities, those of subject, students and professional development and learning. While for most participants subject-related considerations were significant in their motivation for entering the profession and their early years of teaching, only for the two beginning teachers (Liana and George) were these particularly salient for the shaping of their professional identity at the time at which interviews took place. For two participants, both working in disadvantaged settings, the experience of working with students whose life experience and educational needs differed vastly from their own had challenged notions of themselves and their work. Finally, professional development and learning experiences emerged as significant vehicles for changing professional self-concept. These varied greatly from participant to participant, but in common was the exposure via professional learning and development to powerful ideas not experienced either in pre-service teacher education or in the day-to-day context of their work in schools.

The Domain of External Political Environment

The domain of 'external political environment' includes those dimensions outside of the field of education which impact upon it and frame it, such as the policy environment within which education operates, the discourses which surround education and teachers' work, as represented in the media and the 'cumulative cultural text' of teachers' work (Weber and Mitchell 1995, 1999) as well as those stereotypes and dominant images of teachers and teaching held within the popular memory and reiterated and reinforced in interactions between individuals and groups. The domain of external political environment is significant in the construction of the field of education itself, framing and shaping the 'turf' upon which teachers' work is played out. While study data indicated that this domain was possibly less significant in the shaping of teachers' professional identity than those of personal experience and professional context, for some participants the domain of external political environment was nevertheless important in its influence upon professional identity, manifesting in two key ways.

The connection for teachers to discourses surrounding teachers and education as expressed in the media and in society generally differed greatly between participants. For some (e.g. George and Marcus, Katherine and Liz), these images remained very much external, and while these participants were cognisant of the stereotypes and their implications for society's understanding of and regard for teachers' work, they were able to separate the 'outsider' perspective as represented in these ideas from the 'realities' of life within the profession in such a way as they discerned no tangible impact upon their professional self-concept. For others, the discourses were reported to be more pervasive, providing from time to time a source of consternation, disappointment and disillusionment.

For two participants, the focus of their work is very closely connected to their understanding of the broader political environment and their roles as advocates within that environment, albeit on differing scales: one (Liz) in relation to developing empathy and understanding of her local Muslim community, and the other (Marcus) as an advocate for his school community itself, particularly in relation to available funding.

Participants expressed a level of cynicism about the ongoing use of the teaching profession as a political tool by various governments on both sides of politics, indicating that they see such 'games' as removed from the realities of what happens in schools and classrooms, and that while they do form part of the bigger picture of educational policy, the impact upon their sense of who they are and what they do remains very limited, except where it impacts upon broader social attitudes to education and schooling.

Identity Anchors in the Storm

Data from the study indicate that while each of the three domains of personal experience, professional context and external political environment impact upon teacher professional identity to differing extents at different points in teachers' careers, these three domains work in a reflexive relationship with each other in terms of the 'anchoring' of teacher professional identity. While all of the participant teachers in the study had a strong sense of their professional selves, it was clear from the interview data that the anchor points for this identity had changed over the course of their careers—this was in fact the case even for those teachers in the early years of their careers. Further, based on data collected within this study, it seems that identity 'anchors'[1] do not follow a linear or chronology-related progression, but rather that at different points in teachers' careers, particular aspects of the three domains 'rise up' to anchor identity in a particular 'space'. Further, identity anchors do not appear to be exclusive, such that a number of anchors might be in use at any given time. The professional identity anchors in use currently or in the past by participants within this study included: subject area or discipline, welfare/pastoral care, learning, literacy, equity, leadership, experience and 'eldership'.

Common understandings of the professional identities of secondary school teachers often emphasise the importance of the subject in the construction of teachers' professional selves (Beijaard 1995; Day 2004). Earlier in this chapter I noted the role of 'subject' in attracting participants into secondary teaching—for five of the eight participants this was the case—and also that for only the two

[1] This notion of identity 'anchors' is used, albeit slightly differently, in some of the literature relating to work-life balance. Thompson and Bunderson developed the notion, arguing that "individuals 'anchor' their identities, in a generalized manner, either in the work or nonwork domain" (Thompson and Bunderson 2001, p. 28). My version of the term is different in that it relates more specifically to aspects of teachers' work and suggests a high degree of mobility between anchors.

early career teachers was subject still a significant shaping factor in the structuring of their professional identities, although even at this early stage, other factors not in play at the outset of both careers had begun to challenge subject as the key structuring factor.

For Liana, this challenge came in the form of her growing understanding of students' needs in relation to the more enduring aspects of education (lifelong learning skills, positive relationships) which in recent times has seen her question the importance of her subject content against the development of these: "…valuing learning and those sort of things are going to have a lot more value to a lot of my students… than remembering who Pericles was…." [La34]. At the time at which the interviews concluded, Liana's identity anchor was undergoing a shift as she re-conceptualised herself as a teacher focused primarily upon learning in a broad sense rather than driven primarily by her love of History and eagerness to transmit content to her students. Her growing interest in student welfare was connected to this, an interest that at the outset of her career, Liana saw as "Something I never would've in a million years…ever been interested in" [La32].

For Liz, who was drawn to 'retrain' as a secondary school teacher because of her love of Drama, subject interests have long taken a second place to concerns about equity and justice in her work with disadvantaged students. While she still believes firmly in the power of English in the building of critical skills for students, her professional identity and sense of self are focused around these broader concerns, which have been fostered by the particular contexts and circumstances in which she has worked over the past 15 years. She uses English, and literacy skills in particular, as a vehicle for realising her broader goals, but the driving force for her is students rather than subject. Georgiana similarly has made a shift from a focus on her subject (despite her role as a Head Teacher) to the creation of equity and the importance of her subject as a vehicle for transformation: "…as English teachers we can shift young people in the way they perceive the world, the way they feel" [Ga31].

For Skye, who also moved from Primary teaching to Secondary teaching some years into her career, subject concerns always came second to general concerns about student development, learning and critical literacy. In the latter part of her career, the 'learning' focus shaped her professional identity to a great extent, and for her this was closely linked to her recognition within the community as 'one who knows': "I don't take any crap and I know about learning" [Sk18]. She played a significant role as a mentor to younger teachers and enjoyed the status she was given as a 'wise elder' of the community: "…you see yourself in relation to others…the community. I mean that's a very positive thing. That gives me a positive…sense of myself as a professional and what I have to offer" [Sk41].

For some, position within the school can provide a catalyst for changing anchors: both Marcus and Katherine's professional identities were anchored in their sense of themselves as leaders within the school community and advocates for their school within the broader system and community. This identity anchor of leadership was connected for both to student learning and more broadly to student development: "…we have to equip students to be able to speak with truth and integrity about the

nature of the world" [Ma15]; "…I am much more focused on…bigger issues, like social justice, and equity…, and making sure that we have the resources and the expertise to allow these students to take their place in the world." [Ka35]. Informing their work within the school on both a 'big picture' level of leading direction and policy decisions, this orientation also informs their decision making and interactions on a day-to-day level, and in both cases is central to their professional self-image. In the case of Marcus, however, it is significant to note that the use of leadership as an anchor for his professional identity stretched back into his early years where he proactively sought leadership opportunities, and thus was not connected to *role* so much as to general orientation:

> …I always felt I was going to be a leader. I always knew and felt it…, and that meant that I became frustrated if I wasn't, and therefore I'd see opportunities for me to lead. You know, I'd be proactive about that too, and look for ways for that all the time…and that drew me toward leadership. [Ma5]

Anna's current professional identity anchor is also related to her role within the school, although for her, the role came subsequent to her anchoring of her identity in the locus of collegial professional learning:

> …So for me this new role gives me a chance…like I've been doing it anyway but it gives me a chance to know that I've now been given time to do it and even though they might have a directive on how they want it done…well I'll do it but my way, so it's my way that will help…that's non-threatening or onerous to the teachers which is what I've always done…. [An23]

Linked closely to her formative professional development and mentoring experience outlined in her biographical narrative and referred to elsewhere in this chapter, the catalyst for Anna moving from the anchor of subject to professional learning was the acquisition of pedagogical insight into an aspect of teaching and learning which was highly valued within her community, as well as the strong and inspirational leadership of two significant members of the community:

> …it wouldn't have happened if someone just said no, it's not going to happen, like there were a lot of people involved, like [the Head of Junior School], allowing it to happen, like seeing the work in it rather than recognising the importance of it and…[the Director of Teaching and Learning], allowing me to go to Reggio Emilia and then allowing us the time allocation to allow it to grow and all that has probably led to this role because they all gave me this wonderful opportunity to show how it could work and then put it into place. [An25]

Identity anchors essentially provide a connection point for teachers between the work they do and their purpose in that work—they join the essential identity question "Who am I (in this context)?" to the broader question of purpose: "Why am I here?" and hold potential in terms of moving teachers beyond the claim of 'moral purpose' to an articulation of how that moral purpose links with elements of teachers' work such as pedagogical approach and teaching and learning strategies. Importantly, data suggest that these identity anchors do not follow a linear or staged progression, but rather that they are somewhat at the 'mercy' of the domains and change and shift according to the playing out of teachers' lives, both within and outside of the school and educational context.

Conclusion

Teachers have, and always have had professional identities, formed and re-formed out of their experiences both within and outside of classrooms and schools. The findings of this study point to the possibility that teacher professional identity might be explicitly shaped and formed out of professional learning and development experiences that focus not only on 'what to do', but also on the kind of teacher it is possible to be. They suggest that good, thoughtfully constructed professional learning and development which incorporates opportunities for teachers to not only expand their practice but to authentically reflect on their practice and how it relates to who they are as a teacher, might work to anchor and orientate teachers to new and different dimensions of their work. While there remains more research to be done in this area, these findings suggest that teacher professional identity might be capable of functioning as a tool for the profession and those who support it in bringing to life the transformational vision of education that Susan, along with others, has argued for and advanced in so much of her work.

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Chapter 10
Connecting Inquiry and Professional Learning: Creating the Conditions for Authentic, Sustained Learning

Anne Campbell

As I sit by a window overlooking the Firth of Forth near Edinburgh composing this chapter, I think of the times Susan and I have composed our various books in different venues including Sydney, Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds, as well as the inevitable virtual conversations we have had. We have visited my home town of Edinburgh together several times but usually very little composition occurred, rather it was consumption: food, champagne and shopping for jewellery! I dedicate this chapter to Susan and her deep commitment to practitioners' professional learning and inquiry. With regard to my own professional learning, it has been a privilege and a pleasure to have worked with Susan, to have had her as my visiting professor for six years at Liverpool and at Leeds. I always think of her visits as my annual diet of tailored professional, professorial learning as we debate, discuss and argue our way round our current and recent work. Susan's legacy to educational research and development is significant and important in terms of publications, keynote speeches, workshops and tutorials. But also, as anyone who has talked with her will know, it is in conversations and debates that she stimulates, challenges and inspires.

Susan and I have convened two international colloquia or conversations as we have sometimes called them: *An Ethical Approach to Practitioner Research; An International Conversation* in 2005 and *Making Authentic Connections Between Practitioner Inquiry and Teacher Professional Learning in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Ongoing Teacher Professional Learning* in 2007. The ideas developed at the latter event influence and underpin this chapter. This chapter will discuss how linking inquiry with teachers' professional learning can be a powerful motivator for curriculum change and innovation. Snapshots of the voices of teachers from vignettes and stories, gleaned from a variety of recent projects, will illustrate the conditions for successful workplace learning. There will also be some consideration of student voice, an area which Susan has been passionate about and which arises mainly from her work with the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools in New South Wales. The starting point will be a return to Little's (1982) writing on

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workplace conditions for school success. The chapter will draw on several previous publications (Hustler et al. 2003; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2006; Campbell and Groundwater-Smith 2007, 2009), which span the continuum of initial teacher education and continuing professional learning. The importance of collaboration, collegiality and critical friendship will be highlighted and the crucial partnership between academic partners and teachers in school in the present government policy frameworks will be illustrated and discussed.

Professional Learning in the Workplace

What is the current context for professional learning? Teaching today takes place in a global world of rapid change, and teachers are expected to meet prescribed high standards. During the last 20 years or so, education has been subject to intense accountability checks and in many countries we have seen the implementation of a National Curriculum and the introduction of demanding, national programmes of testing. Teachers have at times felt a lack of ownership and a lack of self-worth, as measures to evaluate, inspect schools and appraise teachers have been introduced under the banner of 'modernising'. 'In-service', as it was called steadily became something that was 'done to' teachers, rather than something that sprang naturally from their own views of personal and professional learning. The pendulum swings in educational policy experienced from changes of governments have meant that while some progressive stances have been taken by teachers and their leaders they are often subject to short term or 'one shot programs' aimed at measuring improved test scores.

However, there is currently much more recognition of the value of workplace learning and of the many forms that learning may take, from the solitary, unaided, daily reflections on experience, to working with a more experienced or knowledgeable practitioner, through observing and being observed, in professional discourses and by attendance at workshops, courses and conferences. Groundwater-Smith and Campbell (2009, p. 200) have been highly critical of the practice of professional *learning* being the province of those charged with professional *development* of teachers, supposing that 'there is a body of knowledge and a contingent who "know" that can be visited upon teachers'. They argue that practitioner research and inquiry has at its heart professional agency. Practitioner research and inquiry would normally be sited in the workplace and would be led by practitioners, sometimes in partnership with others.

Little (1982, p. 338) discussed the power of the workplace for professional learning and development and of the importance of collegial interaction and linked these to school success.

> First, the school as a workplace proves extraordinarily powerful. Without denying differences in individuals' skills, interests, commitment, curiosity, or persistence, the prevailing pattern of interactions and interpretations in each building demonstrably creates certain possibilities and sets certain limits.

Her research findings at that time helped to shape future approaches to teacher learning, emphasising teachers engaging in frequent, continuous and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching, building up a shared language with which to talk about their practice. She advocated teachers planning, designing, researching, evaluating and preparing teaching materials. Her study of six schools produced an illustrative inventory of characteristic teacher interactions which described the patterned norms of interaction amongst staff. She identified 'critical practices of success and adaptability' which resonate greatly with Groundwater-Smith and Mockler's (2003, p. 1) tenets in their resource for learning to listen and listening to learn 20 years later. These tenets are: evidence-based practice as a strategy for school improvement and teacher professional learning; developing a community of practice using appropriate technology; building research capability in schools by engaging teachers and students and sharing methodologies which are appropriate to practitioner inquiry as a means of transforming teacher professional learning.

Grundy (1982, p. 358) argued for the acceptance of practitioner research as a means of addressing teacher professional learning and school improvement, making the crucial link between inquiry, research and professional learning which Groundwater-Smith and Campbell (2009, p. 205) argue would 'counter overly simple solutions packaged in short courses'. They believe that authentic inquiry will require risks and mistake-making and looking backwards as well as forwards. This requires courage, resilience and healthy dissent.

Little (2002, p. 714) argues that one of the most significant resources for teacher professional learning is to be found in the teachers themselves and their interactions one with the other when they 'collectively question ineffective teaching routines, examine new conceptions of teaching and learning, find generative means to acknowledge and respond to difference and conflict and engage actively in supporting professional growth'.

In a project in Merseyside, Campbell and Macgarvey (2006) researched teachers' professional learning as a result of engaging in an MA course in Practitioner Inquiry and Research. Teachers spoke of 'cultural shifts' as a result of action research and described this as a movement away from the purely routine or superficial in classroom discourse, to a situation in which pupil learning and teachers' strategic awareness and professional learning are all subject to discussion and investigation. What also emerged was a complex web of skills, types of knowledge and professional dispositions and attitudes that are the anatomy of teaching and constitute professional knowledge. Taken alongside the work of Gibbons et al. (1994) on 'mode two knowledge' as applied knowledge useful to practice and Day's (1999, p. 55) comments about what happens in good teaching 'the application of wisdom, insight, experience, content knowledge and pedagogical and organisational strategies varies according to the context of the problem' we can see the impossibility of providing universal definitions and understandings of professional knowledge. The importance of context is paramount. I would argue that teachers doing research engage in the contextualisation of professional knowledge and learning.

Connecting Inquiry and Professional Learning

In the book published as a result of the second colloquium Making authentic connections between Practitioner Inquiry and Teacher Professional Learning in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Ongoing Teacher Professional Learning in 2007, Campbell and Groundwater-Smith (2009), brought together an international group of practice-based researchers and policy makers to explore and illustrate the connections between practitioner inquiry and professional learning at all stages of professional careers. The international work contained in the book illustrates how research, inquiry and their connection with professional learning are alive and well in the twenty-first century. There is a renewed interest in how practitioner inquiry and research are influencing professional learning as attested by the cases studied in the book from England, Scotland, the United States, Australia and the Netherlands. Examples cover initial teacher education (Livingston and Shiach 2009; Davies 2009; Miletta 2009); new entrants to teacher education (Murray 2009); public service professionals in integrated teams (Hulme and Cracknell 2009); early years educators, teachers and school leaders (Broadhead 2009; Ponte 2009; Menter and Hulme 2009; McLaughlin 2009; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009; Cordingley and Needham 2009) and museum education (Groundwater-Smith and Kelly 2009). The book draws on seminal works such as Carr and Kemmis (1986) and their work on emancipatory action research, Elliott's (1991) book on action research and educational change, Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1993) inside–outside researchers and Stenhouse (1975) on curriculum research and development. There is a legacy, rooted in action research, teacher research and inquiry, which can be traced back to those identified above and to the work of Collier (1945/2005) and Lewin (1948).

The historical journey depicting the connection between research, inquiry and professional learning is further highlighted in Campbell and Groundwater-Smith's (2010) three volume major work for The SAGE Fundamentals of Applied Research (FAR) series '*Action Research and Professional Learning in Schools*'. Volume one, *Historical perspectives in action research in schools: from curriculum development to enhancing teacher professional learning,* traces the changing emphasis from curriculum development to enhancing teacher professional learning. It is argued that teaching can become professional learning when the activity is collegial and where the learning arises, principally from the students' own engagement and behaviours. The authors contend that action research has great power in interrupting many of the prevailing discourses with respect to teacher professional learning.

Zeichner (2003, p. 319) identified several conditions under which school-based teacher research becomes a transformative professional development activity for teachers—and I would argue for those academic partners who support them—as the following:

- *Creating a culture of enquiry and respect for teacher knowledge*
- *Encouraging learner-centred instruction*
- *Teachers developing and controlling their own foci for enquiries*
- *Engaging in collaborative work and study groups for intellectual challenge and stimulation*

These points are reflected in the teachers' voices which are documented in the next section.

Practitioner Vignettes

Pen portraits, vignettes and stories are all recognised ways of depicting teachers' professional lives, their experiences of professional learning and the dilemmas occurring in life in schools, and seen as significant in terms of constructing authentic inquiries by Clandinan and Connolly (1996), Clements (1999), Campbell (2000), Goodson and Sykes (2001) and Winter (1988). I would therefore like to start this section by listening to Susan Groundwater-Smith's voice in her story about her own professional development.

> I have raised what I see to be some critical issues regarding the ways in which practitioner enquiry interacts with professional identity for all who participate, but most particularly in relation to my own formation. I have argued that there is an ongoing imperative that, as a professional community, we constantly interrogate our beliefs and values if we are to engage in career long professional learning. Each of us needs to develop ways of making our second record explicit by revealing something of our life histories, scrutinizing the ways in which they influence our professional lives, and doing so in public, rather than private form. (Groundwater-Smith 2006, p. 191)

Moving to document teachers' voices, a number of 'fictional pen portraits' or vignettes of teachers' views of professional learning were developed from a research project 'Teachers' Perceptions of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)', conducted, on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in England (see Hustler et al. 2003). The project aimed to provide a baseline of teachers' previous experience and of their attitudes to CPD, through questionnaire and in-depth interviews in 22 schools, resulting in case studies. Snapshots from two of these vignettes hopefully serve to illustrate the variety of experience and starting points for teachers who engage, sometimes willingly, sometimes under duress, in professional learning.

Anna is 23 years old and a newly qualified teacher; she works in a medium-sized primary school in the inner city.

> Next year I am going to share the literacy co-ordinator role with another more experienced teacher—actually she has been my mentor this year so I'll continue the mentoring relationship. I've had so much support. She and I team teach my class for a half day each week which means we get to plan together, discuss the children's progress and assessment and review and evaluate together afterwards. She says it has been the best staff development she's ever had, which is a nice compliment for me. She says I've been like a breath of fresh air—sometimes when I get carried away with ideas she says it's more like a whirlwind! We've been sort of coaching each other, trying strategies and feeding back. I've already decided that I am going to enrol on a postgraduate course next year, start working towards my Masters degree. I want one that will allow me to carry on investigating and improving my teaching. I like courses that are both practical and challenging intellectually.

The picture of a beginner able to generate enthusiasm in a more experienced teacher in tandem with more traditional course attendance can be a powerful model for pro-

fessional learning. There is a sense of collegiality and collaborative work which, I would argue, are key elements of school success.

Penny—a realist with 3 years experience in tough contexts:

> I wouldn't really recommend it but, being in 'special measures'[1] is very good professional development—it really gets you thinking, focussed about your targets and planning. But it's all been school-focussed action planning with not much time for individual needs and interests. With the performance management stuff kicking in and everyone getting more relaxed and confident, people are beginning to ask for support that they want…. I'm doing a teacher research scholarship this year with three other teachers. It's good, especially if you get the mentoring right! I've got my old PGCE tutor from the university being mine.

I too would suggest that going into a school in 'special measures' to get good professional development is not recommended! However, bespoke professional development that allows teachers to design their own research project to undertake in their own classroom or school can provide high-quality professional learning and greatly contribute to school improvement.

And from the evaluation of a government-funded programme linking teachers' research and professional learning, Furlong et al. (2003, p. 14) quoted their respondents:

> We learned a lot but we also learned that we need to learn a whole lot more.
> I think more of us need to work more closely with people from university so that we can access their expertise but also get them to see that we do understand and we can do really good research.
> The programme has been a very worthwhile project for both of us, leading us through a process of experimentation, risk-taking and reflection. It has led us to adapt and improve our practice and thus benefit the children we are teaching.

Miletta (2009, p. 146) quotes Virginia, a student researcher, with regards to her professional learning:

> The excitement mounted as teachers realised that their wonderings were evolving into legitimate research projects, and what intrigued me most was the way in which the many diverse topics were somehow interrelated and how we were able to learn so much from each other's work…. Now more than ever I am very interested in doing teacher research.

She also captures the perspective of an irate teacher that serves to remind us that it is not always easy to effect change within imposed power structures:

> I am a very frustrated teacher who writes my story with regret and a deep sense of loss. I feel this way because I was robbed of the very valuable opportunity to conduct classroom research, which I feel would have benefitted not only my students and myself but also other teachers and educators.

The power of the personal in teachers' voices brings alive the reality of teachers' experience of professional learning. Using biography and autobiography can reveal the ethical concerns in professional learning in teacher education. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2007) in their chapter tracing their roots and discussing practitioner inquiry and university culture concluded that 'everything is ethics' which is also relevant to the professional learning landscape addressed in this chapter.

[1] Note: being in 'special measures' in England means being a failing school.

Student Voice

In identifying the benefits of teacher research and inquiry-based professional learning for students above, this leads us to a consideration of the student voice in schools. Groundwater-Smith, in her introduction to a chapter entitled *Student Voice: Essential Testimony for Intelligent Schools* signifies the importance of consulting students:

> Increasingly, there is an awareness that we cannot continue to debate the nature of schooling without consulting the consequential stakeholders, the students themselves.
> It is a truism to suggest that schools could not exist without their students, but it is also curious that as the key stakeholders in the education enterprise they are rarely consulted about the conditions under which they learn. (Groundwater-Smith 2007a, p. 113)

Susan uses two powerful case studies in her chapter: how students' voices were central to the investigation of bullying in a girls' school and how boys' and girls' perceptions of their teachers as learners could inform professional learning plans and advise school policy. She emphasises, as do others writing in this area (Fielding 2004; Rudduck et al. 1996), a number of important issues: listening and *taking action* after consultation; complex power issues at play in schools; ethical concerns around informed consent, confidentiality; and anonymity and sustaining and nurturing student voice. Fielding (2008) in an exploratory paper takes forward some of these issues and addresses: involving those who are never heard, through radical inclusion strategies; students as agents of adult professional learning through reversing roles and remaking public spaces in schools where adults and young people can have an open dialogue by co-constructing the common good. Fielding also reminds us of what lies ahead, as student voice comes of age that

> …we have gone far beyond the singularity of student 'voice' and are beginning to confront some of the hard and serious issues. These not only challenge those of us working in this field, but also challenge all those in our society committed to a more just and more joyful future. Thus, issues of class, race, gender and learning difficulty are now beginning to be taken more seriously. (Fielding 2008, p. 2)

Social inclusion is a significant feature in student voice and issues of diversity feature globally and have particular reference for indigenous youth in Australia. Groundwater-Smith demonstrates her commitment to nurturing young people's voice (Groundwater-Smith 2011) by describing a programme for 'vulnerable young people at Maryville'. The programme, accelerated literacy, was originally developed to assist Aboriginal students in remote Australian communities and designed to equip them to engage with text more successfully than hitherto. It was also seen as a means of enhancing social inclusion.

Student voice or pupil voice has become a major phenomenon in research and school improvement across the United Kingdom and also in Australia. Care must be taken to avoid this becoming a mechanistic process, or controversially, becoming a tool for 'teacher bashing' as recently documented in England (Williams 2010), where it was claimed that pupils were 'asking frivolous questions in teachers' job interviews'. Groundwater-Smith has worked extensively in consulting pupils in the

Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools in New South Wales and has worked with students to develop a set of questions (Groundwater-Smith 2009, p. 11–13), about their learning which are certainly not 'frivolous'. These are:

> How do you, as students, like to learn?
> How important is it for you to speak up in class? What helps you, what prevents you?
> What makes a good teacher and how does he/she help your learning?
> How do you help yourself to learn?
> Do your fellow students contribute to your learning and you to theirs? How?
> What makes learning difficult for you?
> How does it feel coming from primary to high school?

Groundwater-Smith (2007a, p. 126) acknowledges the difficulties and dangers of taking students' voice seriously and emphasises power relationships:

> Moving in relationships from power over students, to power with students is no easy matter; but if the consequence is that the borders are more permeable and the interests more mutual, then the effort will have been worth the game.

At times, having an external partner helps to reveal the learning and provides a different lens through which school life can be depicted. That role can often be filled by the academic partner as discussed below.

Academic Partners

The establishment of partnerships between universities, academics and communities of practice requires developing a different mindset from the stereotypical 'ivory tower' role of universities in public life, and perhaps constitutes for some a boundary that needs to be crossed. Many academics have already started a movement that sees partnerships through a different lens, one of confidence in local communities of practice and consider the power, status and relationships of the various partners (Brady 2006; McNamara 2002; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2003; McLaughlin et al. 2006; James and Worrell 2000).

The model of collaboration between schools and universities and academic partners espoused by those above is one that gives support for practitioner and action research. This model combines research training and support with bespoke, tailored professional learning in context.

In 1999, Groundwater-Smith became a 'researcher in residence' at a Sydney school which would later become a founding member of the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools. Her role was to 'work with teams of teachers to investigate matters of concern to the school in such a way that improvement of practice will follow' and these improvements have ranged over the years from investigating student views on bullying, to assessment and teachers' professional learning. In discussing the facilitation of practitioner inquiry Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2003, p. 33) write:

> The best facilitators of practitioner inquiry in schools enter the process with no agenda other than the achievement of the best possible professional development for the teachers involved.

They identify trust and quality and risk-taking as crucial, essential features of successful practice and quote Elliott (1991) in agreeing that the best facilitators engage in 'second order' practitioner inquiry by reflecting and gathering evidence on their own practice.

Critical friendship and collegiality feature greatly in much of the research into university and school partnerships for research (McLaughlin et al. 2006; Costa and Kallick 1993; Doherty et al. 2001). McIntyre and Black-Hawkins (2006, p. 187) refer to their School University Partnership for Educational Research (SUPER) as 'an asymmetric partnership', in that schools took a frontline role and seemed to view the venture as highly successful but they cast the university in a lesser role albeit a crucial, support role.

This resonates with the findings from a research project looking at partnership (Campbell and Keating 2005), entitled, 'An investigation of Networked Learning Communities (NLC) and Higher Education (HE) partnerships in England: Shotgun Weddings, Arranged Marriages or Love Matches?' The NLC and HE partnerships were 'mandated' as part of the criteria for funding in the National College of School Leadership College (NCSL) project so in a sense some of them were 'shotgun weddings'. 'Arranged marriages' were characterised by 'on paper only' agreements to satisfy the funding criteria. There were, however some 'love matches' which turned out to be long-term successful relationships with many worthwhile outcomes.

The quote below, from the same collection as Groundwater-Smith (2006), illustrates the success of a partnership in a classroom teacher's voice and highlights the role and importance of an academic partner:

> I believe that teaching is a continually evolving process and those teachers who challenge themselves to monitor and change their pedagogy in ways that embrace learning are the teachers who remain dynamic and passionate about what they do. In my teaching and learning with Kimberley, (academic partner) I became significantly more self-reflective about my practice, and I continue to be so. (Pressick-Kilborn et al. 2006, p. 48)

Creating the Conditions for Authentic, Sustained Professional Learning

Respect, integrity, experimentation, reflexivity, mutuality, reciprocity, trust and courage characterise the conditions of authentic, sustained professional learning. I would also add a sense of humour and the ability to take risks.

I would like to quote Meier (2002) to elaborate on a number of the conditions listed above. Meier is an American 'activist ', principal and teacher of 'alternative' state schools in New York and Boston and a veteran boundary crosser in school–university partnerships. She is also a vocal opponent of 'high stakes' testing in the United States.

In her book *In Schools We Trust* she advocates the following in creating and sustaining authentic professional learning communities (Meier 2002):

- *Becoming critical colleagues*
- *Getting into each others' spaces*
- *Weighing the evidence: what to make of it?*
- *Expecting messy differences of opinions*
- *Experiencing 'The Pay Off': the educative value of teachers struggling with trusting each other*

She quite clearly summarises the key conditions for authentic, sustained professional learning.

It may be timely to remind ourselves that if we are to retain and sustain teachers in the profession in the future, then providing them with a voice and empowering them through active participation in research which allows them to investigate and shape the knowledge base of their teaching may be a key factor defining their professionalism and underwriting their commitment to education.

What is the vision for the future? Creating passion for inquiry, criticality and challenge for improvement and creating partnerships, communities of practice, taking risks and les liaisons dangereuses for authentic professional learning.

To conclude I would like to give Susan the final word on courage. Groundwater-Smith (2007b), in her keynote at the BERA Annual Conference, *Practitioner Researchers: Today's children of Mother Courage* reminded us of the fragility of practitioner research and the need for courage in reflecting and critically reviewing our practice and confronting social problems in a world of imposed innovation, intensive accountability and the never ending mantra of raising standards. Courage is, arguably, a key component in creating and sustaining authentic professional learning through inquiry. She summarised the current situation thus:

> Practitioner research requires courage, courage to confront social problems rather than escape them. This is particularly challenging for today's teachers who work within the established order of the various education systems who employ them. It requires rational reflection and critical insight in contexts that are often muddied by short term pragmatic policies. (Groundwater-Smith 2007b, p. 1)

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Chapter 11
Skilling or Emancipating? Metaphors for Continuing Teacher Professional Development

Judyth Sachs

Introduction[1]

At a time when all knowledge is changing rapidly and there is increasing pressures on schools and teachers to be more publicly accountable, the investment in continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers will become a major concern for the teaching profession, governments and teachers themselves. Not surprisingly, there will be differences in terms of focus, content and outcomes between what the State thinks should be the focus of CPD and what teachers themselves see as useful and relevant.

For governments and bureaucracies issues of quality and standards are at the forefront, while for teachers improving their practice and as a consequence the learning outcomes of their students will be front of mind. The challenge is how to maintain standards without demanding standardisation of practice. Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009, p. 8) observe:

> …it is our fear that the current standards regimes and policy contexts out of which they grow have at their hearts a desire not to build an understanding of the complexity and nuance of teaching practice or to celebrate the diversity of teachers and learners, but rather to standardize practice, stifle debate and promote a fallacious notion of 'professional objectivity'.

The purpose of this chapter is to develop a framework against which we can understand the complexity CPD in terms of the types and intentions of programmes pre-

A version of this chapter was presented as a keynote address at the ICSEI conference in Slovenia 3–6 January 2007.

[1] The shape and ideas in this chapter were developed during conversations with Nicole Mockler, Susan Groundwater Smith and Emily Callaghan. I thank them for responding to and testing my ideas. It was their suggestion to make the chapter live through the voices of teachers.

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sented to teachers. Moreover, I want to develop an alternative perspective regarding how best to support teachers in their professional learning at a time of major change and public scrutiny.

In order to support my argument I use data gained from working with a group of 29 teachers (23 secondary, 4 primary and 2 teacher educators) who are part of a group of teachers working as a Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools.[2]

Two sources of data were used: in groups of six to eight the teachers were asked to choose an image from a pile of postcards (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2003) which in some way represents what it is to be a teacher in the twenty-first century—to write on the back and then explain and discuss their responses with each other and then a larger group. The second source of data was through a Silent Conversation technique; this is a process that ensures that every voice is given legitimacy, regardless of status. It also provides opportunities for reflection which has a 'public face'. (Groundwater-Smith and Kelly 2003). Questions reflecting deBono's six thinking hats (1985) were used to get teachers think about CPD from a number of perspectives.

> What PD have you been involved in over the past 2 years? How often?
> Funded by whom? (*White hat*)
> How does a good professional learning experience make you feel? (*Red Hat*)
> When PD is at its best, what does it look like? (*Yellow hat*)
> What PD is at its worst what does it look like? (*Black hat*)
> If you were responsible for designing PL&D, what would it look like and how would it look different? (*Green hat*)
> How do you know when a PD experience has been successful? (*Blue hat*)

I draw on the voices and experiences of these teachers, and weave their comments into the text of this chapter to gain a sense of how they see teaching in the twenty-first century and what kinds of CPD would support them in their schools and classrooms. The following quote is representative of how teachers saw the role and purpose of CPD.

> We as teachers in the 21st century have a supporting role—facilitating the learning of our students, listening to them and their needs and providing strategies, tools and skills and resources to make learning happen.

This quote suggests that the role of teachers is to be supportive and to facilitate learning. This is a view that presents the visible and taken for granted aspects of teaching. Importantly, it does not question orthodoxies regarding practice and conceptualises teaching as a form of transmission, of sanctioned and tried and tested practices. CPD for this type of teacher is about retooling, developing skills that will help them teach, often in a rather unreflective manner rather than developing them as learners.

The second example could be seen to be on the opposite end of the spectrum.

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[2] This is a network of teachers which was established in 1999 in the Faculty of Education at the University of Sydney. Members of the Coalition go about their work examining their practices and investigating new possibilities (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009).

> …flexibility. A teacher needs to be flexible to the ever changing environment, including society, technology and the world in which we live. We often find ourselves in different positions, sometimes moulding to these positions and other needing greater flexibility of training.

This quote acknowledges that change is central to the current context of life in schools and that responding to that change represents significant challenges for teachers, requiring flexibility on their behalf. This flexibility relates to how they learn, organise their professional lives and work with each other inside and outside of schools.

CPD for these teachers is about recasting themselves as active learners, and, accordingly, it is transformative in its intent and outcomes. Its remit is not just about a teacher's classroom practice but rather about social change, where education is a driving force. For Sugrue (2004, p. 86) the evidence suggests that current tensions facing teachers means:

> …that current pressures and possible overload on teachers' willingness and capacity for continuous learning and improvement have shifted their learning away from more individual and idiosyncratic pursuits and towards more formulaic, frequently prescribed learning routines. Their lives as well as their learning become distorted, and the growth in, and popularity of, emergent learning networks and communities of practice indicates that they are seeking safe spaces where they can begin to exercise more control over their learning, lives and work.

When learning is at the centre of the teaching enterprise we would assume that the CPD of teachers would be a priority of both education systems and teachers alike. Teachers like other professionals need to update their skill and knowledge base—in the case of teachers their pedagogical skills and content knowledge. However, teachers can be said to be a particular case—for many of them have short-term and immediate goals that reflect the exigencies of the classroom and the types of daily demands they face from students, parents, education systems as well as their professional peers. These types of demands lead to a pragmatic view of how to invest their time inside and outside of schools and to a practicality ethic that drives their practice inside classrooms and shapes the type of professional learning they prefer. A litmus test for CPD for many teachers could include the following questions: Is it useful? Does it my improve practice? Does it improve student learning? Does it extend me intellectually, personally or professionally? Does it question orthodoxies, generate new knowledge or transform practice? For some teachers these questions, especially the first three, are taken for granted and are deeply embedded into their personal practices and belief systems, while for others the last two questions would be confronting and would require a significant shift in beliefs and practices. Indeed, the first two questions relate to traditional forms of CPD while the others focus more on teacher learning. I would suggest that if a CPD activity or programme does not recognise the importance of these two transformative questions and the role these play in transforming individual practice, generating new insights about practice and developing the capabilities of teachers and the teaching profession then teachers will remain mere technicians serving the interests of government at the time, rather than those of their students. Moreover, the focus will probably be on

individually directed skills development rather than on a profession-wide enterprise where teacher learning is acknowledged, valued, supported and rewarded.

Grundy and Robison (2004) identify three interconnected purposes of CPD: extension, growth and renewal. Extension is through introducing new knowledge or skills to a teacher's repertoire, growth is by the development of greater levels of expertise and renewal is achieved through transformation and change of knowledge and practice. Following Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009) these purposes operate at their best in an inquiry-based model of professional learning which aligns with the more transformative approaches to CPD. Such an approach has professional, practice and personal value for teachers in understanding and improving their practice. "It requires a willingness to collaborate and forge true collegiality which brings teachers into professional discourse with each other about things that really matter for their schools, their students and society more broadly" (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2009, p. 65).

Following Grundy and Robison and Groundwater-Smith and Mockler I identify four metaphors to describe current approaches to the formal CPD of teachers which reflect Grundy and Robison's above purposes: retooling, remodelling and revitalising. I add a fourth one—reimagining—to indicate the need for teachers themselves to have some agency in identifying priorities and needs for their own professional learning.

My argument is that CPD needs to incorporate all the elements of retooling, remodelling, revitalising and reimagining which in turn would have two interrelated effects: first to ensure that the goal of improving student learning is achieved and second that a strong and autonomous teaching profession is supported.

I organise this chapter in two sections: in the first section, I develop and elaborate the elements of the four metaphors, while the second part makes some suggestions relating to future directions for CPD.

CPD as Retooling

In many respects, CPD as retooling has been a dominant form of CPD. This is not surprising at a time when governments want to make teachers more accountable and where standards and competency-based regimes dominate education policy. This form of CPD responds to the view that teaching can be improved through the learning and development of new skills. The following statements capture what teachers think:

> I feel confident that I am doing what is needed, …I am sometimes overwhelmed at how much else I could/should be doing.

The outcome of such types of CPD is that teachers feel inspired, energised, armed with practical ideas for implementation.

For Kennedy (2005, p. 237) this is a Training Model which supports

> a skill-based, technocratic view of teaching whereby CPD provides teachers with the opportunity to update their skills in order to be able to demonstrate their competence. It is generally 'delivered' to the teacher by an 'expert', with an agenda determined by the deliverer and the participant is placed in a passive role.

CPD as retooling is very much based in a practical view of teaching, in which relevance and immediate application within classrooms is a prime objective. It sees teachers as the manager of student learning rather than a reflective practitioner or inquirer who considers how appropriate the pedagogy is for the students she/he teaches. In the words of one teacher "it supports participants to develop the skills and confidence they need to take charge of their own professional learning".

However, with its focus on improving instruction it does not allow any consideration of the social and cultural factors which influence the design and delivery of teaching and learning. As Day (1999, p. 139) observes, "it is likely to promote a limited conception of teaching and being a teacher". Concepts of practicality and relevance contribute to the development of instrumentalist ideologies which emphasise a technical approach by providers and consumers of CPD. This form of CPD encourages teachers to see their world in terms of instrumental ends achieved only through the recipes of tried and true practices legitimated by unexamined experience or uncritically accepted research findings (Sachs and Logan 1990, p. 479). For a teacher this type of CPD:

> …results in an immediate spin off at the school level, teachers sharing ideas about best practice and how to achieve it….

And because it has this immediate benefit it is often the preferred type of CPD for teachers. Similarly, governments and education bureaucrats prefer this is type of CPD seeing it as an end in itself. As Guskey (1999) observes they assume professional development is inherently good, and therefore more is always better. However, "simply doing more of the same old stuff, however, is not necessarily better. It can actually lead to diminished results, higher levels of frustration and increased cynicism" (Guskey 1999, p. 2).

Dadds (1997, p. 32) describes this type of CPD as a delivery or empty vessel model. Her major criticism is that

> on their own they are extremely limited because they have little, if anything, to say about the crucial role of teachers' understandings about, and experiences of children, in the development of their work. Nor do they have anything, to say about the variety and complexity of processes which teachers undergo as they continue to learn about their professional craft; as they continue to gain new knowledge and understanding; reconstruct their attitudes, beliefs, practices; struggle with the difficulties of the change process.

In summary, CPD as retooling can best be described as old style professional development; it is something that is done to teachers, or as Mockler (2001) calls it 'spray on' PD. Inevitably these kinds of activities are provided by an outside expert and are mainly concerned with tinkering with practice.

It develops a type of 'controlled professionalism' where teachers can best be described as craft workers. At its worst, this type of CPD is:

> Unintellectual—anything redolent of the worst kind of pop psychology, jargon filled with no explanations…8-3 at the local RSL for a one day wonder session by a visiting guru… Mars boys are different, left brain right brain, multiple intelligences cross hatched with Blooms taxonomy.

CPD as Remodelling

Remodelling does not challenge orthodoxies or beliefs, rather it reinforces a practical approach to teaching, where teaching is sometimes seen as a performance and the role of the teacher is to engage/entertain students. The quote below captures an element of this:

> Literally smile, put on an act, entertain, draw on reserves of energy. Conflict between giving too much and burn out and keeping a life balance but still engaged in the process of change and development and renewal. Try something and keep going, enjoy the work and like working with children.

Like CPD as retooling, this model is concerned with transmission (Kennedy 2005) but is more concerned with modifying existing practices to ensure that teachers are compliant with government change agendas. It is very much focussed on the enhancement of teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge. One teacher wrote, "it is about learning something new, which is stimulating, applicable and exhilarating". Helping them to "understand more deeply the content they teach and the ways students learn that content" (Guskey 2003, p. 748). In this respect, teachers are very much positioned as the uncritical consumers of expert knowledge.

In Australia and elsewhere, CPD programmes are normally provided by the school or district, but on occasion may also be mandated by the State (some changes in syllabuses are examples of this). These programmes are usually devised by an external expert, working within existing frameworks and conducted over a period of time. They can best be likened to building a frame and adding on an extension. There has to be compatibility, with the existing structure. In terms of teaching these programmes ensure continuation between old practices and new ones. One of the shortfalls of these programmes is that they may well remodel teachers' behaviours but not necessarily change their attitudes and beliefs about teaching. The limitation of this approach is well captured by this teacher's observation:

> Outside experts telling teachers what they should be doing, it is impossible to be encouraged or inspired by this approach—it must be a complete collaborative approach otherwise it is a complete waste of our limited and valuable time.

Like CPD as retooling, this model of CPD reinforces the idea of the teacher as the uncritical consumer of knowledge, and operating at the level of improving specific skills as these relate to immediate classroom practice.

CPD as Revitalizing

Unlike the previous two types of CPD, this type of CPD is very much about teacher renewal, with the shift away from development to learning. The following quote captures the fundamental element of CPD as revitalizing. Clearly it is active, challenging and includes students in the learning enterprise.

> The child says LOOK AT ME, LISTEN TO ME. I have things to tell you, I have things to share, I WANT to talk to you. I am important. I can contribute. It is about us listening to children and acting on their voice, their opinions, ideas. Involving them in decision-making. See them as the key contributors to society, people who must be listened to. I am not cute, my brain and personality are big, capable and influential.

Given this teacher's observations, CPD as revitalizing connects teachers with other teachers and with the needs of students. The difference between this kind of CPD and the two so far presented is that its' focus is primarily on teacher learning, in particular professional renewal through opportunities to rethink and review practices and in so doing become reflective practitioners. When it is at its most successful it "ensures learning from my colleagues in day-to-day work" and as one teacher whimsically suggested, "you come away feeling the world is your oyster—a dozen oysters—and affirmed with a dash of challenge". It demands that teachers are able to engage in reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (Schön 1987). According to Day (1999, p. 28)

> reflection-in-action "focuses upon the identification and rapid solution of immediately pressing problems" and reinforces the notion of teacher as artisan. Reflection-on-action occurs both before and after the action. It is a more systematic, considered process of deliberation enabling analysis, reconstruction and renaming in order to plan for further teaching and learning.

To this extent, its focus is still on the individual teacher but makes teachers "feel inspired, idealistic—a reminder of what teaching's all about".

Kennedy (2005) calls this kind of CPD transitional, in the sense that the types of CPD characteristic of this model have the capacity to support underlying agendas compatible with either the transmission of transformative models. Under Kennedy's schema, a transitional approach to CPD incorporates a standards-based, coaching/mentoring or community of practices models. Under my schema, however, the standards-based model would be included within CPD as retooling as it "belittles the notion of teaching as a complex, context-specific political and moral endeavour; rather it represents a desire to create a system of teaching, …that can generate and empirically validate connections between teacher effectiveness and student learning" (Beyer 2002, p. 243, cited in Kennedy 2005, p. 241). The coaching/mentoring model emphasises the importance of the one-to-one relationship between two teachers, which is designed to support CPD. It involves an equitable relationship which allows the two teachers involved to discuss possibilities, beliefs and hopes (Kennedy 2005). One of its major tenets is that of confidentiality. The community of practice model draws on the work of Wenger (1998) and generally involves more than two people. Importantly, members need to create their own understanding of the joint enterprise, therefore allowing members of that community to assert a certain level of control over the agenda (Kennedy 2005, p. 245).

Another form of CPD as revitalizing is to be found through professional development networks. Morris et al. (2003) argue that two linked processes of CPD can create opportunities for teacher learning and transformation. They claim that external teacher networks that focus predominately on enhancing teachers' pedagogical knowledge and collaborative and leadership skills in a content area when linked

with internal school reform networks and projects can provide the transformative power to alter professional development and teacher learning in power and sustainable ways (p. 764). My teachers saw the strength of this type of CPD in terms of its being collaborative and collegial, and made them ask themselves "what would learning look like? How would we capture it and gather evidence of it?" Another benefit was that "you can share with colleagues and students, adapting to your student community and see positive feedback", which is "reflected in student data and teacher practice".

Daley (2000, pp. 40–41) lists a variety of tools which can foster a transformative view of learning including: concept maps, reflective journals, Venn diagrams, analysis of practice exemplars, action learning and creating professional learning communities. In her view "all can be used to foster a constructivist, transformative, context-based professional practice development program" (pp. 40–41) where "the focus is on linking new knowledge to previous experiences, contexts and practices" (p. 41) From a teacher's perspective the following advice was given to ensure success of a CPD programme, "start small, share experiences, reflect on and build on successes" and "has to be carefully targeted towards real needs not those determined by others".

CPD as Reimagining

As the name reflects this kind of CPD is different and requires imagination both on the part of those delivering CPD as well as those who are the recipients of it. The extract below is indicative of what it is not like, and the paradox of opposites gives power to this metaphor.

> I chose this an as exact opposite. The photo shows what we have built from in terms of student involvement, teaching practice and classroom environment. One wonders whether this lesson was ever a successful one.

This type of CDP is transformative in its intent and practice, and will equip teachers individually and collectively to act as shapers, promoters and well-informed critics of reforms (Little 1994, p. 1). It leaves teachers "energised, ready to try new things…as though you could take on the world in your classroom the next day".

This model of CPD represents what Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009, p. 40) refer to as authentic professional learning. For them "it takes courage: first of all, it requires a recognition of the complexity of school education and a desire for improvement and action". Accordingly, it is highly political and serves to advocate and support change from a variety of perspectives and approaches. Thus it "provides teachers with space and time to pose questions and identify issues that are important to them and their students". It is successful when "there is dialogue beyond the PD session and teachers are thinking/planning how strategies and ideas can be implemented" and "when conversations in the classroom continue three days after the PD session".

At its core then, it is a transformative view of teacher professionalism which seeks to develop teachers who are creative developers of curriculum and innovative pedagogues (Mockler 2005). Such teachers value divergent and risky thinking in themselves, their colleagues and their students, and in doing so assist their students in the development of their own critical and transformative capacities. Transformative teachers also "collaborate at a deep level with colleagues, students and other stakeholders, and necessary for such collaboration is a willingness to be open to change and transformation in themselves" (Mockler 2005, p. 742).

Given that this is political work, it requires building collaborative partnerships between various stakeholders whose task is to work together, combining their experience, expertise and resources. The strength here is that jointly planned activities are consistently more effective and more efficient than those planned by either school-based or district educators working alone (Guskey 1999). Education reform networks are a type of collaborative action to support teachers. For Lieberman (2000) these networks are flexible, borderless and innovative, able to create collaborative environments, and focus and develop agendas that grow and change with participants. For teachers these networks "support open minded inquiry, reflection, they support teachers in validating their knowledge and building on it".

CPD as reimagining demands that educators must have the courage to ask tough questions and have the skills to find honest answers. They must regularly examine all forms of evidence on student learning to identify potential weaknesses in the curriculum or instructional programme (Guskey 1999). Furthermore, it requires that teachers "engage in professional knowledge building whereby practitioners can challenge, defend, explicate and question not only the information that comes their way, but also the policies that emerge from it" (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009, p. 52).

This approach reflects what Richardson (2003, p. 401) describes as an inquiry approach where teachers determine their individual collective goals, experiment with practices, and engage in open and trusting dialogue about teaching and learning with colleagues and outside facilitators. Its success would be evident when the following teacher aspirations are achieved:

> When society is transformed by the students we teach
> When there is reflection resulting in an action, change of attitude, or…
> When it promotes that door opening: "What if…"
> When people go away determined to make changes in their own practices as a result
> When you can take it, share it with colleagues and then apply it to the classroom
> Yes, when it actually makes a difference to student learning and,
> when the most disengaged teacher wants to be part of the professional learning experience.

CPD as reimagining positions teachers as researchers of their own and their peers' practice. It contributes to an understanding of the nature of practice and the improvement and transformation of practice. It provides teachers with opportunities to communicate with their peers in more formal ways so that the reach of their practice and their insights into that moves beyond their own classroom and school to a broader constituency.

This view is clearly reimagining a set of social relations where teachers and students are cast as learners and working together in a collective endeavour; where risk taking is promoted and supported and where negotiating change and dealing with ambiguity is something that provokes excitement rather than fear and insecurity. It is not an unrealistic utopian vision but rather an aspiration for a strong and confident teaching profession, what elsewhere I have called an activist teaching profession (Sachs 2003).

The CPD Grid (Table 11.1) brings together each of these different approaches to CPD. It differentiates between the drivers, purpose, conceptions, responsibility, learning processes, approaches, view of teaching and professional learning outcomes.

Clearly, retooling and reimagining stand at opposite ends of the CPD spectrum, while remodelling and revitalizing are more transitional positions. At one end, the focus is on PD as evidenced by the Retooling and Remodelling, while at the other end the focus is on teacher learning. The focus on learning is significant as it recog-

Table 11.1 CPD Grid

	Retooling	Remodelling	Revitalising	Reimagining
Driver/trigger	Accountability and control by government	Compliance with govt change agenda	Professional renewal	Professional reinvention
Purpose	Upgrading of skills	Modify existing practices	Rethink and renew practices	Transformative practices
Conception of CPD	Transmission	Transmission	Transitional	Transformative
Responsibility	System	School/district	Individual teacher	Teachers
Focus	Professional development	Professional development	Professional learning	Professional learning
Learning processes	Passive recipient of knowledge	Uncritical consumer	Collaboration	Mutual engagement and knowledge creation
Approaches	One off seminars, outside expert	Programmes devised by an external expert over an extended time	Collaborative learning circles, networks, action research	Practitioner inquiry or action research, inquiry as stance
View of teaching	Teacher as technician	Teacher as craft worker	Teacher as reflective learner	Autonomous professional
Professional outcomes	Improved teaching skills	Updated discipline knowledge or pedagogical skills	New approaches to pedagogy and learning	Production of new knowledge
Type of professionalism	Controlled	Compliant	Collaborative	Activist

nises teacher agency and personal responsibility. Each of these approaches serves different purposes and has different outcomes. At its most extreme retooling and remodelling are concerned with compliance and control, while revitalising and reimagining are about personal transformation and change. Not surprisingly, each one also has a different view of what it means to be a teacher and how teachers practice can be improved. Again at its most extreme, retooling focuses on specific skill development, while reimagining envisages teachers as producers of professional knowledge.

Future Directions for CPD

Thus far, I have presented four metaphors or models of CPD for teachers. It is clear that from my perspective CPD should emphasise teacher learning rather than a deficit-based professional development view where PD is 'done to teachers'. Importantly, CPD is not about looking for the grail, or as a panacea to cure the ills of education failure. If this is the case, then, as Guskey (1999) notes, providers need to be careful not to focus on the symptoms, as a retooling and a remodelling approach would assume, but rather have the ability to identify the need and develop approaches that help respond to that need.

A current dilemma of practice is that much of the recent literature advocates reimaging but the experience of practice is more towards a technocratic and instrumental form of CPD. We need to ask why this is so? There can be several answers to this: first is that education is increasingly political, and a regulated, skilled and compliant teaching profession is probably in the interests of governments and bureaucracies. While schools do not necessarily deliver votes to politicians, failing students, evidence of falling standards certainly provide heat for them to respond to. Second, standards and standardisation are strong shapers of public opinion. Standards for teaching and standards for teachers are often confused. These words do not mean the same or do the same conceptual or practical work. For example, *teacher* standards are concerned with measuring teacher performance and encompass the work of regulatory standards, while *teaching* standards are about improving teaching through a developmental approach. *Teacher* standards place teachers as objects for measurement, while *teaching* standards focus on teaching as a process that can be improved (Sachs 2005a, b).

Day and Sachs (2004, p. 26) make the following observation about the future shape of CPD. They argue that

> identifying teachers' agendas is crucial to learning and change; that teacher learning needs to be inquiry base oriented, personal and sustained, individual and collaborative, on and off site; that CPD means a range of learning opportunities appropriate to needs and purposes; that these need be supported by school cultures of inquiry and be evidence based, where evidence is collected and interrogated which acknowledges the complex worlds of teaching and learning, teachers and learners; and, that if it is to be effective its direct and indirect results need to be systematically evaluated.

In order to achieve the aspirations of a learning profession, education providers need to ensure that the programmes offered match appropriate professional development provision to particular professional needs (Mujis et al. 2004, p. 295). The important point here is the need for CPD to be differentiated in the same way as learning is differentiated for students.

For this to happen, as Sugrue (2004) suggests, it necessitates that teachers take control over their learning, which is a beginning for them to feel empowered in the process and acquiring a new and emerging confidence to meet new challenges head on and in ways that previously they did not imagine were possible.

> Such learning is career stage sensitive, and requires time and space as well as conducive conditions that also need to alter with time, while the external climate creates a context that impinges in marked ways…. (Sugrue 2004, p. 85)

It requires that teachers are prepared to take risks and not lose their nerve when it comes to justifying positions about education against which they can provide justifiable evidence. Saunders (2004, p. 165) sees the opportunities that research has for development of teacher networks as means whereby teachers have the space to:

- *Reflect* on practice
- *Reclaim* the language and discourse of pedagogy
- *Relate* professionally with colleagues in schools; and universities and collaborate on experiments in teaching and learning
- *Reinforce* the need for an evidence-driven approach to innovation (in the richest sense of the phrase)
- *Restore* a sense of exploration, invention and creativity to classroom planning and practice
- *Create* a more naturally paced, naturally scaled reform, school-led improvement

Inherent in this is the link between developing trust and professional judgement as hinges and catalysts for professional learning. To this point, I have indicated some of the major themes in the literature, now I briefly synthesise the points made by the teachers I worked with regarding what they want of CPD programmes to look like:

- Focus on themselves as learners and engage in challenging learning
- Be inspired by sharing ideas and practices while working with colleagues
- Create an intellectual challenge which causes teachers to re-examine their beliefs and practices
- Have the luxury of time to reflect on their learning and in the company of other teachers think about and challenge their assumptions and views of schooling, teaching and learning
- To connect with what is learnt with real life situations

Returning to the litmus test questions I posed earlier, the type of CPD presented above would satisfy the personal and professional needs of teachers. Clearly, the de-

velopment and implementation of such activities would require some readjustments in how CPD is presented and where it would be conducted. It requires constructive dialogue between teachers, principals and education bureaucrats about what are the priorities for the school and teachers, how to ensure that the needs and interests of students are at the centre of decisions and what kind of activities can ensure an engaged and well-informed teaching profession.

As I have said elsewhere (Sachs 2003), a strong teaching profession is one that is self regulating, one where teachers themselves must be committed to investing time and energy in their own CPD. This needs to happen in a context where education systems and employers provide financial support for continuous professional learning to support and sustain a robust and competent teaching profession.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used four metaphors to describe current approaches to CPD of teachers. Using data from teachers, I have inserted their voice into this chapter to give it both a sense of authenticity but also an evidence base to support my argument. Clearly, the CPD of teachers is important as a means to maintain and sustain a competent teaching profession. Moreover, at different times it serves different purposes and masters and hence is a political activity. The politics of curriculum content, pedagogy and relationships within schools can all be sites of struggle, which should not be underestimated.

I identified two tracks for CPD; namely a traditional training approach as evident in the retooling and remodelling approaches and a teacher learning orientation as present in the revitalising and reimagining approaches. Each of these approaches has different forms of provision and delivery and will accordingly have different outcomes and effects both in terms of teacher practices and the type of teacher professionalism emerging from these practices. While on occasion it is appropriate for each of these kinds of teacher CPD to be used to improve teaching quality and teacher effectiveness, teachers for the twenty-first century need to be autonomous learners as well as skilled practitioners. The reimagining metaphor links the imperative of learning to improve as well as improving learning. The current situation is one where change is ever present and the ability to manage change and to understand and work with ambiguity are probably core competencies for teachers. The ability to learn with and from colleagues and students is central to this. The building of relationships and the development of trust between stakeholders also ensures that this is achieved.

A well-respected teaching profession, which is supported in its professional learning, will ensure that quality student learning outcomes are achieved. Moreover, teachers who are transformative professionals will contribute to a society which values equity, participation and social justice.

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Chapter 12
Towards an Ecology of Teacher Collaboration on Research

Colleen McLaughlin

Introduction

In 1994, Hargreaves wrote that collaboration had become 'an articulating and integrating principle of action, planning culture, development, organisation and research' (Hargreaves 1994, p. 245): this is even more so now. It has become a sine qua non of reform and educational policymaking: writers with very different political and educational views see it as central to the development of teachers and classroom practice. This will be explored in more depth later in this chapter. The studies of teacher learning and collaboration have taught us a great deal and these detailed studies have been very important, showing us the complexity of collaboration, especially around research. They have shown the delicacy, the range of influences and the interwoven nature of the work. I argue in this chapter that this is why we should adopt an ecological approach to understanding and researching teacher collaboration. By an ecological approach I mean an adaptation of Uri Bronfenbrenner's (1992) approach to human development:

> the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life course, between an active, growing human being, and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded. (p. 188)

I do this by first exploring the increased emphasis on collaboration in the world of education. I then explore what we know about the conditions and impact, as well as the challenges and benefits, of teachers collaborating. Finally, I discuss collaboration on research and illustrate the discussion with some thoughts from teachers. I conclude by arguing for an ecological approach to teacher collaboration: an approach that takes into account the forces of influence in teachers' lives and the tensions and dilemmas created by this ecology.

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The Move from Individualism to Collaboration

It is not oversimplisitic to say that there has been a major shift in thinking on teacher collaboration over the last two decades, although there has not necessarily been such a major shift in practice. There have also been developments in whom teachers collaborate with. The current emphasis on teacher collaboration has come from two very different directions: the first a move towards teachers collaborating that grew organically and began to be studied by educationalists; the other a top down form of policy implementation which saw the potential power of collaboration for school improvement. In 1975, Lortie's seminal work on the nature of teaching showed that to teach was to inhabit a world of uncertainties and that teaching was a very individual activity (Lortie 1975). Eleven years later, in 1984, Andy Hargreaves wrote that 'teachers it seems are present-oriented, conservative and individualistic. They tend to avoid long-term planning and collaboration with their colleagues' (Hargreaves 1984, p. 27). The focus in scholarly writing, particularly in the 1990s, was around the nature of the isolation, loneliness and individualism of teaching (e.g. Lieberman and Miller 1990; Huberman 1993; Hargreaves 1993) first identified by Lortie. This focus on the nature of teaching and its individualistic features was born out of an increasing interest in and focus on collaboration, as well as teachers' professional relations (Nias et al. 1989). The debates of this time were around the nature and extent of collaboration within teaching. Huberman (1993) had challenged the nature of the school as a 'bonded community of adults and children' putting forward questions about the social organisation of work in schools. He proposed a model of the teacher as artisan who tinkered like a bricoleur—a do-it-yourself craftsperson who used all available material lying around. He and others (Nias et al. 1989; Watkins 2005) drew attention to the fast moving nature of teaching, the importance of control and responsiveness, and the primarily individual nature of teaching. Distinctions were drawn between collaboration in different sorts of schools such as primary or elementary and secondary. The contextual influence was depicted.

Both Hargreaves (1993) and Huberman (1993) were arguing that individualism is built into both teaching and the architecture of school organisation. Lieberman and Miller (1990) also focused on the 'social system understanding' of teachers' practices. They identified the personalised style of teaching; the uncertainty of, and weak links between, teaching, learning and the knowledge base; the conflicted nature of teachers' goals; the centrality of control norms and the lack of professional support as characterising teaching viewed through a social systems lens.

These studies and others by Little (1990) in particular shed light on the nature of teaching and professional relations so that the tensions and difficulties around teacher collaboration could be seen more clearly. Little (1990) wrote of the 'persistence of privacy' as having its roots in the complexities of and nature of the work of school teaching. Others drew attention to the emotional dimensions of teaching and particularly the fear of exposure and the need to exert control arguing that they are central to teaching (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. 1983; Nias 1993). Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. showed that the 'publicness' of classrooms is linked to the fear

of judgements by teachers. So these studies were the beginning of a study of the environment of teaching and the influences on teacher collaboration.

Paralleling these studies was a shift in policy and practice on teacher learning. International governments focused on the performance of schools and standards of educational attainment, putting the spotlight on teacher learning. The reforms in the United Kingdom enshrined in the 1988 Educational Reform Act legislated for the first time that teachers would be expected to have five days of professional development time annually. These were affectionately known as 'Baker Days' in the United Kingdom, after the Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker, who introduced the legislation. What these days symbolised was an official recognition for the first time in the United Kingdom that resources would be given to all teachers learning together. There had been in the United Kingdom a system of professional development, largely based on seconding teachers out of school to full-time university-based courses. The teachers were volunteers and chose to learn. Before these reforms there had been strong arguments put forward from educational thinkers for collaboration between professionals in the educational system. Some, like Stenhouse, had argued for a tighter collaboration between university-based staff and school-based staff on research and this will be focused on later, but these were not the accepted positions. The reforms of the late 1980s and 1990s were also linked to new notions of accountability; increased marketisation; competition and these trends were to be seen in many countries, including the United States (Cochran-Smith 2005) and Australia (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009; Johnson 2003). This accompanying notion of teacher learning was therefore linked to highly political and contestable notions of accountability and impacted on teachers' views of collaboration.

This emphasis on compulsory teacher development time and programmes was linked directly in some cases to the introduction of new curriculum reforms, such as the national literacy strategy in the United Kingdom. In this new model of reform alongside the prescribed curriculum outlines and pedagogical methods were teacher development packages that were to be 'delivered' to teachers. This was a different notion of the more open, voluntary, professional development models and was part of the increased control over the agenda of teacher learning and curriculum that characterised educational reforms in many of the countries of the global north in the decades of the late twentieth century (Blase and Blase 1999; Anderson and Grinberg 1998).

Alongside this was an older tradition of thinking and practice, which also emphasised the benefits of collaboration and was motivated by different intentions. Stenhouse (1975) had argued for the necessity of teacher collaboration on research and saw the professional enquiry in a group as part of the role of the extended professional. Lieberman and others had encouraged a long tradition of teacher leadership in the United States, which ran alongside a rich seam of self-study (Lieberman and Miller 2004). In 2003, Sachs includes collaboration in the list of the key features of an activist professionalism alongside based on democratic principles; future oriented; socially critical; negotiated; strategic and tactical (Sachs 2003, pp. 14–15). This is, as she says, the opposite of the audit model of what teachers should be and

do which is embedded within many of the reforms previously described. From very different and indeed opposing ideologies came an emphasis on teacher collaboration and on joint learning. These were new orthodoxies within teaching in general, although of course these ideas and practices had been present prior to this and had been part of the conception of the extended professional (Stenhouse 1975).

More recent policy proposals in the United Kingdom and the United States have widened the circles of collaboration to include collaboration with other professionals who are based outside of schools. In the United Kingdom, the Children Act 2004, known locally as the *Every Child Matters,* has required teachers to work in an 'integrated way' with support staff, both within and outside of schools. In particular it leads to the appointment of support staff within schools on a large scale. This co working and the appointment of large numbers of support staff was enhanced by workload difficulties teachers were experiencing. In addition, the work required multi disciplinary working. Teachers were expected to work very closely indeed with other professionals working with children. These reforms were profound in that they have involved the reorganisation of organisational structures in local districts and the generation of common training and forms of assessment. They grew in part from the failings of interagency collaboration, which had been identified consistently by reports into tragedies of child protection (Laming 2009).

Collaboration had become a central feature of educational policymaking and was seen as the 'collaborative solution' to many challenges (Hargreaves 1994). Johnson (2003, p. 332) has reviewed the literature and summarised the benefits of collaboration that are to be found there. His list is as follows:

- It provides moral support by strengthening resolve and providing support in difficult situations
- Increases efficiency by eliminating duplication and removing redundancy
- Improves effectiveness by improving the quality of teachers' teaching
- Reduces overload by allowing for teachers to share burdens and pressures
- Establishes boundaries by setting commonly agreed boundaries
- Promotes confidence
- Promotes teacher reflection through dialogue and action
- Promotes teachers learning from each other
- Leads to continuous improvement

Two of my recent additions are:

- A process which provides solidarity and a forum for social critique (Sachs 2003)
- Central to participatory approaches (Freire 1970)

Viewing this list of claimed benefits, it is possible to see why collaboration is seen as such a powerful tool.

The landscape of supporters of collaboration outlined above is inhabited by different tribes, covering the spectrum from Marxism to neo liberal conservatism. All see collaboration between teachers as central to teacher and school development. With this new emphasis on collaboration came some detailed studies of teacher collaboration and these will now be explored. The detail of these studies and what they

taught us about the 'dailiness' of teachers' professional lives and their collaborative practices are very important indeed, since the assumptions behind many of the policy initiatives or pronouncements on collaboration appear to be very simplistic.

Collaboration in Schools—What Have We Learned About the Conditions?

The Potential Influence of the Broader Educational Climate in Which Teachers Operate

The practices of collaboration cannot be separated out from the contexts within which teachers and other staff work, as has already been indicated. The contexts in which teachers work have changed significantly. Day and Sachs (2004) portray vividly the move from the autonomous professional to the professional whose time, curriculum and learning are all prescribed. What have we learned about the changed contexts and how they impact on collaboration?

We have learned that there are pulls in completely opposing directions and that the world of teaching, which was already marked by high ambiguity, is now even more characterised by opposing discourses. There has been the introduction of a managerialist discourse, mixed with a move to standardisation and accountability, which has meant that collaboration can become 'contrived' or that collaboration has rather limited and instrumental ends (Hargreaves and Dawe 1990; Sugrue 2004). There has been an intensification of teachers' work, increased responsibilities and a crisis for some of professional identity (Day and Sachs 2004). The task of teaching has become socially more complex in many countries. These pressures, and the intensity of them, have caused changed patterns in the profession. In the United States, 50% of teachers leave within their first five years of teaching (Ingersoll 2001) and in the United Kingdom there is also a shift of teachers out of the profession within the first two years (Bielby et al. 2007). The climate of accountability and surveillance has meant that many teachers have become more fearful about the 'publicness' of teaching and have withdrawn into their classrooms, reinforcing the individuality and isolation that was discussed earlier. However, it is also the case that teachers have opened up their classrooms and there is more collaborative work. The picture of opposing pulls in educational policy and rhetoric characterises many countries and is particularly evident in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (Day and Sachs 2004; Little 2004).

The other and opposite trend has been a push for teachers to work in learning communities and to collaborate more strongly than they have done before to promote teacher learning per se, democracy and participation. Little (2002) argues that 'research spanning more than two decades points consistently to the potential educational benefit of vigorous collegial communities' (p. 917). This discourse of collaboration and collegiality could be called one of democratic professionalism

(Day and Sachs 2004). Its origins are in long debates within education and other professions about the relationships between knowledge and practice (Hargreaves 1999, 2004) and about the previously mentioned attempts to counteract the isolation of teaching. So school contexts have become more complex and nuanced.

The Nature of Teaching and Collaboration

Brook et al. (2007) cite research studies to show that teacher collaboration occurs infrequently, with teachers interacting with colleagues only 5–10 hours per week (Miskel et al. 1983; Zahorik 1987; Gordon 1996). They argue that when collaboration does occur, it is generally in informal contexts and as a result of teachers' personal initiatives, rather than a regularized structure. This picture may be different in different countries but this study reinforces the picture which emerged earlier of teaching as a largely individualistic and isolated activity—private from the gaze of other teachers. There has been a growth of formalized collaborative initiatives too. These include initiatives such as peer coaching, mentoring, peer observation, enquiry groups in large-scale programmes such as the National College of School Leadership Networked Learning Communities programme in the United Kingdom.

The Nature of the Task

Teachers tend to collaborate around activities that are student focused and near to students, e.g. curriculum resource sharing or lesson planning but less so around teacher centred activities, such as pedagogy and organisation of classrooms (Brook et al. 2007). They also prefer to work with teachers in the same age or grade level. The differences between these types of work and the importance of certain aspects of the activity are highlighted by Little (1990). She describes four activities: story telling and scanning, sharing, seeking aid and assistance and joint work. These are significantly different in

> the degree to which they induce mutual obligation, expose the work of the each person to the scrutiny of others, and call for, tolerate, or reward initiative in matters of curriculum and instruction…. The move from conditions of complete independence to thoroughgoing interdependence entails changes in the frequency and intensity of teachers' interactions, the prospects for conflict, and probability of mutual influence. (pp. 511–512)

There is a great deal of understandable protectionism implied here. Teachers are keen to shelter themselves from criticism and from public gaze (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. 1983). They are at the same time more subject to public scrutiny in terms of public discussion and the scrutiny of inspectors and others in the classroom than they used to be. The outcomes of this are not necessarily counter to collaboration though and more research is needed here. Little (1996) shows that reforms can potentially challenge teachers' beliefs and practices, and as such school-wide

initiatives 'deplete or restore teachers' emotional energy' (p. 352) and collaboration may be more acceptable during times of school-wide reform (Brook et al. 2007; Huberman 1993).

The process of collaboration on teaching and learning is a challenging one. Critical factors are the ability to develop a shared language; to share purposes; to engage in a range of collaborative practices, accepting that this is a developmental task, especially in relation to 'the capacity and disposition to dig deeply into matters of practice' (Little 2002, p. 918): to understand and work with the risk; to work towards improvement in students learning rather than improvements in collegial cohesion: to engage constructively in conflict and the discussion of difference; and to interact with a focus on practice, including distinguishing between focusing on practice and evaluating performance; and to interact frequently. These are highly sophisticated tasks. The discussion of practice and the development of a shared language in itself is a challenge requiring subject and pedagogical knowledge and containing many assumptions. Many of the current notions of sharing practice or identifying best practice have over simplified notions of collaboration underpinning them. Little (2002), Fielding et al. (2005) and Wenger (1998) have shown that the notion of transferring practice is neither fully understood nor simple. The research also suggests that there are differences between primary and secondary school settings and draws attention to the final critical factor—the institutional capacity to support teachers and improvements in practice.

The School Culture and Organisation

There are great variations between schools in terms of their culture, capacity and infrastructure in relation to collaboration. Brook et al. (2007) identify key elements as the extent to which teachers feel able to ask for help and how much effort has to be seen to be individual to be worthy of merit. These nuances of individual school cultures are very important, as is the school-level organisation of staff work and leadership. The structures inhibit or foster collaboration (Little 1990). Structures and processes such as teacher workloads, the physical possibility of meeting with colleagues in school time and the degree of autonomy and choice that teachers have over their work the work. A UK study found that the degree of alignment between policy or intention and structure was significant (McLaughlin et al. 2006). Time and timetable are often overlooked as key barriers to collaboration. McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) emphasise the importance of institutional policies and practices committed to supporting teacher collaboration and collegiality, as reflected, for example, in symbolic endorsements and institutional policy statements that give rewards and importance to collaborative endeavours. 'These practices include administrators prioritizing collaboration about teaching purposes and practices, the existence of regularized structures so that staff can come together at predictable times to discuss teaching practices and problem-solve, and connecting teachers to outside groups to further their professional development' (Brook et al. 2007, p. 216).

The very interesting and relatively recent study by Brook et al. (2007) of a particular approach, *The Responsive Classroom,* which was thought to enhance teacher collaboration, supported earlier research. 'Teachers' perceptions of the school environment, specifically perception of shared educational goals and values and perception of fewer barriers, related positively to teacher collaboration' (p. 235). 'Lack of time (both personal and perceived lack of time for colleagues) and lack of administrative priority were reported by teachers as two key barriers to collaboration, a finding concordant with research stressing that teachers must be given time to collaborate and the administration must make collaboration a priority' (p. 237).

Many studies have pointed to the unintended consequences of collaboration. Achinstein (2002) warned that teacher collaboration could make matters worse for pupils and she cautioned against 'unguarded optimism'. A recent study of teacher collaboration with support staff within the classroom found that this co-working was not a sharing of tasks but resulted in teachers teaching groups and support staff having individual interactions; this had particular implications for pupils with special educational needs (Blatchford et al. 2008).

> Given that we also found in the systematic observation results that the amount of contact with teachers tended to decline when support staff were present, there are grounds for conceiving of interactions between support and pupils as an *alternative,* as much as an *additional,* form of support. (p. 11)

Collaboration is complex. It can be of great value to students and their teachers (McLaughlin and Talbert 2001) but it cannot be applied without a careful analysis of the context, the culture, the nature of the task and the consequences.

Collaborating on Research

In the United Kingdom there has been a long tradition, as in the United States and Australia, of teacher research. In Australia and internationally Susan Groundwater-Smith has been a pioneering and seminal actor. One of the key British figures, Laurence Stenhouse, conceived of teacher research as necessarily involving some degree of collaboration. It was through a collaboration between those based in schools and those in universities that curriculum reform would take place and a new knowledge be created. His minimal view was that teachers would share their self-study or research with other teachers and colleagues. 'Each classroom should not be an island. Teachers working in such a tradition need to communicate with one another. They should report their work. Thus, a common vocabulary of concepts and syntax of theory need to be developed' (Stenhouse 1975, p. 157). His more extended view of collaboration was that teachers would form critical communities of enquiry and would systematically interrogate each other, thus ensuring the quality of the research. Those who came after Stenhouse developed the collaborative nature of research. Elliott (1991) describes the origins of educational action research in England as including the collaborative efforts of innovative teachers in secondary mod-

ern schools in the 1960s who, through debate and investigation, were able to challenge and change their schools' curricula. Thinkers in the field of teacher research post-Stenhouse, and prior to the increased control and accountably described above, emphasised the democratic purposes and process of teacher research, thus implying its collaborative nature. Many have argued that teacher research must necessarily be both collaborative and democratic or critical in purpose (Carr and Kemmis 1986).

In recent times government and other organisations, such as the Teacher Development Agency and the General Teaching Council, have promoted collaborative teacher research. This move has been beset by the same debates as teacher learning. Is the agenda one of colonisation with a technical-rational face, such as in the move to identity and transfer 'best practice', or is it a genuine attempt to develop teacher autonomy and knowledge generation in a democratic tradition? This debate is laid out fully by Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009). Another feature of educational developments has been the growth of networks or partnerships. Some voluntary networks or larger groups of schools or networks have emerged similar to the Networked Learning Communities programme in the United Kingdom. Examples are the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools in Australia (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2002): the Schools–University Partnership for Educational Research (SUPER) (McLaughlin et al. 2006) or the Bay Area School Reform Collaboration in the United States (BASRC 2010).

The focus on teacher research has been a recent feature of policy and practice in the United Kingdom but it is also an international one, particularly with the emphasis on evidence-informed policy and practice. The features of collaboration between teachers that were discussed earlier (the fear of exposure or the need for supporting climate and structures) are even more potent in collaborative teacher research. I will use the words of teachers who have been engaged in such collaboration to illustrate this.[1]

Not only have teachers been collaborating with peers but the work on researching pupils' perspectives or consulting pupils has also extended the notion of collaboration to collaborating with pupils. This has been a very rich seam of work and has generated a new motivation and energy for many teachers in engaging in researching practice (Rudduck and Mc Intyre 2007).

One teacher who has been a member of the SUPER collaborative enquiry group for eight years voices her ongoing anxieties.

> C. …if [we] participate in true research, then we're going to expose our own institutions. We're going to find that we're not doing something as well as we believe that we should be doing, and through action research then we're going to be looking at what we need to do, putting that action in place, and we may well be coming back round the table and saying 'it didn't work the way we expected it to, and now we're going off in this direction.' …I just think that we've got to remember that when we walk out there that round here we're just exposing a source.

[1] The illustrative extracts are from transcripts of a collaborative enquiry group which comprised senior teachers engaged in a collaborative research project with myself and other colleagues from the Faculty of Education in Cambridge. For further information on this partnership (The Schools University Partnership for Educational Research SUPER) go to www.educ.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/super/intorsp.html.

She talks of trust and how important and delicate it is, as well as being predicated on good relationships. The teachers talk of the different criteria for judgement in schools and within researching communities, as well the delicate task of discussing practice critically.

> C. I think one of the shocks my colleagues found is how frank people from the University can be in discussions about what they see, and some colleagues took it away as a criticism of their practice, and I think that's one of the hurdles that we actually needed to get over, if you'll excuse that expression, that it's not meant as a criticism; we're entering into a debate about practices and looking at the best different places can do.
>
> C. But we're being told in schools that unless it has an impact you shouldn't be doing it. Unless it has a direct impact on the lesson, on learning.
>
> [A] And pupil progress is a big word at the moment.

The teachers describe how a university–schools collaboration gives them a space to reflect and make meaning from the fast paced world of school as well as an appreciation of the complexity of practice.

> S. …what I have learnt by being here today has given me greater clarity on the huge black hole of stuff that I don't know, so that's really been good. I had been peripherally involved at [School Name] and did know something about it but I'm just beginning now to get a sense of the layers and the complexity and what I really need to get a grip of […]
>
> C. That's what I mean by the quality time. It's allowed me to order things. I feel, you know when you feel that you've got all these plates spinning out there. I feel like I've got one plate spinning at the moment, in the direction in which I'm going, for a couple of weeks at least. [group laughter]

The collaboration within the partnership is beneficial and the internal collaboration with colleagues too, but it throws up many problems. This teacher is alert to the new capacities required of her to work with her peers.

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

The Need for an Ecological Approach

What these illustrative comments do is bring to life the complexity and dynamic nature of collaboration with colleagues in or out of school settings. The research to date on collaboration has shown how interrelated the various elements are. This is an argument for an ecological approach: one which acknowledged the interrelationship of the various systems and which pays attention to what develops from the activity. An ecological approach would be both collective and contextual. 'A social ecology is concerned with the web of human relationships as well as their environmental contexts. Thus, a social ecological analysis in a field of study or problem is an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to the study of social issues and employs multiple levels and methods of analysis' (Swartz 2009, p. 25). It would be

an approach which acknowledged the interplay between people and their environments—both proximal and distal. It would also acknowledge the power of people to affect their environments and of environments to affect people. It is this interrelationship and responsibility for this, which seems to have been abdicated in recent times. It is not enough to focus only on the outcome and the activity; the context too must be examined. Bronfenbrenner (1992) identified five systems: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem (change over time). These are shown in Fig. 12.1, as is how they interrelate and apply to collaboration.

This conceptualisation of collaboration within an ecological framework addresses important issues within the field. In advocating collaboration many local and governmental policy makers have not looked at the misalignment of the relationships between the various parts of the system or the ecology of teachers' lives. They have not taken responsibility for the growth of the collaboration child nor the factors which help it to grow or shrink. This cannot continue if teachers are to be enabled to make the most of collaboration and particularly collaborative research. This framework may also be one for research that will help us to understand the conditions under which teachers, as Little (2002) has said, can 'dig deep into practice' with confidence and reward.

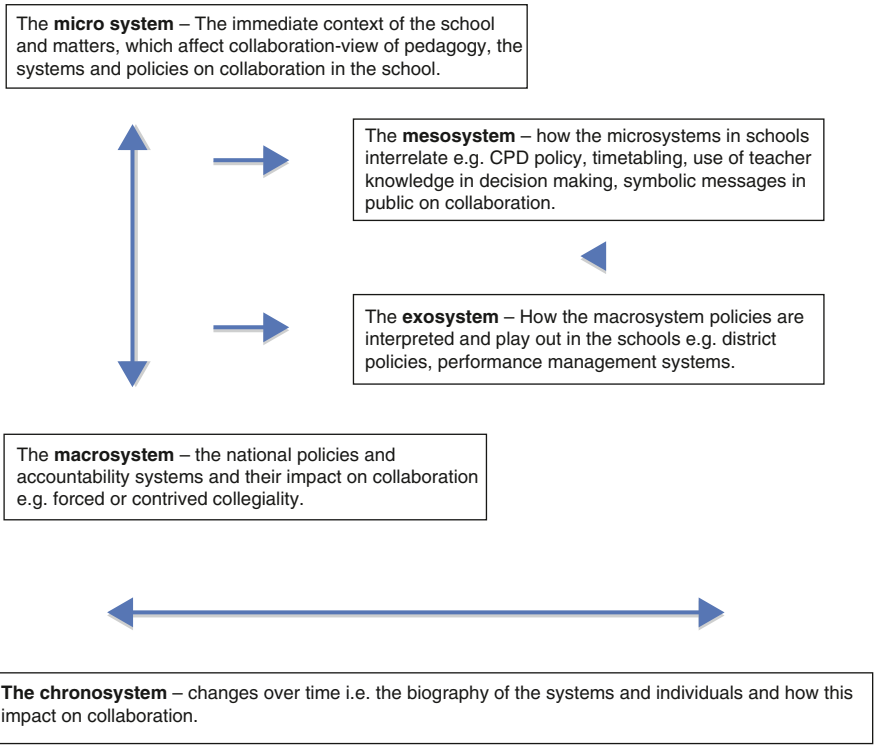

Fig. 12.1 An ecological approach to collaboration

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Chapter 13
The Insider and Outsider Model of Professional Learning

Jane Hunter and Jane Mitchell

Both authors have had the privilege of working closely with Susan Groundwater-Smith over the last 15 years. Her influence on our work as teacher educators and researchers has been profound. In particular, Groundwater-Smith's research methodology for working closely alongside teachers to explicate pedagogical knowledge, good teaching practice and the processes of professional learning has provided a rich and enduring model for our own work and is reflected in the case studies reported in this chapter.

The purpose of our chapter is to develop a model of teachers' professional learning that considers the ways in which pedagogical knowledge is generated within the practice of the classroom, through formal and informal professional exchange that takes place inside schools, as well as through the contribution of research methods and research expertise that is brought in from outside the school. The argument developed in the chapter is that pedagogical innovation is both dependent upon, and enhanced by, a close alignment between the above dimensions of practice.

The chapter presents two case studies of pedagogical innovation in and across school classrooms. The first case, Engaging Pedagogy, speculated about a 'fresh technology equation' conceptualised to promote high levels of intellectual engagement where the pedagogy required particular technology tools, content integration and a 'meddler in the middle'. The second case concerns a school–university research partnership that aimed to document pedagogical knowledge and professional learning in a group of rural schools using new technologies. The cases track the forms of professional learning that enabled teachers to explore, develop and sustain pedagogical innovation associated with new classroom technologies. The cases also explicate the pedagogical knowledge developed by teachers working with these technologies. While the policy default for professional learning is typically either a somewhat ill-defined form of action research or a 'one-shot' session delivered by an outside expert, the cases in this chapter provide the grounds for a sustained and robust model of professional learning. In their most recent work, Groundwater-Smith

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and Mockler (2009) assert that in 'an age of compliance' educators increasingly require manifold courage to weather the wishes and edicts of others. The case studies in this chapter are examples that give 'voice' to a call for action and exemplify practices of generative and transformative professional learning.

The research literature pertaining to professional learning abounds with detail regarding the range of practices that support teachers' professional learning in schools. The notion of 'professional learning community' has become common in the research literature, as well as the vernacular of schools, over the last decade (e.g. Lingard et al. 2003; Tudball 2007). The prevailing assumption within such literature is that professional learning is related to classroom practice and takes place within a school-based community that supports reflection, inquiry and collaboration.

While we support the notion of school-based models of professional learning, we believe that there are important questions to be asked pertaining to the ways in which, and the degrees to which, knowledge from outside the school context can be accessed, applied and extended by teachers within such school-based communities. For example, what access is available in schools to relevant research knowledge? In what ways can this knowledge inform practice? Likewise, there are questions regarding the ways in which knowledge developed within school sites can be the object of research and taken to a broader audience. For example, can professional learning be strengthened through the development, exchange and evaluation of knowledge across institutional sites and among a broad community of educators?

The value of bringing together 'insider' knowledge, that is knowledge generated within a school context, and 'outsider' knowledge, that is knowledge generated outside an individual school context, is acknowledged in the literature (Hoban 2002). How this can happen in sustained, purposeful ways has certainly been a hallmark of Groundwater-Smith's work. This chapter takes up these ideas through two cases in which 'insiders' and 'outsiders' worked together. In one case, the goal was to implement a change and develop an innovative programme of practice. In the second case, the goal was to document the knowledge developed within a cross-school innovation through a process of collaborative research. The cases provide the framework for developing an 'insider' and 'outsider' model of professional learning.

Case Study One: Engaging Pedagogy

Constructing learning to engage school students who use digital technologies requires teachers to know what is significant in the lives of the young people they teach (Green and Hannon 2007; Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2005, 2008). The choices that teachers make in deciding what digital content should be exposed through what medium, using what device, is paramount if learning with embedded information and communication technology is to be engaging and motivating. This idea is not necessarily new; however, it is possible that when the components of a 'fresh technology equation' are combined

with an insider and outsider model of teacher professional learning, teaching in schools inhabited by today's 'net generation' may be transformed (Oblinger and Oblinger 2005).

Engaging Pedagogy is a robust example of how ten teachers in a project conducted inside six New South Wales public schools used a 'fresh technology equation' to build their pedagogical knowledge of practice using new technologies alongside 'two outsiders'. One outsider was an education officer from the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (NSW DET), and the other, a technical skills officer from the Macquarie ICT Innovations Centre (MICTIC).[1]

The project approach required the teachers to use a particular technology tool set (digital resources, interactive whiteboards and a learning management system (LMS) using collaborative tools) in lessons for students in primary and secondary classrooms. Its design was developed from research using new technologies (Hedberg and Lefoe 2005; Philip et al. 2006; Zhao 2003). Each of these technologies is thought to promote high levels of intellectual engagement and motivation (Higgins 2005; Kennewell 2006; Schuck and Kearney 2006). This occurs through the promotion of a quality-learning environment where the teacher's pedagogy supports the achievement of effective outcomes, and the significance of the embedded technology approach is made explicit in the students' learning.

The teachers who participated in the professional learning project experienced a combination of 'pressure and support' (Doecke et al. 2008) from inside the school, as well from 'two outsiders' who acted in part as 'meddlers' in the teachers' classrooms (McWilliam 2009). Such a deliberate professional learning tactic realised an education experience that potentially enabled teachers to bridge the gap between learning using technology that students do in their own time, and that which they use in education settings.

About the Project

Developed to support and enhance teacher professional learning, the project teachers were purposively sampled from schools in one northern Sydney region because of their expressed willingness to learn more about new technologies, and its pedagogical intent in student learning. The teachers' collective teaching experience ranged from 3 to 35 years. Six of the teachers had taught for more than 20 years.

When the project commenced, each school released the teachers to participate in a whole-day professional learning workshop outside the school context. This workshop sought to extend the teachers' subject matter knowledge, use of digital re-

[1] At the time Jane Hunter was a senior officer in NSWDET, she wrote the final 15,000-word Engaging Pedagogy project report with input from the other 'outsider', Deborah Evans from MICTIC. It is important to acknowledge the support given by the Principals in each of the schools, as well as the teachers and students who generously gave their intellect, time and energy to the project.

sources, the interactive whiteboard and an LMS, in this instance LAMS developed by researchers at Macquarie University.

A 'sharing day' with all the participants was held to conclude the project. During the six-month project, data was collected from participants via two quantitative surveys, multiple classroom observations, as well as responses to teacher interviews and student focus group discussions.

Three main questions underpinned the project:

- How has the use and integration of a technology tool set increased learning in the classroom, the substantive communication skills of students, on-task behaviour and engagement, and any other elements in the Quality Teaching Framework?[2]
- Does the teachers' use of three technologies increase deep understanding, visualisation and game-like opportunities for students?
- How do lesson sequences set out in an LMS enable learning to be more engaging, articulated or personalised for students?

In the Engaging Pedagogy report there is a description of each school context, an outline of lessons observed, and a short summary of quotes from conversations with all of the teachers in the project. Also included in the report are key themes from student focus group discussions, as well as data from student work samples, lesson documents, photographs and video footage.

Culamer Primary as One Example of Pedagogical Innovation[3]

The school has over 600 students; its motto is 'the feel of the country in the heart of the city'. The school has a very supportive parent community which assists the school through fundraising and voluntary work. Surrounded by open space and sporting fields, the school is 500 m from the local beach. Student numbers have nearly doubled over the past five years and are steadily increasing.

Two teachers, Gail and Amanda, participated in the project at this site. A snapshot from a Stage 1 'transport' lesson (students in this stage are usually in the 6–7-year-old age range) taught by Gail from the Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) K-6 Syllabus (Board of Studies New South Wales 2006) is detailed here.

Gail had taught primary students for more than 20 years. She shared her lesson plans over the course of the project with the NSWDET 'outsider' prior to each class; this officer was on hand alongside the teacher in the lesson to 'meddle' in technology issues and teaching moments as they arose.

[2] The Quality Teaching Framework (NSW DET, 2003) was developed out of the work of 'productive pedagogies' (Hayes et al. 2000) in Queensland and 'authentic learning' in the United States (Newmann and Wehlage 1993).

[3] All school and teacher names are pseudonyms.

The students had their HSIE lessons in the computer room where they worked in pairs on personal computers. This room also had a digital projector and an interactive whiteboard that was used for whole or small group tasks. The pedagogical design for the 'transport' lesson comprised a range of collaborative tools in the LMS used by the teacher to structure the lesson. In this lesson, students completed multiple choice questions using a survey tool to determine pre-knowledge about their transport choices. After this task, they independently worked through 'Cobb and Co', an interactive digital resource using the shared resources tool in the LMS and by writing down key words they shared with peers later in the lesson using the notebook recording tool. Students discussed transport 'past and present' using a forum tool in the same platform to finish each lesson.

Some noteworthy features of the 'transport' lesson included how the LMS survey tool provided students with instant feedback upon completion of the lesson sequence. Students were engaged in the lesson, and discussion between partners was sustained and on-task. To close the lesson, the teacher used the monitor tool to display the survey graph on the drop down screen to inform the class about overall class data on transport. An analysis was made by the whole class to the survey findings; special attention was given to some responses. For example, one child had flown in a helicopter and was given the chance to retell that experience to the class.

In a focus group discussion after the lesson, students stated that they liked it when their teacher used a range of digital resources, the interactive whiteboard and an LMS simultaneously. Some of the students said, 'it helps me to learn', 'it's always fun', 'I can see where I'm up to', 'much better to use technology rather than doing it in a book' and 'we can help each other better when we use the interactive whiteboard in our learning in small groups'.

Findings from the Other Five Schools

Teachers from across each of the school sites demonstrated that there was consistently a much deeper understanding of concepts when this 'technology tool set' was integrated into learning for students. Students showed a greater range of substantive communication skills and an increased use of metalanguage when three technologies are used in a class or computer room environment. Engagement, focus and enthusiasm for learning were enhanced when tools like those in the 'fresh technology equation' are embedded into learning. Teachers felt that it was often the game-like nature of the digital resources and their visual appeal that caused increased student motivation and attention.

All teachers noted that their exposure to what they regarded as a 'challenging professional learning experience' with supportive 'outsiders' inside their context increased their desire to use and build their pedagogical knowledge and meta-cognitive planning using new technologies.

Concluding the Project

Teachers see affordances in technologies like digital resources and the interactive whiteboard (Condie and Munro 2007; Hedberg 2006; Kitchen et al. 2006). All teachers in the project observed shifts in their practice to what they described as a more 'transformational' pedagogy where lessons were student-centred and there was less 'show and display' or simple recall of facts and content. The benefits to learning for students using several technologies were greater than the technical difficulties teachers encountered while becoming familiar and utilising new software. Using collaborative tools in the LMS was the most confronting part of what was required; however each teacher remarked that they were determined to continue learning because they felt supported and sustained by the 'outsiders' inside their classrooms.

As stated at the beginning of the case study, this group of teachers were motivated and eager practitioners, a couple who described themselves as 'less technically savvy' believed their ability to integrate technology into teaching and learning had improved over the duration of the project. Teachers who already used digital resources and the interactive whiteboard saw the use of an LMS as a logical progression for pedagogy and subject matter integration. They had to do it and they did. This action fits the suggestion of 'being progressive and taking a liberatory stance' (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009, p. 34). Each teacher appeared to develop a nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between technology, content and pedagogy (Mishra and Koehler 2007; American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Committee on Innovation and Technology 2008). The teachers utilised this perspective to develop appropriate, context-specific strategies and representations. Immersion by teachers in a technology project inside the school context with an 'outsider' was effective. There was sustained opportunity to ask questions, reflect on lesson content and adapt and change next steps with pedagogical and technical knowledge from a 'third party' as the lessons and units of work unfolded. Such an approach is a move towards what many teachers regarded as meaningful and relevant professional learning. Technologies often come with their own imperatives that constrain content and pedagogical decision making, most would argue that the teacher is still central to learning; the outcomes of Engaging Pedagogy further support the notion.

Case Study 2: Developing and Documenting Pedagogical Knowledge for Innovation

This case considers a school–university research partnership that developed over a two-year period. The partnership between the e^2 (extending education) programme and Charles Sturt University was created in order to document the innovative knowledge developed by teachers and leaders working in the e^2 programme.

The e² programme was conceived in 2006 with the purpose of extending curriculum options for students in senior years in five rural NSW Department of Education and Training high schools. The means for achieving this purpose have been twofold: (1) the use of videoconference and interactive whiteboard technology to connect senior classrooms across school sites; and (2) the use of intensive half-day sessions in which students from across the schools travel by bus to one school site for a weekly lesson. This case is concerned with the knowledge developed in the classrooms connected by videoconference. The term 'connected classroom' is employed by the NSW Department of Education to describe such classrooms and will be used in this chapter.

Since its inception, the e² programme has developed a strong reputation for innovation in the areas of curriculum and pedagogy, cross-school partnership and leadership, and professional learning. e² was recorded as a case study site for the Australian National Mapping of Professional Learning Project (Doecke et al. 2008). This report noted that those with responsibility for leading the e² innovation had designed a comprehensive model of professional learning that had enabled and sustained the innovation. The case also made clear that it was teachers and leaders working in the e² programme who had taken considerable responsibility for building the knowledge required to work in these new environments (Doecke et al. 2008, pp. 133–134). Through a process of professional learning in practice, teachers had developed a range of skills and knowledge relevant to working in the e² context.

Yet what was the knowledge that the teachers had developed through establishing this innovation, and through the varied forms of professional learning in which they had been engaged? How could this knowledge be documented through research? The partnership between the e² programme and Charles Sturt University was developed in order to document this knowledge through a process of collaborative research. The partnership sought to develop a methodology that honoured the principles of teacher research and reflection as a means of developing practical knowledge. At the same time, the partnership was concerned to develop a process for data collection and analysis that was consistent across classroom sites in ways that would enable the collation of data and, in so doing, expand the scope of the findings. The 'insiders' brought to the partnership strong pedagogical knowledge pertaining to the e² environment. The 'outsiders' brought to the partnership strong knowledge pertaining to classroom-based research.

Design and Methods

With the support of a Charles Sturt University Research Development Grant, e² teachers and CSU staff[4] worked with teachers to design and implement a model of collaborative research that involved both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' conducting

[4] Staff included the author of this case, Jane Mitchell.

research related to pedagogical knowledge in the e^2 environments. The first part of this involved focus group interviews with teachers to identify aspects of their practice so that the partnership team had a shared understanding of the e^2 programme and the pedagogy. This was followed by a research workshop in which teachers in the programme were exposed to a range of methods for conducting classroom-based research presented by Nicole Mockler, an academic with expertise in this field. This workshop provided the basis for a collective project. At this workshop, the partnership decided to focus on the following research questions:

- What pedagogical strategies have been developed in the e^2 environment?
- How do the strategies support student learning?
- How are these strategies different from those employed in a regular classroom?

In order to respond to these questions the partnership team decided to collect observational data from classrooms, as well as interview students and teachers in the programme. One teacher (an insider) and one university team member (an outsider) would observe each of the teachers working in e^2 classes. The methods for conducting the observations involved the two observers keeping detailed notes regarding the processes of the lesson. At the conclusion of the lesson, the observers would talk through the lesson, note points of interest or importance, and check the accuracy of key detail recorded. Based on the two sets of notes the 'outside' observer prepared a vignette or portrait of the lesson. In writing the vignettes, the aim was to capture the routines of each class, the strategies employed by the teacher and the distinctive features of the lesson given the environment and curriculum content. These vignettes were sent to the teacher whose class was observed for checking. Following this individual checking, the vignettes were collated and distributed to all participating teachers at a face-to-face meeting. At the meeting we discussed the vignettes. The discussion was audio recorded. The goal of this particular discussion was to use the vignettes to identify teaching practices common across the connected classroom sites.

Focus group interviews with students were also held and conducted by an e^2 teacher and a university researcher. The interviews with students sought to gain their views on being a student in the e^2 programme, what they saw as the pros and cons of the environment, and how being a student in e^2 differed from being a student in a regular classroom. Individual interviews with a small number of teachers were conducted to ascertain in more detail how they planned, not just individual lessons, but also programmes of work that involved the connected classroom environment. All interviews were tape-recorded.

Data Samples

The following documents provide samples of data and illustrations of the methods employed to collectively identify and detail teachers' pedagogical knowledge developed in the e^2 environment.

Sample 1: Year 11 Geography Lesson Observation

Globalisation in the Classroom

The Year 11 Geography class connected students between two of the high schools that were approximately 40 km apart. The class consisted of six students at High School A and eleven students at High School B. For this observation lesson, the teacher was located at High School B. The lesson was observed from the receiving end (High School A). The students were undertaking a unit of work on globalisation with a specific focus on cultural integration and transnational corporations.

The teacher began the lesson by organising the desks and chairs at the High School B site so that they were in a tight unit in front of the camera. The teacher stood behind the High School B students so that when talking he was directly facing the front camera. Figure 13.1 provides the layout of the Videoconference classrooms on the two school sites.

While students at the High School B site were organising the desks, students at the High School A site established the Bridgit connections with High School B. This connection enabled the common use of the electronic whiteboard. Once furniture was in place and whiteboard connections made, there were brief introductions, greetings across and sites, and the presentation of lesson instructions and topics on

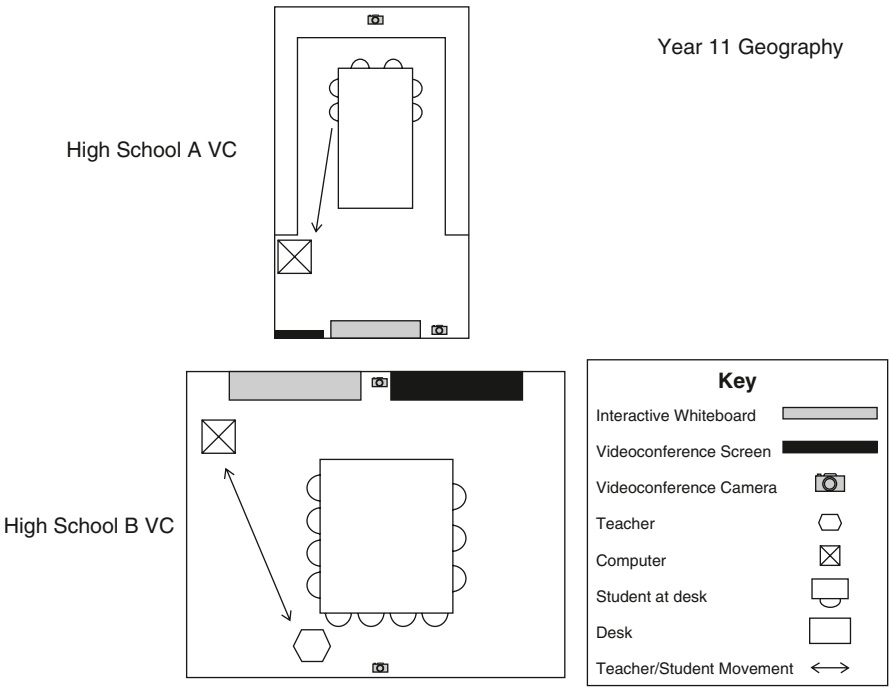

Fig. 13.1 Model of the two classrooms

the interactive whiteboard. To introduce the idea of cultural integration the teacher began the lesson with a YouTube clip of a well-known musician, popular among young people, played through the electronic whiteboard.

The lesson moved on to consider the factors that affect cultural integration. This took place through teacher exposition; questions and answers directed to students at both sites; and notes and graphics presented as power-point slides on the interactive whiteboard. Students recorded notes in their own books.

The second part of the lesson focussed on transnational corporations as a cause and effect of globalisation. Whiteboard slides with graphics and notes (located on the Moodle site—a web-based teaching tool) provided a stimulus for discussion and illustration. The teacher directed questions to the two sites and also handwrote notes onto the whiteboard. In order to illustrate the size and scope of transnational corporations the teacher connected to an internet site that detailed the largest companies in the world. This site provided a stimulus for explanations and questions that helped focus attention on recent trends associated with globalised companies. During this time the students took notes.

Sample 2: Notes Extracted from Interviews with Teachers

An interview with the Geography teachers noted that considerable teaching took place outside the parameters of the 'connected classrooms'. The Year 11 geography class have used a variety of communication tools and resources. The teacher has prepared a comprehensive set of course notes. The notes set out the key content areas, key terms and learning objectives. The online learning platform, Moodle, is used as a repository for all resources, notebook notes, course notes, weblinks, etc. Students can access Moodle whenever they wish. Email is used by the teacher to circulate fortnightly lesson guides.

The Geography class works on a two-week cycle that involves the following: videoconference lessons that connect the two school sites; tutorial sessions at each school site; set task lessons in which students at each site take responsibility for presenting an aspect of the curriculum and written tasks. It is also of note that the teacher alternates between each school as the site of delivery for videoconference lessons. Likewise, the lesson focus and teaching mode vary so that in some instances the lesson has a strong focus on teacher instruction and explanation of content; in other cases the lesson has a strong focus on student interaction and discussion; in other cases the lessons are designed to enable students to research ideas and present to their peers. Critical to this teacher's involvement with e^2 was a concern to ensure that students across school sites had access to senior level Geography.

Sample 3: Notes from Focus Group Interview with Six Students

The focus group interview with the six students provided useful insights into the e^2 environment. Students studied in the e^2 programme because it provided an opportunity to undertake a subject that they may not have had access to in their own school.

Students found the resource material available on Moodle useful. Students also noted that they liked the way these notes provided a complement to the class interactions. The students also noted that they worked together as a group and so would often talk together to discuss work-related issues and respond to set tasks. The students did indicate that it was different when the teacher was actually on site; they were 'more involved'. In this respect, they liked the cyclic structure in their lessons and knowing that they would see their teacher once a week in person. Students also indicated that they rarely used the mute button during the videoconference lessons so that they stayed involved and on task. The students also acknowledged that they needed to be responsible and independent in the e^2 class.

Collective Articulation of Knowledge

The samples and summaries of data presented above were collected and interpreted by both 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. The goal of the research was to identify common aspects of practice across classes, and common knowledge utilised by teachers across classes. It is important to note that the research did not identify anything that the teachers did not already know. Rather the research provided a means for recording the knowledge in ways that can be taken to a wider research audience, and in a way that collated data and knowledge from across classroom contexts.

Four aspects of pedagogy in the 'connected classrooms' environment emerged as key through our focus group discussions and analysis of data: (1) considerable planning is required when working across time and space; (2) specific strategies and routines are in place in each 'connected classroom'. These include: tight structures; student responsibility for technology connections; the focus on the whiteboard and its integration with each teacher's voice; (3) the provision of opportunities for interaction between students and teachers outside of the videoconference environment; and (4) underpinning the programme and associated professional learning is a strong sense of purpose—that is to provide a broad curriculum offering to students across all schools. This sense of purpose underpinned all pedagogical development.

Reflections on the Two Cases and the Development of the 'IO Professional Learning Model'

Both cases provide illustrations of some means by which those inside schools and those outside schools can work together to develop and document professional knowledge. In the two cases, the focus was on articulating knowledge pertaining to the use of classroom technology. Teachers as insiders in all the schools had developed considerable practical knowledge and expertise related to working in innovative environments. This knowledge had developed through experimentation and reflection. The outsiders brought different sets of skill and knowledge to the table—that is some means by which the knowledge generated by teachers could be extended, challenged, researched, documented and collated across classroom sites.

The processes in the first case demonstrated ways in which outsiders or 'meddlers' provided expertise pertaining to technology and pedagogy in a way that sustained purposeful innovation and reflection. Through their expertise with technology, their close work with teachers, and an over-arching research project, the outsiders in this case were able to work alongside teachers to build teaching knowledge relevant to context and evaluate some of the ways in which the uses of technology were impacting upon student learning.

In reviewing the process in the second case, one of the teachers who conducted the observations noted that actually doing the observations, and discussing the observed lessons was the best professional learning he had encountered. The opportunity to observe other teachers is surprisingly rare, but in this case it enabled the teacher to develop a strong sense of what lessons were like from the perspective of a student, to observe the different ways that teachers operated in the e^2 environments, and then review this with the outsider. Likewise, the formal discussions between teachers and the outside researchers provided an opportunity to collectively build knowledge beyond the individual classroom.

In both cases, a research framework, alongside rigorous professional exchange across classroom and institutional contexts, provided a mechanism that not only documented but also helped to evaluate and justify the practices developed by the teachers.

We have drawn on the two cases to develop a model for professional learning and knowledge building. The model, referred to as the 'IO (Insider and Outsider) Professional Learning Model' (Fig. 13.2), is based on a Venn diagram that illustrates possible relationships between 'insiders', 'outsiders' and educational purpose. The key point of overlap between these three components of the Venn diagram is the generation of practical knowledge pertaining to teaching.

The three components of the model—'insiders', 'outsiders' and 'purpose'—are seen as critical to professional learning and the development of teaching knowledge. The cases reported in this chapter have illustrated ways in which insiders

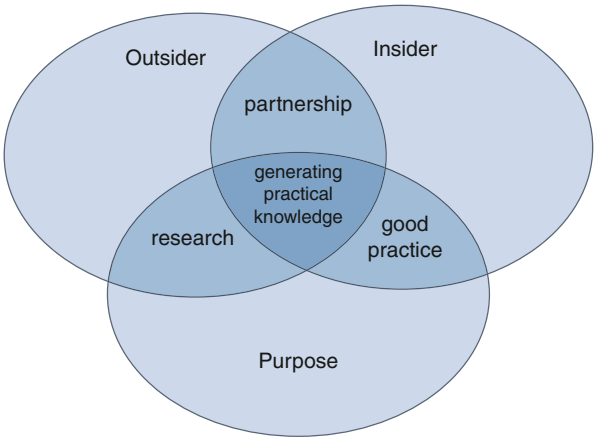

Fig. 13.2 The IO Professional Learning Model

and outsiders can work together, and we argue that the strength of this collaborative work is underpinned by a strong sense of purpose pertaining to teaching and research. Purpose is therefore strongly represented as one key part of the model.

The central part of the model is the generation of practical knowledge about teaching. We claim that this knowledge is strengthened when:

- insiders and outsiders work in partnership;
- insiders have as their key purpose good teaching practice that is strengthened through partnerships;
- insiders bring knowledge of good practice to the partnership;
- outsiders have as their purpose, research related to good practice conducted in partnership with schools; and
- outsiders bring knowledge of research related to the partnership.

The IO Model illustrates the importance of the relationships between these component parts for building strong professional learning.

Conclusion

Opportunities for outsiders to work alongside insiders in the school context provide productive moments of professional learning and knowledge building for all parties. Giving 'voice' to how this was affected in the two case studies in this chapter has illustrated the value of professional learning that is underpinned by strong practice-based knowledge developed in school contexts, research and 'outsider' knowledge related to practice and practice-based research methods for explicating knowledge. The approaches to professional learning and knowledge building reported in this chapter serve as timely reminders of policy imperatives against the notion of 'one size' professional learning that is 'context beige'. Resisting the limited, quite often 'beige' approaches to professional learning has been a constant theme of Groundwater-Smith's research, writing and engagement in schools for over three decades. The cases reported in this chapter, and the IO Professional Learning Model, encapsulate the ways in which the two authors of this chapter have been influenced by Groundwater-Smith's work. Key here is an approach to generative and transformative professional learning related to classroom teaching for educators working inside schools and educators working outside schools.

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Chapter 14
Professional Learning in an Across School Network: An Epidemic of Passion?

Kris Needham

Teachers' professional knowledge is now more continuous, more categorised, measured, assessed and possibly more elusive as a construct than ever before. Through a variety of deliveries, face-to-face and online, school and non-school based, individually and in groups, teachers engage in learning processes, knowing that professional knowledge is a pursuit never completely achieved.

The complexity of acquiring the knowledge necessary to sustain and progress professional practice is part of the complexity of our contemporary existence. The social aspects of learning are manifest in the ways in which we interact and seek 'like kind' through community. Over this decade in particular, networking is 'all the go', from online social networking sites to professional networks. In fact, the phenomenon of online social networking is not so distant from educational networks, with sites such as Facebook and Twitter, blogs and forums playing an increasingly integrated role in educational contexts, formally and informally.

The parallels have been taken even further. Hargreaves (2003) believes that at the heart of educational transformation are networks or communities of teachers who are passionate about transferred innovation. Borrowing from the concept of 'open source democracy' (Rushkoff 2003) in online environments, he speaks of an 'education epidemic' describing the transfer processes of innovative networks as good ideas 'catching on' from peer to peer, assisted or facilitated by a 'practitioner champion'.

Jackson and Temperley (2007) argue for networks on the basis of scale: that the school as a unit has become too small scale and isolated to provide scope for professional learning for its adult members in a knowledge-rich and networked world. A new unit of meaning, belonging and engagement—the network—is required. They believe that openness and permeability to external learning, from other schools and from the 'public knowledge base' of the theory, research and practice of other schools, is necessary to avoid stagnation and constant recycling of a school's existing knowledge base.

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The network-as-community focus emphasises professionally supportive interactions and a sense of inclusiveness and collective learning, especially shared beliefs and understandings, shared norms and values. As the community interacts, it engages in dialogue and makes communal interpretations of that dialogue.

We know from extensive studies of effective professional learning communities, such as the Effective Professional Learning Communities (EPLC) project (Bolam et al. 2005) that in these communities there are several characteristics in orchestrated interaction, including shared values and vision, collective responsibility for student learning, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration focused on learning in the group, as well as individual, professional learning. In addition, three more characteristics were found to be important: inclusive membership; mutual trust, respect and support; openness, networks and partnerships.

Of more recent interest are the ways in which these networks themselves operate as a site of professional learning. The network which is the subject of this chapter is the Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools, founded and facilitated by Susan Groundwater-Smith, which meets under the auspices of the Division of Postgraduate Coursework and Professional Education in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney.

The Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools

The Coalition of Knowledge Building Schools is a loose alliance of approximately 13 schools, the Australian Museum and the State Library of New South Wales, committed to teacher inquiry and school-based research. The school membership includes the education unit from Taronga Zoo and Stewart House, an educational facility that provides respite care for children in need. The schools are diverse: primary and secondary, government and non-government; small and large, low and high SES.

Member schools and institutions engage in a range of projects using methodologies appropriate to practitioner research and meet four times a year to share their findings and actions. Three of the four meetings per year are hosted by member schools, thus giving an opportunity for members to visit other sites. The cross-sectoral membership of the Coalition is significant as there is competition for enrolments across sectors and indeed more recently, within the government sector itself. It is the exception rather than the rule for teachers to work collaboratively across these boundaries.

The Coalition aims to develop and enhance the notion of evidence-based practice, build research capability within and between schools and make a contribution to the broader professional knowledge base with respect to educational practice. Particular emphasis is placed on involving not only teachers but students themselves as researchers within a supportive and ethical framework.

The Coalition has as its stated purpose:

- developing and enhancing the notion of evidence-based practice
- developing an interactive community of practice using appropriate technologies

- making a contribution to a broader professional knowledge base with respect to educational practice
- building research capability within their own and each other's schools by engaging both teachers and students in the research processes
- sharing methodologies which are appropriate to practitioner enquiry as a means of transforming teacher professional learning (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2003).

It is the question of how the Coalition enacts its role as a mechanism for the professional learning of its participants that is the subject of this chapter. Although the Coalition has been the subject of previous publications (e.g. Black-Hawkins 2008), professional learning within the Coalition per se has not been the subject of inquiry.

The Coalition was formed nearly ten years ago and during that time some of the original member schools have remained, some new members have joined and a few have discontinued their membership as their school's leadership changed and subsequently their priorities. At meetings, members share experiences of practitioner research. Participant representatives of member schools report on their current projects and engage in professional conversations arising from those reports. Like-minded academic staff from the University of Sydney and other universities are also members, critiquing and extending the practice. International visitors, doctoral students and other guests frequently observe meetings and lend their perspectives. There have been several collaborative projects involving member schools, some in conjunction with the Australian Museum.

The methodologies adopted by member schools acknowledge the complexities of practitioner inquiry and include focus group discussions (often with students themselves trained as focus group facilitators), interviews, analysis of images and photographs, silent conversations and questionnaires. These methodologies and others underpin the school projects, which may be conducted wholly by school personnel or in partnership with the academic staff. The value of student voice is emphasised in discussions and in research papers presenting projects to wider audiences.

Projects over recent years have included significant partnerships, for instance 'Improving Learning in the Museum', with student groups from participating schools visiting the museum to investigate the ways in which the museum contributed to their learning (Groundwater-Smith and Kelly 2003); a 'Kids' College' where students co-operated with the Australian Museum and architects to redesign the learning spaces in the museum and 'Designing for Learning in the Museum' where schools were invited to send submissions to a competition The Museum I'd Like.

One school has built on the lesson study model to seek a school-wide model of professional learning—borrowing the term 'master class' from music, opening classrooms to observers. Other schools have held projects in aspects of student participation such as learning environments, cyber bullying, boys education, girls educations, pastoral care, positive behaviour for learning, primary–secondary school transition and student engagement through music. There have been session inputs

on aspects of pedagogy and research, such as Reggio-Emilia philosophy, holistic education, uses of ICT in schools and current educational research papers. There have also been several invited student presentations including a recent session on a Skoolaborate project, Values in a Virtual World.

Meetings are characterised by collegiality, enthusiasm and warmth. The Coalition is a network with a sense of substance and energy, achieved without any funding to support its function. Member schools either fund their own projects or draw on federal or state grants.

Networked Learning

In a document summarising processes and protocols for professional learning the National College for School Leadership (2005a) offered this definition: 'networked learning occurs where people from different schools in a network engage with one another to learn together, to innovate and to enquire into their collective practices'. Networked learning when effective tends to be purposeful, sustained and facilitated so that participants 'learn with one another, from one another, and on behalf of others, both in the network's schools and the wider system'.

Jackson (2002) believes networks have the potential to support educational innovation and change by:

- providing a focal point for the dissemination of good practice, the generalisability of innovation and the creation of 'action oriented' knowledge about effective educational practices
- keeping the focus on the core purposes of schooling, in particular in creating and sustaining a discourse on teaching and learning, and the organisational redesign factors that will support more powerful learning
- enhancing the skill of teachers, leaders and other educators in knowledge creation, change agent skills and managing the change process
- building capacity for continuous improvement at the local level, and in particular fostering leadership and creating professional learning communities, within and between schools
- ensuring that systems of pressure and support are integrated, not segmented. For example, professional learning communities incorporate pressure and support in a seamless way
- acting as a link between the centralised and decentralised schism resulting from many contemporary policy initiatives, in particular in contributing to policy coherence horizontally and vertically.

For teachers, the experience of across-school networked learning can be significantly different to that of within-school learning. Jackson and Temperley (2007) have proposed a model of learning in networks based on the interaction of three fields of knowledge: practitioner knowledge, the knowledge of those involved; public knowledge, from theory research and best practice; and 'new knowledge', the

knowledge we create together through collaborative work and enquiry. The network is a crucial intersection for practice and theory, generative of new learning. It therefore has potential to offer validation of the knowledge that practitioners bring and, through collaborative processes, connect and extend that knowledge to build new knowledge.

Jackson and Temperley (2007, pp. 48–49) further distil four learning processes in effective networks:

- learning from one another—benefitting from individual differences and diversity through sharing their knowledge, experience, expertise, practices and know-how
- learning with one another, where individuals learn together, notice that they are learning together, co-construct learning and make meaning together
- learning on behalf of, where learning between individuals from different schools is also done on behalf of other individuals within their school or network—there is a transfer of learning to other individuals within participants' schools
- meta-learning, where individuals are additionally learning about the processes of their own learning.

Little (2005) references a large body of research suggesting that conditions for improving learning and teaching are strengthened when teachers collectively question teaching routines, examine conceptions of teaching and learning, find ways to acknowledge and respond to difference and conflict and engage in supporting one another's professional growth. The inquiry processes of questioning, reflecting, seeking alternatives and weighing consequences promote the 'transparency' of what otherwise might remain unobservable facets of practice, making tacit knowledge visible and open to scrutiny. Collaborative inquiry creates an opportunity for educators to consider both explicit and tacit knowledge in order to investigate issues through a number of lenses, to put forward hypotheses, to challenge beliefs and to pose more questions.

Discourses of networked learning draw on those of community of practice (Wenger 1998), since an effective network can be seen as one form of a community of practice. The term 'community of practice' usually refers to a group of individuals who, through the pursuit of a joint enterprise, have developed shared practices and common perspectives.

As Wenger (2007) puts it: "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly." Further, three characteristics are crucial: a shared domain of interest, joint activities and discussions, and a shared practice. Learning within communities of practice is seen as profoundly social. The environment in which the learner engages in learning activity is an integral part of his or her experience. Individuals learn as they participate in the practices of communities and furthermore, construct identities in relation to those communities (Wenger 1998).

Earl and Katz (2006) describe the process: Knowledge is created through dialogue or conversations that make presuppositions, ideas, beliefs and feelings explicit and available for exploration. It is in these conversations that new ideas, tools

and practices are created, and the initial knowledge is either substantially enriched or transformed during the process.

Several studies have linked networked learning communities with impact on student learning. The CUREE review (2005) concluded that networks can be a highly effective vehicle for improving learning and attainment. Earl and Katz agree, although they observe: "the work of networks of schools is almost always indirect, evidenced in changes that occur in schools and classrooms removed from the network by time and space. This makes it very hard to establish any direct links".

The theory of action proposed by Earl and Katz is that once new knowledge is created and shared, the expectation is that the new learning will influence practices. When the strength of attachment between schools and networks is strong, school-level learning communities can upload their ideas and practices into the network, thus strengthening the networked learning community. In the same way, school learning communities can download and use ideas and practices from the network for local knowledge creation and sharing. Individuals are the connectors of schools to networks (and networks to schools), through active participation and through the construction of artefacts that serve as the link between the network and the school, with a two-way flow.

In this theory of action, there are seven key features that enable successful networked learning communities, each of which operates within the schools and the network: purpose and focus, relationships, collaboration, enquiry, leadership, accountability and capacity building and support. Of these, relationships that embody trust, shared understanding and collective responsibility appear to be more important dimensions of interaction in the network than simply working together.

However, none of these factors can work in isolation in this complex human system. Rather, a web of connectedness is evident. The nature of collaborative enquiry will depend on the quality of relationships; capacity building and support will depend on the kind of the leadership; the power of the enquiry will depend on the focus and purpose.

To these layers of interconnections, the Coalition adds another intersection. In promoting practitioner research, it seeks to connect research and practice and to legitimise that connection. Stein and Coburn (2007) suggest that the two worlds of research and practice themselves constitute examples of communities of practice and that members of these communities can learn from each other in the 'third space'—the boundary between communities of practice where their members may be exposed to new ideas and practices that affect the meaning members create as they negotiate new learning within their own communities.

We therefore have parallel concepts of a 'learning space': between school and network and between research and practice. There may be another space again—a psychologically safe space for learning.

Networks can provide the forum for colleagues to address genuinely new, and often difficult, ideas in a safe environment, away from the risk of censure or even retribution in their daily place of work (Earl and Katz 2006). From her perspective of the importance of recognising the emotional context of teachers' work, Beatty (2008) speaks of the concept of a 'safe place' for learning and 'the transforma-

tional power of the changing role of peers, particularly in relation to the concept of knowledge authority, which shifts from being experienced as relatively external to increasingly internal through the sharing with others of experiences in personal meaning making' (p. 144). There are links too from this sense of psychological safety to the affirming power of shared values—what Jackson (2002) describes as the aspiration of 'generating morally purposeful partnerships'. Thus, networked learning has the potential to expand professional identity, through affirmation of values, from the school as a unit of community to the network as a unit of educational community.

Another important contribution to the concept of networks as 'learning spaces' is situated learning theory (Lave and Wenger 1991). Situated learning theory draws on Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social cognition for a conception of social knowledge that conceives of learning as a transaction between the person and the social environment. Situations in situated learning theory such as life space and learning space are not necessarily physical places but constructs of the person's experience in the social environment. These situations are embedded in communities of practice that have a history, norms, tools and traditions of practice. Knowledge resides not in the individual's head but in the communities of practice.

Learning in this discourse is a process of becoming a member of a community of practice through legitimate peripheral participation (e.g. apprenticeship). Situated learning theory thus enriches the learning space concept by reminding us that learning spaces extend beyond the teacher and the classroom. They include socialization into a wider community of practice that involves membership, identity formation, transitioning from novice to expert through mentorship and experience in the activities of the practice.

Kolb and Kolb (2005), in their discussion of learning spaces, remind us of the Japanese concept of ba, a 'context that harbors meaning', which is a shared space that is the foundation for knowledge creation. "Knowledge is embedded in ba, where it is then acquired through one's own experience or reflections on the experiences of others" (Nonaka and Konno 1998). Knowledge embedded in ba is tacit and can only be made explicit through sharing of feelings, thoughts and experiences of persons in the space. For this to happen the ba space requires that individuals remove barriers between one another in a climate that emphasises 'care, love, trust, and commitment'. Learning spaces similarly require norms of psychological safety, serious purpose and respect to promote learning.

In a sense then, networks as communities of practice may create a 'learning space' which offers participants more supportive contexts than those available within the school itself. The relationships and discussions within the network become vehicles for professional identity, professional renewal and professional learning.

If learning networks are to act as multi-layered learning spaces, then the relationship formed among participants is a vital conduit for the flow and connection of knowledge. Indeed what has been called 'a high level of social capital' (Leat 2009), the level of trust between people and the tendency for people to collaborate, strengthens intellectual capital because people interact and co-operate more and, in effect, share their thinking.

Relationships 'form the connective tissue of networked learning communities' (Allen and Cherrey 2000) and provide the social capital that allows people to work together over time and exceed what any of them could accomplish alone. In these relationships, people create a common language and a sense of shared responsibility, provide channels for communicating and disseminating information to one another about network member's expertise and develop readiness to trust one another (West-Burnham and Otero 2005).

Trust is a key condition of productive relationships. Indeed, Bryk and Schneider (2002) found that social trust among members of staff was the strongest factor of professional community. They propose that a base level of trust may be necessary for professional community to emerge, but working and reflecting together can build trust and strengthen relationships.

Methodology and Results

The inquiry into professional learning of members of the Coalition aimed to capture the ways in which the Coalition served as a source, or site, of professional learning for its members. Data were collected through two main processes: a questionnaire and a less traditional approach, informed by processes borrowed from Appreciative Inquiry (AI).

The questionnaire (ten responses in all) aimed to distil particular aspects of the network's function in relation to professional learning. Respondents were invited to comment on aspects of Coalition participation that were powerful sources of learning and also to comment on how this learning had impacted on their practice. They were also invited to consider how this learning might be different to that gained through membership of other networks.

The aspects rated highest (most powerful professional learning) by respondents were tone and culture of meetings and reflection and analysis of member schools' research.

Responses described meetings as informal, open, friendly and sharing. Comments included: 'sharing in a positive environment is stimulating'; 'relaxed but professionally run and positive in outlook, but realistic'. Sometimes this was explicitly linked with shared values and collective responsibility, as in 'It is so energising to be in a room full of people with such diverse backgrounds but all sharing a common goal—improving the quality of students' experiences with school'.

Allied with this was the role of the convener in meetings, particularly in establishing tone and culture: 'welcoming, positive, keeps to time and agenda, good minutes and feedback', 'everyone feels like there is a reason to be there that is worthwhile for them and their institutions', '(the convenor) very inspiring and nurturing, includes all school participants to feel research projects are positive and evolving successfully'.

Responses describing reflection and analysis of member schools research as powerful professional learning focused on the ways schools were using action re-

search to improve teaching and learning, sometimes naming particular school reports, and also on the differing ways in which member schools were applying student voice methodologies.

The next most powerful sources of professional learning were projects run by their own schools involving Coalition academics and opportunities offered by partner agencies. Two strong examples given of projects run at members' own schools in partnership with Coalition academics were a project conducted by the Taronga Zoo team that has 'changed the way our team thinks, operates and develops' and a project conducted with a large non-government school on how the building environment affects learning. The opportunities offered by a partner agency were the Australian Museum projects, such as Teachers College and Kids College, seen as powerful learning for both the host institution and for the participating schools.

Other highly rated sources of professional learning were the actual reports and discussions at the network meetings. These were seen as sources of motivation and inspiration: 'discussion relating to projects which gives ideas and inspires to continue other research', 'gives an opportunity to discover and reflect on the experiences of others'. Student presentations and visual presentations were also cited.

Respondents were also asked to identify the most significant new understandings, knowledge or skills they had gained. Responses here focused on:

1. Skills in action research methodology: student voice, focus groups, practitioner enquiry and lesson study
2. Understandings gained from looking outside their own context: 'hearing from other schools about their research practices and results'; 'learning how others link with outside sources like the Zoo and Museum'; 'learning about the programs at Stewart House'; 'more knowledge coming to light about how students can learn in well-designed student-centred environments'; 'that organisations who are continually researching or looking for achievement of best practice for learning and welfare of their students, end up with engaged and motivated students'
3. Being observers of process: 'documenting student voice in a variety of ways', 'working with (the convenor)', 'hybrid professional learning networks'
4. Perceptions of self as a learner: 'developed confidence in my own evidence-based practice', 'building knowledge and of being part of a culture that promotes this'

Some respondents were able to identify specific changes in their practice as a result of their Coalition membership. One respondent wrote:

> Our team's commitment to action learning has changed our philosophy! We now have a culture of taking risks, discussing, reflecting and evaluating everything we do. We are keen to learn and improve, to think about ways to maximise our impact in workshops, we share ideas, take risks, invite criticism and recognise our efforts.

Others identified shifts in the focus of their own leadership in their schools, for example in applying principles from the Coalition: 'focus on empowering staff, professional development and empowerment', 'improved my pedagogy through

collaborative reflection' and 'student voice, ownership of learning, staff can listen to students' stories and reflect on their practice'. Further projects were anticipated, both within schools and in partnership with member institutions.

A large proportion of responses identified the Coalition as a site where they experienced a deepening of values or affirmation of previously held values. These were in relation to practitioner research, such as 'that evaluation is about the process, not the product', 'that the answers come from reflecting as a team in an action learning model', 'the power of student voice is profound', 'that new learning research and practice in the classroom and at grass roots level is now being sought and valued' and 'teachers really are passionate about their students'.

A dominant theme was impact on practice in terms of participants' own values and professional identities, for example: 'valuing more explicitly the practice all teachers and communities can be involved in, of building knowledge', 'discussions/workshops with teachers have reinforced long-held beliefs based on experience about what students and teachers needs outside the classroom to provide positive engagement and focus' and resonance with a network that appeared to 'value pedagogy rather than background issues'.

The questionnaire then moved to identifying the ways in which the Coalition provided a source for professional learning that was different to other sources. The majority of responses attributed this to communal enterprise: 'this is a relationship which is essentially reciprocal and co-operative', 'more personal, like a family', 'emphasis is on sharing', 'generous sharing of ideas and concerns'; an enterprise about learning: 'belonging to a community of learners—as a principal I spend lots of time organising and supporting learning for my staff—this is learning for me and my staff', 'helped to make learning visible'; and an enterprise with a values base: 'continuous, meaningful, based on values rather than short term outcomes', 'focus is on the students' and 'this is a group which is at once incredibly diverse and unified in its passion for professional learning and improving learning for students'.

For one respondent from the Australian Museum, the Coalition uniquely filled a need: "At AM, feedback and learning about the concerns and needs of practising classroom teachers and what their students are interested in doing, especially the outcomes of current research in this domain, is of prime importance."

Several respondents identified the diversity of the member schools as a unique factor, and also the role of an 'expert chair' or 'having (the convenor) leading to "interpret" our learning for us is a defining quality'.

The Appreciative Inquiry (AI) interview process sought to supplement the questionnaire data. AI has been described by its co-creator as 'a form of transformational inquiry that selectively seeks to locate, highlight and illuminate the life-giving forces of an organisation's existence…. AI is more about learning and understanding something…than it is about expressions of appreciation' (Cooperrider et al. 2008).

In this sense AI is a method, a type of action research, that attempts to discover 'the best of what is' in any human system. In exploring the professional learning experiences of Coalition participants, AI methodology was not employed as a change process, rather as a form of inquiry aimed at eliciting the positive professional learning experiences of participants. In a more extensive study, AI could be more

fully integrated with action research (see, for instance, National College for School Leadership 2005b).

The AI interview and reporting process was conducted at a regular Coalition meeting. Those present were given a short presentation on AI, then invited to conduct interviews with each other. Participants were given interview questions and a discussion guide. The interview questions were:

1. Tell me a story about the best professional learning experience you have had as a result of your membership of the Coalition. Perhaps this is a time when you felt most alive or excited about your learning. What made it a peak experience for you professionally? Describe the event in detail.
2. What do you think is the core value or factor than enables professional learning from Coalition membership? If this did not exist, how would this make the Coalition totally different to how it is?

Working in pairs, interviewers were invited to listen to the interviewee's story, without giving opinions, to make notes and to use probe questions, such as 'Why was that important to you?' and 'What do you think was really making it work?'

The interviews were followed by table discussions in groups of four, sense-making from the data. Interviewers shared what stood out from their partner's story in response to the first question. The rest of the group noted themes that emerged, some quotes and any surprises. Groups were invited to choose one powerful story from their table to share with the whole group. Following this each person in the group commented on their own answers to the second question. The group then prioritised the three to four most important factors from all reports. Finally, the whole group reconvened and shared their themes and findings.

The first interview question asked about peak positive learning experiences. From these stories told in interviews, the groups themselves identified the themes. The first theme emerging from these narratives was willingness to share and trust, which led to professional growth and opened up ideas for future possible action research. A key aspect of this trust was the cross-sectoral nature of the member schools. As indicated earlier, the dominant broad prevailing culture among Australian schools is not cross-sectoral. Government and non-government schools compete for scarce resources and for student enrolments, both within and across sectors. Although there are models of networks, genuine trust and collaboration is scarce.

The diversity of the group featured in the discussion of sharing and collaboration. This diversity is not only cross-sectoral but across other school demographics, philosophies, primary/secondary/tertiary, large and small. The strong relationship felt across the 'boundaries' was an aspect many found surprising: 'how we feel connected given diverse backgrounds', 'The Coalition is an equaliser of different contexts'. A common example was school/institution projects, for example Kids College. The main outcomes of this collaboration in relation to professional learning were described as reflection, inspiration and professional development.

A second theme to emerge was the power of the passion and energy evident in the Coalition. This was reported in relation to two strands—first, the passion for student voice as a methodology—that the learning of students, from their own

perspective, was heard and respected. This passion led to experiences of 'excitement', 'engagement', 'involvement' and 'enthusiasm'. Being explicit in processes and reporting, it assisted in 'seeing the faces of learning' and seemed to resonate with members' own ideals and values in having children's learning as a focus and by looking at 'learning in context' in authentic school situations. In much of this discussion, membership of the Coalition seemed to serve as a validation of members' own ideals and moral purposes.

A third theme arising was that of the climate of the group itself and the manner in which it was facilitated. The convenor was admired as a mentor and active modeller of these ideals, especially in relation to her interactions with members, characterised by active listening and respect. The informal nature of the meetings assisted engagement. Some recounts of peak learning experiences acknowledged not only the support of the Coalition but the 'courage' demonstrated by its members in the action learning projects they took on. Having academic partners as fellow members was also seen as a valued aspect of the network's interactions.

The second question explored by pairs in interview was in relation to core values or factors that enable professional learning. In AI methodology, this question is intended to elicit those characteristics that describe the Coalition at its best, without which it would not be the same. Responses reinforced and extended themes from the first question.

Again, trust, sharing, collaboration and shared inquiry were identified as core factors. This was supported by aspects of the cross-sectoral involvement, where all schools shared problems, practices and ideals: 'love the democracy of the Coalition'.

The importance of having students at the centre of the Coalition's focus was also recognised: 'student voice—listening to our learners, being respectful', 'developing a best practice for all students', 'bringing kids back into the equation', 'shift ownership of learning from teachers to students'.

In group discussion arising from this interview question, other similarities to the stories from the first question emerged. A feeling of excitement and professional fulfilment came about: 'switches on idealism', 'feeling validated in practice', 'feeling energised in practice', 'celebrating', 'real values focus, not just outcomes focus'. Again, the sense in which the Coalition's discussions resonated with participants' own ideals and moral purposes was evident.

Discussion also raised other aspects of the Coalition's processes, for example action learning, critical reflection, continual improvement, voluntary nature of contribution, input from a range of sources, as being core factors that gave life to the Coalition.

Discussion

In articulating their own learning as participant members of the Coalition, respondents to the questionnaire identified some specific content learning, such as skills in methodology. However, they placed much more emphasis on the Coalition as a site for learning gained from projects run at members' own schools by host academics, member partner projects and reflection and analysis of other's research projects.

In some responses there was a sense of meta-learning: of self as observer—looking outside one's own context, as observers of process and perceptions of self as learner.

This view of learning contains elements of 'enquiry as stance', or teaching as reflective practice in which research is an activity (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2001) of 'knowledge-in-practice' and 'knowledge-of-practice'. In gaining 'knowledge-in-practice' teachers probe the knowledge embedded in others and deepen their own expertise as makers of wise judgments and designers of rich learning interactions.

Implicit in participants' comments about sharing across schools is the notion of 'collective responsibility' for student learning. This concept, interrelating as it does to professional community, relational trust, accountability and efficacy (Whalan 2010), is more likely to occur where there are shared goals and values and a sense of 'collective struggle'. Coalition participants see connections and similarities across school contexts and make these connections explicit in their discussions. Often the Coalition is the only site where these connections can be made. As one participant wrote:

> The Coalition has been a source of inspiration to me in my practice. Despite the differences in school contexts there has always been something to take away. We work in 'confined spaces' ours being the world of low SES communities (high rates of illiteracy and low numeracy, dysfunctional families and poor social skills) with a high need for equity funding, and sometimes we do not have opportunities to see outside.

Going beyond this, the Coalition served as a site where participants' own moral purpose or values were both enacted and validated. The sense of teaching as a moral activity and a driver of passion that bonded teachers together across diverse school experiences was palpable. These learning enablers were supported by the tone and climate of meetings, seen as friendly, open and sharing. There was explicit acknowledgement of the role of convenor as a deliberate facilitator of this climate, for example, 'the other fantastic thing about the Coalition is working with (the convenor), she is remarkable and her knowledge and enthusiasm are infectious'.

The dominant theme from responses was that the willingness to share and the trust demonstrated in the Coalition are strong enablers of learning. Evident in this sharing, however, was something else—a feeling of excitement and professional fulfilment, of passion and energy. It appeared that in this network the sharing functions as an affirmation of teachers' professional identity. As Lieberman (1999) has observed: "The kind of sharing that goes on in educational networks often has the effect of dignifying and giving shape to the process and content of educators' experiences, the dailyness of their work, which is often invisible to outsiders yet binds insiders together." The data from the AI interview and discussion process reinforced and synthesised the ways in which this phenomenon can be manifested.

Conclusion

This study has not attempted to understand the process of knowledge transfer into practice, rather to tease apart the supportive conditions it provides for learning. The Coalition appears to be less about 'transfer of practice' than it is about 'joint practice development' (Eraut 2005).

This development of practice is facilitated by a highly developed climate of trust and openness, especially given the diverse contexts of member schools and educational backgrounds of their participating staff. The peer-to-peer communication allows teachers to explore their own practice, make the tacit explicit and support colleagues in the process. Facilitation is obviously critical for such conditions to be present, and in the case of the Coalition there is an outstanding 'advocate champion' of practitioner inquiry, trusted and admired.

In the Coalition, the professional learning of participants is moving towards the 'open source democracy' and 'peer-to-peer epidemic' described by Hargreaves (2003):

> A key to transformation is for the teaching profession to establish innovation networks that capture the spirit and culture of hackers—the passion, the can-do, the collective sharing… A hacker has been described as 'an enthusiast, an artist, a tinkerer, a problem solver, and expert'—terms that will arouse fellow feeling in every classroom teacher. The professional values and norms of teachers are close to those of the hackers: in the education service we need the practices that have allowed hackers to transform their world.

The Coalition offers a site for professional learning that is empowered by the heart as much as the head: passion and energy that bring lifeblood to the pursuit of shared values.

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Chapter 15
Extending Connections: Linking Support for Teachers Engaging in and Using Research with What Is Known About Teacher Learning and Development

Philippa Cordingley

This chapter explores evidence from 14 years of support for research and evidence informed practice as a way of enhancing teacher and pupil learning in England. It starts from the proposition that empirical evidence about teacher professional learning and development has an important role to play in developing understanding of how to support teachers engaging in and using research. There has been extensive development of models for promoting engagement of policy makers and teachers with research based on evidence from knowledge transfer (Oakley 2003) and analysis through the lens of the co-construction of knowledge (Edwards et al. 2005). There has also been modest investment in empirical investigation of the use of research and evidence (Sharp et al. 2006). But public exploration of these issues from the perspective of what is known about teacher learning, development and change is limited. This chapter attempts to fill this gap. It builds on and develops an argument set out in Cordingley (2008a).

Over the last 14 years many English Government Agencies have gradually increased and aligned their interests in and support for teachers engaging in and using research (OECD 2002; CUREE 2007). A series of international, systematic reviews of the impact of continuing professional development (CPD) (e.g. Cordingley et al. 2007) have also identified consistent characteristics for effective CPD. This chapter uses evidence from these reviews to illustrate and explore a case study of a national initiative supporting teacher engagement in and with research. This involved the creation of a national framework to support and shape mentoring and coaching that was directly rooted in research evidence and promoted enquiry-oriented approaches to professional learning.

It concludes with reflections on the extent to which connecting research with teacher action involves a mix of complex processes some of which require specialist mediation.

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Introduction

Successive governments have sought to enhance national social and economic development in England by investing in education, learning and skills. For the past 14 years, the English Government and its various National Agencies have increasingly supported teachers engaging in research and in using it in education. The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) started to promote teaching as a research-based profession as long ago as 1996 through the work of its Research Committee. Its commission of Professor David Hargreaves to provide its Annual Lecture in 1996 marked a turning point in public debate on this topic in England (Hargreaves 1996). Hargreaves' clarion call to improve the quality and range of education research and its relevance to policy and practice was taken up by the incoming Labour Government in 1997 and was debated energetically, both positively and critically, by the Academy. The new Government unveiled three parallel strategic policy initiatives to improve the supply and, to a lesser extent, the use of research: it instigated a National Review, established a National Education Research Forum and funded a national centre for conducting systematic reviews of research. It also set up a policy unit to underpin these initiatives, to support the development of high quality education research and to increase the accessibility and use of research as a means of improving practice and raising standards.

The landscape in 2010 looks very different from that which Hargreaves surveyed. Amongst the changed contours a (not exhaustive) list would include the very substantial multi-million pound investment in the recently concluded Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP). The aims for this programme focused on practice and prioritised practitioner involvement in the research processes. The emphasis has been on striving for excellence to be achieved through a wide range of mechanisms including:

- Fierce competition for large scale and funding supported by extensive peer review of proposals
- Investment in read across individual projects through the collaborative creation of commentaries
- The creation of a large-scale web repository of data
- Funded seminar series to conceptualise and test emerging theories and understandings
- A range of different forms of text- and web-based outputs

Other initiatives to support teachers engaging in and using research have started from a policy as opposed to a knowledge creation perspective. For example, early years practice has been extensively influenced by the findings of the large-scale, longitudinal Effective Pre-school and Primary Education (EPPE) project (Sylva et al. 2004). National agencies are gearing funding to research informed specifications: the Training and Development Agency (TDA), for example, is building its CPD programme around both systematic reviews of research about CPD and a range of specifically commissioned studies to explore the state of current practice. The outputs of systematic research reviews have contributed—amongst many other

things—to the evidence base for ongoing national curriculum development (Bell et al. 2008).

Importantly, for the purposes of supporting teachers in using research, diverse research outputs are also becoming increasingly accessible to practitioners. The Government hosts The Research Informed Practice Site (TRIPS)[1], for example, where digests of practice-relevant research from peer reviewed journals offer a menu of evidence-based ideas for teachers, parents, governors and others. Similarly, the web site of the General Teaching Council (GTC) for England features in-depth, teacher-friendly presentations of large-scale, robust empirical research with illustrative case studies via its Research for Teachers (RfT)[2] site.

More recently attention has moved on from communicating research findings effectively to mediation and brokering designed to embed their use in practice. For example, CUREE has supported the development of a wide range of accompanying research tools and CPD protocols for the RfT presentations[3] and the development of Research Tasters (micro enquiry tools to help teachers identify their own and their pupils' starting points in relation to research findings) for both the TLRP web site and for RfT. All of these linked resources are freely available to all practitioners via the web but also diffused through GTC's professional networks and mediated via its own Teacher Learning Academy. What follows is an exploration of some of the developments which have accompanied this sustained policy drive.

The Contribution of the Formal Knowledge Base

What do empirical evidence and theory offer to inform such developments? Alongside the development of UK policy relating to use of education research there has been extensive debate and analysis through the lenses of:

- Knowledge accumulation and transfer (Oakley 2003; Hammersley 2001)
- Evidence-related analyses of the role of research in policy making (Saunders 2007; Nutley et al. 2003; Oates 2007)
- Knowledge dissemination (Edwards et al. 2007)
- The development of a range of models for promoting teacher enquiry as a change lever (Furlong et al. 2003; Earl et al. 2006)

There has been more modest investment in empirical investigation of the use of research and evidence and the provision of support for teacher research (Galton 2000).

The incoming Labour Government established the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information (EPPI) Centre[4] specifically to enable teachers seeking to use research to do so on the basis of confidence about the cumulative evidence base; it

[1] www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/research/

[2] www.gtce.org.uk/tla/rft/.

[3] For example www.gtce.org.uk/networks/engagehome/resources/behaviour_for_learning/.

[4] www.eppi.ioe.ac.uk.

grew out of policy initiated needs analysis (Hillage et al. 1998) and theory (Oakley 2003) relating to knowledge creation and transfer. The centre was funded to develop a methodology for, and quality assure a range of, systematic reviews. Funding was made available initially through open competition and later on the basis of the priorities of the Government and the outcomes of earlier reviews, although review groups were also able to undertake self-funded or sponsored, accredited reviews. This initiative and the resulting reviews generated a good deal of debate about of the merits and limitations of such approaches to knowledge synthesis for education (Hammersley 2001).

For the first three years, Government funding for the EPPI Centre secured interest from a range of researchers who carried out reviews ranging from English teaching and mathematics to early years education and care. As Government funding was withdrawn, wider participation in reviews diminished with the result that the Centre now predominantly carries out reviews directly on commission from Government Agencies. However, the initiative has raised the expectations of policy makers and many practitioners about what can be achieved through systematic research reviews, and, as we shall see from a later case study, systematic reviews pointing to cumulative and consistent evidence are finding their way into CPD and pedagogic policies that in turn shape teachers' own enquiry interests.

Although, part of the rationale for this initiative was improving the accessibility of research outputs, the Centre's early insistence on technical excellence resulted in dense and complex review reports which were not conducive (Cordingley et al. 2003b) to making the evidence accessible to practitioners, in the early stages. To tackle this, the Centre required review groups to provide very brief summaries of their reviews written by practitioners themselves. This too was problematic. Practitioner authors were deeply respectful of, perhaps overawed by, the rigour and scale of the review process. Faced with a necessarily scant word limit and with little time to spare, they often produced descriptive, safe summaries that inevitably had little capacity to engage, enthuse or enlighten their colleagues.

The challenges of translating large-scale, technical, and therefore seemingly abstract, research review findings into engaging and useful materials to inform practice or policy are significant. Some review groups were determined that their efforts should be connected more directly and practically with the concerns of policy maker or practitioner audiences and invested separately in creating user-friendly outputs.[5] The point to emphasise here is that in the early stages the extension of the knowledge base and its use as a change lever were seen as directly linked processes. But the limitations of this conception rapidly became clear. A case study later in this chapter illustrates the ways in which systematic review findings were brought within the ambit of policy makers and practitioners.

Of course, research reviews can only make contributions to teachers' own enquiries or use of research if evidence is available. The drive towards accumulating research was therefore accompanied by pressure to extend the knowledge base

[5] For example, summaries of the EPPI CPD findings have been tailored for CPD leaders, researchers and policy makers: www.tda.gov.uk/about/research.aspx.

itself, especially regarding improving teaching and learning. The top slicing of significant funds from the Higher Education Funding Council's contribution to Higher Education Institutions created the resource base for the TLRP. The £43 M, 12-year programme—'the UK's largest ever investment in coordinated educational research' (Gardner 2008)—offered a number of perspectives on integrating knowledge creation and the transformation of practice and policy. TLRP was 'an exceptional opportunity' and provided 'a useful case study for others who wrestle with the challenges and dilemmas of how to maximise the impact of research' (Pollard 2008). Direct involvement of practitioners was a requirement of the programme at the outset, albeit one observed in tentative, or occasionally, token ways in the early stages.[6] But there were extensive examples of successful engagement of teachers in the research process as members of advisory groups, as co-researchers, as fieldworkers trialling and testing outputs from elsewhere or as champions of the projects that they had been engaged with reaching mainstream teachers (Edwards et al. 2007).

But this chapter argues that it is not enough to engage teachers directly in academic research projects. Supporting teacher enquiry and use of research requires a focus on the needs of colleagues who have no direct experience of academic research projects or relationship with their authors.

Practitioners' Own Enquiries

One well-established approach to connecting teachers with research that has been extensively tested in the field is Stenhouse (1980)'s argument that to 'use research is to do research' and that this should be linked with the focus of teachers' own enquiries. The work of Stenhouse (1980) and Shulman (1987) acted as a springboard for sustained investment by many English national agencies, universities and schools in teacher research. Influential initiatives to support such research have been established across the UK including: Collaboration Action Research Network (CARN); The Research Centre for Learning and Teaching (CfLaT), Newcastle University; Centre Research in Education and Environment (CREE), University of Bath; and the Department of Educational Research (DER), Canterbury Christchurch University. National bursary schemes were also developed, starting with the TTA teacher research grants first issued in 1996, designed to support teachers in undertaking research that would be developed to the point where it could both inform the practice of their colleagues and survive scrutiny by both academic and practitioner peers. One example of such a bursary led from a small-scale numeracy project by a pair of teachers to a nationally influential programme which has improved the mathemati-

[6] A pattern noticed by the National Teacher Research Panel in its analysis of all first round of applications for funding (Cordingley 2001).

cal achievements of thousands of children especially those with Down's Syndrome[7] (Tacon and Atkinson 2001).

This influential scheme was followed in close order by (among others):

- TTA's own school-based research consortium programme
- The three-year, large-scale (£3 M) and much-mourned Best Practice Research Scholarship programme
- The TDA's large-scale Post Graduate Development programme which supports Masters level CPD for teachers
- The National College for School Leadership (NCSL)'s Networked Learning Communities programme
- GTC's Teacher Learning Academy
- The Creative Action Awards Scheme
- The National Centre for Teacher Excellence in Mathematics grants programme
- The National College for School Leadership Research Associates programme

At a conservative estimate these nationally funded schemes for supporting teacher research involved some 39,500 teachers. If we include LA award schemes and school-funded research grants the number is likely to be significantly greater. If we extend our attention to colleagues involved in themed change programmes such as the Campaign for Learning's Learning to Learn in Schools project, widespread support for Assessment for Learning following the publication of *Inside the Black Box* (Black and Wiliam 1998) or the Primary National Strategy's research lesson study work the numbers will be greater still.

The programmes cover a wide spectrum. At one end there are teachers trying out strategies from a menu offered to them by researchers or facilitators as approaches with promise (because of larger-scale evidence about potential benefits for pupils). CPD facilitators may or may not cite the sources of the strategies chosen with the result that teachers collect evidence from their own and each others' classrooms and use it to inform and refine their teaching without realising that they are using research findings or methods. At the other end of the spectrum are teachers pursuing higher research degrees. They may undertake action research on their own and with their peers. Such teachers are focussed on generating systematic accounts and analyses of teacher innovation and adaptation and use a wide array of research methods and expose their work to the disciplines of peer or academic critique and publication.

There is then, in England a groundswell of support for and interest in enquiry-oriented learning for teachers. Some start from a desire to diffuse and mediate research findings. But a good deal simply flows from a belief in practitioner research as an improvement tool. Here the driving force is teachers' aspirations for their pupils or their concerns about practice without consideration of what the evidence base has to offer about teaching and learning strategies that have empirical and/or theoretical promise.

[7] www.numicon.com/index.html.

One organisation that has sought both to encourage and support increasing interest in engagement in and with research is the English National Teacher Research Panel (NTRP), established by the then TTA in 1999 to champion research informed practice. This panel of expert teachers and practitioner researchers has been concerned both to welcome the range of activity described above and, at the same time, to champion the incremental growth of rigour and quality in a proportion of such work. Their aim is to promote and illustrate excellence as a means of raising expectations and aspirations at the same time as encouraging a wide range of entry points. So their goal is by no means to insist that every teacher should subject every enquiry or development to such standards. Rather they try to enthuse teachers to engage in and/or with their own, or a colleagues' research as a means of enriching and informing the development of their own professional practice and enhancing their students' learning.

Impressive as the numbers of teachers engaging with research may be, they represent at best 9% of the teacher workforce in the UK. What then, can or does engaging in or with research really mean for this wider group of colleagues?

Supporting the Wider Teaching Population in Using Research

For the majority of the teacher workforce, using research is not a naturally occurring phenomenon. To make such connections it is important to consider the environment in which such learning must take place. The reality of day-to-day teaching and learning experiences in and around classrooms is the context for interpreting, enacting or testing research findings and embedding change. Such realities shape the kinds and forms of knowledge that can be put to work. Learning for teachers (as for their students) has to build on and/or be related to what they know, can do, believe and care about already. Unless teacher learners have the opportunity to make such connections, new knowledge, ideas or skills are all too often quietly forgotten, discounted or simply remodelled and shoe-horned into pre-existing practices and beliefs. As Desforges (1995) notes, the pull of the status quo in classroom practice is very strong. There is also a good deal of developed theory, starting with scholars such as Dewey (1991), Vygotsky (1978) and Bruner (1960) that support the importance of making, in Bruner's words, 'the relation between things encountered earlier and later as clear as possible' (Bruner 1960, p. 60).

The evidence from the professional development and learning literature similarly highlights the importance of working with existing, structured and contextualised knowledge when trying to change it for understanding and practice (Joyce and Showers 1988; Guskey 1986, 2000; Cordingley et al. 2003a; Cordingley et al. 2005b; Bolam and Weindling 2006; Timperley et al. 2006). Using knowledge from research to encourage and sustain change is a cumulative rather than a standalone

process. Given the diverse starting points of individual teachers, the practicalities of ensuring that learning processes are cumulative will be similarly differentiated; in other words, facilitating teacher use of research in group settings is both *context specific* and *personalised*.

Classroom Practice as the Context for Using Research

What are the aspects of classroom practice that exert a powerful influence over teacher use of research to support change? Knowledge and understanding that is to inform teaching and learning in classrooms has to survive in fast, dynamic interactions between learners, as mediated through multiple, second-by-second judgements and decisions by teachers. The teacher's contributions to such dynamic exchanges are, of course, interpreted differently by a large number of pupils. The variables pile up fast.

Pupils' responses also affect one another even if the teacher is teaching in a transmission mode. If teaching is interactive, pupils support and challenge each other's learning through their questions and interaction in ways that call for quick, well-informed and creative responses from teachers. Such challenges are manifested in the blink of an eye in interactive classroom settings. If teachers' knowledge is not instantly retrievable, they will not be able to deploy it at all. In this context, teachers need an intimate, multi-layered grasp of an idea or strategy from research in order to deploy it. It will involve, as Shulman (1987) points out, a range of different kinds of knowledge including, for example, knowledge of pedagogic content, which arises from a complex interplay of knowledge about the subject, about patterns of learning, about students and about the curriculum.

The complexity of the knowledge demands of teaching and learning mean that (both existing and new) teacher knowledge, skills and understanding must be internalised or routinised if research is to be put to work to change responses to practical classroom challenges. Using research means changing knowledge and understanding which happens in an intensely populated environment and so needs to be understood and developed as an integral part of the ecosystem rather than as something self-contained that can simply be added to pre-existing ideas, beliefs and understandings.

Fortunately there is a strong research base for teacher learning and professional development which is already influencing policy and practice and which is capable of providing manageable strategies for supporting teacher use of research.

Authors such as Desforges (1995), Guskey (1986), Hargreaves (1996), Huberman (2002), Eraut (1994) and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) explore in different ways, the challenging nature of the process of developing or reframing tacit knowledge. Of course, lack of awareness of existing knowledge generates several key operational challenges for changing it. For example, such lack of awareness can lead many teachers to underestimate their existing knowledge and expertise, frequently dismissing complex strategies and skills as 'just common sense' perhaps

even reinforcing, ironically, a culture of anti intellectualism. Conversely, it can also lead teachers to overestimate the extent to which they have absorbed new ideas or concepts into their dialled-in practices. Teachers may be quick to talk the talk of new initiatives but the pull of internalised knowledge and strongly held beliefs about learning acts as brakes on translating this into walking the walk (Bell and Cordingley 2007).

An exploration of the take up of perhaps the most popular piece of research ever in the UK offers a case in point. As Marshall and Drummond (2006) point out, very many teachers across the UK in the early twenty-first century are interested in and excited by some of the ideas of assessment for learning, offered through the impressive systematic review *Inside the Black Box* (Black and Wiliam 1998) and the follow up illustrative research and development *Assessment for Learning: Putting evidence into practice* (Black et al. 2003). But in their recent empirical study only 20% were observed deploying the approaches in ways that were in keeping with the underpinning evidence and rationale, i.e. were using the information from the assessment to plan the next steps in teaching and learning. Most teachers saw the approaches as an end point. These teachers had absorbed key messages from research sufficiently well to be able to discuss them and to deploy techniques superficially—to talk the talk. But they had not as yet understood their purpose and so were unable to relate them to the beliefs that were shaping their orientation to pupil learning and therefore to use them to change the nature of the learning experiences for their pupils to walk the walk. For insights into this kind of embedded learning, the evidence about CPD has much to offer.

What Is Known from CPD Evidence About Teacher Engagement in and with Research?

The impact of CPD is one of the areas where the systematic reviewing described at the start of this chapter and carried out over the last seven years (Timperley et al. 2007; Cordingley et al. 2003a, 2005a, 2005b, 2007) has revealed a mature evidence base. This body of cumulative evidence identifies in particular a remarkably consistent set of characteristics for CPD linked to benefits for pupils as well as for teachers. These involve complex change processes including, in different forms, ways of:

- Identifying the starting points for teachers' learning both through structured analysis and through peer support and review.
- Reinforcing this by enabling them to select from a range of strategies where there is empirical evidence about effectiveness.
- Illustrating the strategies in the context of pupil learning to make the strange familiar.
- Encouraging experiments in interpreting, adapting and adopting new strategies in the teachers' own school and classroom setting.

- Support for such experiments from specialists to 'help make the familiar strange', i.e. probe and challenge the teachers and offer guided reflection in order to help them think about why, how and where things work or don't work. In this way teachers develop an underpinning rationale or practical theory that helps them use strategies in contexts that are different from those where they first encounter the idea.
- Providing sustained peer support to create opportunities for structured dialogue rooted in evidence about the learning of identifiable students. This reciprocal support enabled the teachers to take risks and to maintain motivation (teachers working this way 'don't want to let each other down' and so sustain momentum in the face of other priorities).
- Deep engagement with evidence from their own classrooms.
- Facilitating growing independence.

Although common across the sustained professional development programmes with strong evidence of teacher and pupil benefits, these approaches are often confusingly differentiated by acronyms, programme labels and technical terms. Teacher learning processes are variously called collaborative coaching, enquiry reflective practice, action research, innovation, conferencing or curriculum design or development. Specialist contributions are similarly variously labelled tutoring, facilitation, mentoring, coaching, conferencing, partnership working and critical friendship. Despite the labels, the strategies have a great deal in common with each other and reflect another important aspect of CPD, the way it, as a teacher in the TLRP *Learning how to Learn* project put it, 'mirrors' pupil learning (James et al. 2006). The systematic reviews relating to CPD highlight the way that explicit teacher learning of this kind can create a virtuous circle. The same phenomenon appears to be important at the level of school leadership. As Robinson (2007)'s Best Evidence Synthesis highlights, overt engagement in their own and their colleagues' professional learning by school leaders had twice as much impact on pupils' learning as any other leadership intervention.

The Nature of Specialist Contributions

So far this chapter has explored the context for teacher engagement in and use of research through the lens of the teacher's own development and learning. But in understanding how research can act as a catalyst or support for change it is also important to focus on the nature of the knowledge that can make a difference. The fourth EPPI registered review of the impact of CPD on change explores specifically the contribution of specialists to CPD and examines the kinds of knowledge and skill that were important (Cordingley et al. 2007). In the very early stages of such CPD programmes the specialists do tend to communicate knowledge from research, often in the form of a menu of related approaches from which teachers can choose. However, far from focusing exclusively on their instructional contributions,

the review highlights the importance of *complementary,* ongoing specialist activity geared to supporting the complexity of teacher professional learning and change. Specialists, this review suggests, do provide instruction. From time to time new strategies and ideas are analysed for effectiveness, explored and modelled. This is offered as an introduction to the teachers to enable them to see the implications for practice of research evidence and understand it in the context of their own previous practice and, crucially, in the context of their aspirations for, and the learning needs of, their particular students. Such professional learning is conceived not as a question of communicating knowledge but as a question of orienting knowledge from one sphere so that it can be organised and framed as an improvement tool in another to support specific learning needs or target groups of students and their teachers. Using research as a lever for change to the point where new practices supported by evidence are embedded in practice is constructed here as a process of supporting and informing professional learning.

How then do we *operationalise* the use of research as a lever for change in a way that helps teachers to integrate the various forms of knowledge? Part of the answer lies in the construction of this as a pedagogy for professional learning. What might such a pedagogy look like? As suggested in the monograph *Sauce for the Goose* (Cordingley 2008b), all the evidence points to the need for deep engagement with evidence from *both* the public knowledge base and from participants' own practice (Cordingley et al. 2003a). It suggests early scaffolding of teacher learning and determined and progressive removal of the supporting mechanisms as control over learning is handed over to teachers. It suggests, in particular, persistence and care in making existing beliefs and ideas explicit in order to review and refine them in the light of evidence—and an important and sustained role for coaches in securing this through, for example:

- Enabling teachers to explore multiple possible explanations for pupil responses.
- Modelling an interest in theory and models as tools for understanding and planning learning and teaching.
- Providing tools and protocols to support teachers in connecting their own starting points and progress with their aspirations for and concern about their pupils' learning.
- Providing tools and protocols to ensure that discussion that unpacks teaching and learning episodes explores the underpinning rationale behind a new approach rather than just the surface features.

The National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching in England—A Case Study in Knowledge Transformation as CPD

The focus of this chapter is, of course, layered; the findings about CPD described above are themselves research findings which may or may not be used by teachers. What follows is a case study illustration of the use of systematic reviews of research

about CPD and learning which had as a side effect the development of support for teacher engagement in and with research.

In 2003, the then Department for Education and Skills commissioned from the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education a single 'National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching'. The goal was to harness the most practical elements of the growing evidence base about CPD and to use them to create a vehicle for increasing the coherence and consistency of change efforts and programmes across the system. The resulting framework was to be driven by the evidence but its form and expression were to be developed iteratively to reflect the following:

- The context in which such agencies were working
- The realities of practice on the ground in England at that point in time

The specific challenges that the framework was created to tackle were to create a framework that

- Would be as relevant to trainee teachers as it would to experienced headteachers
- Built on the best available international evidence
- Built on and enhanced the current interests and practices emerging in schools
- Provided guidance and incentives to schools to use the best available evidence

In effect the Department commissioned an experiment in use of research. At the centre of the experiment was the challenge to create a 'framework' capable of both sparking and supporting the transformation of knowledge about CPD into practice.

The outcome was a set of core principles, a summary of the key skills of coaches, mentors and professional learners and a summary of the core concepts (why, who, what, where, when) that shape effective mentoring, specialist coaching and collaborative coaching. Crucially for this chapter, the framework places considerable emphasis on the skills of coaches in brokering access to the specialist and public knowledge base and in supporting teachers in using evidence about the impact of their learning on their pupils. Similarly it emphasises the skills of professional learners being coached in drawing on, collecting and interpreting such evidence.

The framework is now in active use across England—from the Teacher Learning Academy of the General Teaching Council (www.teacherlearningacademy.org.uk/) to the NCSL's materials on leading coaching (Creasy and Paterson 2005) and many local authorities, networks of schools and individual schools are using it as a tool for creating self-sustaining professional learning communities.

From the perspective of what is important in ensuring use of research, there are several key features:

- Each principle and skill is illustrated by a 3–4-minute video clip of authentic coaching or mentoring practice and each video clip is supported by a summary of the underpinning knowledge base and by probing questions and a case study outlining the approach to mentoring and coaching in the school concerned.
- The framework is also informed and supported by a series of tools and activities including learning agreements, observation frameworks, critical incident activities and questions for schools to ask of themselves and of others when seeking to interpret the framework in their own context.

- An interactive version of the framework and the related resources was made available free on the TDA website (mclibrary.tda.gov.uk).

In other words, the framework itself was constructed as a vehicle for learning as well as for communicating the evidence-based knowledge.

Other research initiated experiments in illuminating knowledge from research by constructing toolkits include several generated within the TLRP including the pupil voice network from the first phase of TLRP (www.consultingpupils.co.uk/) and the learning how to learn projects (www.learntolearn.ac.uk/). Both projects have developed and published text-based tool kits containing illustration, reflection and practical activities that teachers can use.

Conclusion

There are no quick fixes in supporting teacher engagement in research and their use of it. What all the activities described in this chapter share is a substantial, specialist, multi-level approach to supporting teacher engagement in research and using it. Whilst the chapter suggests that using research evidence about effective professional development brings helpful structure to this process, this is not to claim that such research has all the answers—just an important starting point that has the added benefit of modelling the virtues of the kind of enquiry-based learning that is very often the goal of the use of research by teachers in the first place.

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Chapter 16
Changing Teachers' Work in Australia

Bob Lingard

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with changing teachers' work in two senses. The first is concerned with contemporary political and related policy developments in Australian schooling, captured by the Rudd/Gillard government's talk of an 'education revolution'. This revolution has been manifest inter alia in the development of a national curriculum, the introduction of national testing in literacy and numeracy at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, and the My School website, which is purportedly the transparency arm of the education revolution in its publication of results on the national tests for all schools against averages and against the performance for each school against those of 60 'like schools'. This education revolution also includes the 'building the education revolution', which expended more than $16 billion as part of the stimulus package in response to the global financial crisis. The second meaning of 'changing teachers' work', by way of critique of the negative effects of the first sense, talks about the need to change the nature of teachers' work, a difficult task in contemporary Australia, given the strength of the top–down national agenda central to the education revolution.

The former meaning fits within a policy critique of the education revolution, which despite then Prime Minister Rudd's stinging critique of neo-liberalism (Rudd 2009), remains itself trapped within a neo-liberal social imaginary (Rizvi and Lingard 2010) of high stakes testing, more parental choice and competition between schools as a putative way of driving up standards in response to global economic demands requiring a higher quality and quantity of human capital. The second meaning, by way of contrast, seeks to work a positive thesis regarding teachers' work and what can be done to maximise its impact in constructive and productive ways on student learning and opportunity structures. This conception accepts that apart from student socio-economic background, it is teacher practices (pedagogical and assessment) that make the most difference in student learning outcomes.

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The Rudd/Gillard governments have recognised this with their National Partnerships on Teacher Quality and Low Socio-Economic Schools. The trouble, however, is that both policies are framed by the neo-liberal agenda of National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) performance. What we have is the right research insights being mediated by neo-liberal inflicted and inappropriate policy settings.

The thesis proffered in this chapter sits within the broad framework of Susan Groundwater-Smith's contribution to educational research and school reform. Her oeuvre acknowledges the centrality of teacher pedagogies and assessment practices to enhancing student learning, socially and academically, and to improving opportunities for all students. Her work recognises that schools through such practices can make a difference, but not all the difference, given what we know about the stubborn and intransigent effects of student socio-economic background on their learning potentials and outcomes and thus on their life opportunities. Susan's work recognises as well that central to strengthening teacher impact is a need to simultaneously acknowledge and nourish teachers as intellectual workers and knowledge producers and that such nourishment grows out of collaborative teacher learning communities, both within and across schools and with university colleagues. Productive and respectful partnerships with university colleagues are an important component of such collaboration with a focus on research. Teachers here are seen as both research informed and research informing (Lingard and Renshaw 2009).

Within Susan Groundwater-Smith's work, there is an acceptance that ongoing and collaborative teacher learning is a central contributor to the enhancement of student outcomes. Ongoing teacher learning and enhanced student learning are seen in effect to be imbricated in each other and central to the reflexivity inherent in such professional practices. This is an enlarged conception of professional practice and akin to Sachs' (2003) notion of the activist teacher professional. Teacher collective substantive conversations, reflexive analysis of the pedagogy and assessment practices, along with research of various kinds, are also central constitutive elements of teacher professional communities.

The central argument of this chapter is that Susan Groundwater-Smith's project is now more difficult to achieve; indeed, it has almost been closed down in Australia by the education revolution and its top–down character and teachers as the objects rather the subjects of policy; for example, there is no teacher on the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), which oversees the national schooling agenda. Susan's modus operandi and vision need to be rearticulated in these contemporary policy times in Australia and at the same time the national policy agenda, while well intended, needs also to be rearticulated through relevant research insights and a post neo-liberal social imaginary. In her recent book co-authored with Nicole Mockler (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009), Susan has recognised the need to challenge the new norms of schooling for the audit society. This chapter is constructed as a contribution to that challenge in the contemporary Australian policy context.

Such a challenge demands an activist profession which works on developing an enlarged construction of educational accountability at the school site and which has

the professional strength to pursue broad educative goals at the school site, while also using and developing the resources, intellectual and of other kinds, to defend their good practice (Thomson et al. 2011). This form of vertical and horizontal accountability will recognise the width of the purposes of schooling and work against the reductive and top–down construction implicit in the education revolution and particularly in the functioning of the My School website (Lingard 2010). Such multiple accountabilities will recognise as well the funds of knowledge available in school communities and schooling's broader purposes in relation to them, as well as on the global stage. These accountabilities will also work upwards to the schooling system, demanding as Darling-Hammond (2010) would put it, 'opportunity to learn standards'. The achievement of such standards will require a concerted collective professional response.

The education revolution has had differentiated effects in schools, with those schools performing less well on national testing—most often schools in low socio-economic areas and serving 'disadvantaged' students—feeling most emphatically the reductive effects of this agenda. More advantaged schools are able to manage the revolution and work in the ways suggested by Susan's research and those continue to offer high quality education. This is not good enough! Disadvantaged students depend more than their better off counterparts on good teaching and good schools. Just as Darling-Hammond (2010) has argued in relation to the United States, so too for Australia: our future is dependent on better education for everyone, especially for those now most disadvantaged through schooling.

The goal of more and better education for everyone is a laudable one; however, contemporary policy settings as part of the education revolution in Australia will potentially exacerbate the gap between the quality of education provided on socio-economic grounds, as well as in relation to outcomes. The Rudd/Gillard government's equity goals of 40% of 25–34 year olds holding a university degree by 2025 and 20% of university students being from low socio-economic backgrounds will be difficult to achieve, given the potential effects of contemporary policy settings in schools. Australia seems to be going down a road in schooling policy terms that other nations appear to be stepping back from, for example, in England, where there is real evidence of the negative educative effects of such an agenda (Alexander 2009) and even Singapore is seeking to work with greater amounts of school autonomy and supporting hybrid pedagogical practices mixing teacher direction with intellectual demand that will make a real difference (Hogan in press).

The chapter proceeds by first describing the contemporary Australian policy contexts and proffering a brief account of its potential and differentiated effects on teachers' work. The next section draws on insights I have derived from recently presenting 12 workshops as the Middle Years of Schooling Association (MYSA) Travelling Scholar for teachers and principals around Australia concerning the national agenda. The subsequent concluding section then considers briefly how teachers and schools might work to enhance this national agenda by making it more genuinely educative, drawing on the broad framework and contribution of Susan Groundwater-Smith's work and cognate literatures. The conclusion also succinctly restates the overall argument and addresses the constituents of the education policy

community who will need to push for broader definitions of the purposes of schooling, richer and more intelligent forms of accountability than My School and NAPLAN and a strengthened rather than thinned out equity agenda, which encourages schools to work with the variegated funds of knowledge in their communities and is framed by a progressive national approach to economic redistribution (Thomson et al. 2011).

The 'Education Revolution' in Australia

The election of the Rudd federal Labor government in late 2007 has seen the strengthening of the national presence in schooling in Australia, despite Australia's federal political structure and Constitutional arrangement. Under this arrangement, schooling is a residual power of the States and Territories and indeed central to their political identities and one of their major policy responsibilities. Since the 1970s with Whitlam's national schooling agenda, we have seen an enhanced federal presence in schooling, motivated initially by social justice concerns, then later through the Hawke/Keating period by a more economistic reframing of schooling policy set in the context of globalisation, through the strengthening of national approaches under the Howard government, framed then by a conservative reconstruction of the nation in the face of global developments, September 11, greater migration numbers and greater cultural diversity within the population. With Rudd and Gillard, the federal presence has been further enhanced and the national impact in schools and on teachers actually strengthened. So, for example, the National Partnership, Low SES Schools, has renegotiated principal employment contracts with salary incentives for the achievement of set targets for improvement on NAPLAN scores. During the 2010 federal election, the incumbent Labor government and the opposition both promised more autonomy for school principals, given the pressure on them to improve test scores, a manifestation of the recognition by both sides of politics that a national approach to schooling is necessary in the context of the globalisation of the economy, with education conceived now as a central arm of national economic and productivity agendas. It is this economistic reframing, along with the reductive effects of testing regimes and narrow construction of educational accountability, which will have negative effects on schools and their social justice purposes (Lingard 2010).

This Rudd/Gillard national approach includes new national accountabilities and testing, a national curriculum, currently under construction, and a range of National Partnerships between the federal government and the States and Territories. The latter include the National Partnership Low Socio-Economic Status Schools, already referred to, and which constitutes the centre piece of the government's redistributive and social justice in schooling agenda. The ACARA has been established to oversee the national curriculum and testing and accountability. Perhaps the most significant recent national development has been the creation of ACARA's My School website, which lists a school's result's on NAPLAN against national averages and

also the school's performance measured against 60 'like schools' across the nation on a socio-economic scale (divided into quartiles) developed by ACARA. These national engagements have grown out of a new cooperative federalism in respect of schooling, facilitated—at least in the early stages of the Rudd government—by Labor governments in all the States and Territories and have been central to what the government calls its 'education revolution'. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG), consisting of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and State and Territory leaders, has been central to the achievement of the national agenda and framing in terms of productivity, a framing which even applies to early childhood education. COAG has managed the reworking of federalism in schooling for the government and helped to achieve the national agenda.

The My School website has now been developed and gone online (28 January 2010) against much opposition from the teacher unions and educators around the country, while being very strongly supported by the Murdoch press that owns the national daily, *The Australian* and a range of other daily papers in the capital cities of Australia, which has been fulsome in its praise of this policy initiative and of the then Minister for Education, the Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, for pushing it through against teacher union opposition. While the Murdoch press has attempted to almost crucify Gillard around the waste of funds in terms of the building revolution, they have simultaneously sought to beatify her in respect of NAPLAN and the My School website. Union and professional opposition has linked to the validity of the data and 'fit for purpose', likely negative, that is reductive and defensive, effects on curricula and pedagogy, the likelihood of newspapers developing league table of performance, and the related potential for the 'naming' and 'shaming' of poorly performing schools, which most likely will be situated in poor communities and which would fail to recognise the very strong relationship between socio-economic status and both student and school performance.

There is a lot of evidence internationally (Alexander 2009; Ball 2008; Gillborn and Youdell 2000) and some evidence in the Australian context in some states of schools manipulating variables linked to the publication of league tables of school performance. For example, in Queensland, there is evidence that some secondary schools are excluding particular students from being eligible for a tertiary entrance score in the final semester of secondary schooling, as they attempt to manage the public representation of their performance on newspaper league tables.

The most obvious manifestation of the strengthened national presence in schooling and new national accountabilities is NAPLAN. NAPLAN entails yearly full-cohort standardised testing in literacy and numeracy at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 conducted in all schools and school systems in Australia. All Australian schools, government and non-government, participate in NAPLAN and have their performance recorded on the website. The outcomes of these results gain a great deal of media coverage in terms of cross-state and cross-school comparisons. The My School website has heightened interest of various kinds in school comparisons. The amount of media coverage given to the website following it going online on Thursday, 28 January 2010 has been extraordinary, as has been the number of 'hits' on the site itself. This situation has led the government to suggest huge parental demand for such account-

ability and Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister promised, if re-elected, to add additional data on bullying, extracurricular activities and parental satisfaction data to the site. It is interesting how the government has used the media (Murdoch press support) and the web to circumvent teacher union opposition to the publication of NAPLAN data, in effect working a different politics in the information age. The teacher unions also want data on expenditure on schools, both government and non-government, from all sources, to be made available and linked to school performance. This is a difficult oppositional politics, as any critique of the data base included on the website, inevitably elicits the response that further data will be added; for example, full per pupil expenditure in all schools and who could be opposed to that? Opposition can also appear to be about restricting access to knowledge and thus can appear to be non-democratic. There is also probably a distinction to be made here between knowledge that is useful for effective policy interventions and knowledge that ought to be publicly available. This distinction is elided in the debates around the My School website.

Further, despite claims to the contrary, the literacy and numeracy tests that underpin the website have quickly become high stakes, with all the potentially negative effects on pedagogies and curricula as evidenced in other national systems (Stobart 2008; Hursh 2008; Alexander 2009; Darling-Hammond 2010). The Queensland government's response to Queensland's apparently 'poor performance' on NAPLAN in 2008, whereby a review was commissioned and its recommendations quickly implemented, demonstrates that the tests have become high stakes. One likely outcome of these high-stakes tests and consequential accountability is an 'uninformed systemic prescription' from above and mistrust of teachers and schools, ushering in an 'uninformed professionalism' (Schleicher 2008), which is the norm in poor performing national school systems as measured on the OECD's PISA for example. It is this 'uninformed professionalism', which is implicit in much of the top down national agenda and which will inhibit the sort of productive professional practices, both individually and collectively, which have been the focus of the research and professional development work of Susan Groundwater-Smith across her academic career.

Instead of teaching as the learning profession as envisaged by Groundwater-Smith, what we will most likely see instead is test-focused schooling, with a consequent narrowing of curricula and defensive pedagogies and reduced possibilities for teacher professionalism. The former Deputy Prime Minister and federal Minister for Education, Julia Gillard (Prime Minister from June 2010), responds to this specific criticism by arguing a narrowed focus on literacy and numeracy is what is required right now in Australian schooling. Yet, such narrowing will not produce the sorts of outcomes now deemed necessary for a globalised knowledge economy and will potentially reduce the curriculum of schools in poor communities, while not having such impact in schools serving more advantaged students. It is to be hoped that this policy agenda will be seen simply as a short sharp jolt to refocus and energise the teaching profession and the work of schools, rather than a long-term agenda, which when it fails, we will back away from as is the case in contemporary England (Alexander 2009).

Bernstein's (1971) sociology of the curriculum demonstrated the ways in which, what he refers to as the three messages systems of schooling—namely curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation—sit in symbiotic relationships with each other, with change in one affecting the practices of the others. In policy terms, across recent times, the evaluation message system, or more specifically high-stakes, census testing at national levels, has arguably become the major steering mechanism of schooling systems (Rizvi and Lingard 2010). Often, this has been linked to a parental choice agenda, as in England, where league tables of performance are seen as central to informed parental choice and the creation of a school market (Ball 2008). This process is now underway in Australian schooling, while comparable policies and practices have had profound impact on curricula and pedagogies in the United Kingdom (or more accurately, England) and in the United States, where schooling at state level has been driven by high-stakes testing and consequential accountability for a long time (Alexander 2009; Darling-Hammond 2010; Taubman 2009; Au 2009). As Stobart (2008, p. 24) notes:

> A key purpose of assessment, particularly in education, has been to establish and raise standards of learning. This is now a virtually universal belief—it is hard to find a country that is not using the rhetoric of needing assessment to raise standards in response to the challenges of globalization.

This has become a globalised educational policy discourse. Consequentially, the evaluation message system (manifest as high stakes national census testing) has taken the upper hand in many schooling systems around the world with England as the best (or worst?) case in point. However, we also need to recognise that national and provincial uptakes of this discourse always occur in vernacular ways mediated by local histories, politics and cultures. Witness, for example, how educational federalism mediates all schooling policy developments around national curriculum and testing in Australia, even when there is political alignment across the tiers of government. Yet, I would argue that NAPLAN and related developments in Australian schooling (particularly the national curriculum, employment contracts for some principals, moves towards national teacher and principal professional development and possibly registration) are catalysing the emergence of a 'national system of schooling'. Think about the like school comparisons of NAPLAN performance. The like schools scale operates nationally, not within state boundaries. Thus, for some schools most of their 60 like school comparators are located in other states. This is one step towards a national policy field in Australian schooling, set against global pressures to reconstitute the nation and linked intimately to the economisation of schooling policy.

Histories of statistics, for example, have demonstrated the close connections between the development of national statistical systems and creation of state administrative structures at the national level; indeed, the creation of the nation as a commensurate space of measurement was a factor in the constitution of nations; national statistical systems helped unify administration over the space of the nation (Porter 1995; Desrosieres 1998). The historical unification of the imagined and real space which is the nation thus was partly constituted by the establishment of a

statistical space of equivalence across national territories and the associated dispositions and epistemic communities that accepted the nation as a space of equivalence. Porter (1995, p. ix) argues 'quantification is a technology of distance' or in Gulson's (2007) Foucauldian terms, statistics are a 'spatial technology', ensuring the possibility of governance across distances.

In my view, NAPLAN, the My School website and other developments are ushering in a national system of schooling in Australia in a way similar to the effects of national statistical collections. National accountability in schooling will have more profound effect than other historical approaches to national schooling in Australia attempted though other mechanisms (utilised by earlier federal Labor governments, for example, Whitlam, Hawke and Keating), such as targeted equity funding and weak versions of national curriculum frameworks (Lingard 2000). At a broader level, this nascent national schooling system is part of the strategic reconstitution of the nation in the face of globalisation and transnationalism.

Elsewhere, I have argued that global comparisons of national school performance such as the OECD's educational indicators and PISA are similarly constructing a commensurate global space of measurement and an as yet still inchoate global education policy field (Lingard and Rawolle 2009, 2010). This global commensurate space of measurement of school performance also has the effect of strengthening the national field, as with NAPLAN and the My School website in Australia, almost making the creation of such a space imperative. This situation also pressures nations to enhance their 'national capital' in the face of such global pressures. We see this in the contemporary Australian educational policy context in COAG's (re)working of federalism in schooling and in its meta (re)framing of all layers of education policy by concerns around worker and workplace productivity.

We need to recognise, however, that globalised education policy discourses are always mediated in their generative effects within national systems of schooling. If we think about 'policy borrowing' (Steiner-Khamsi 2004) or 'externalisation' as Schriewer (1990) calls it, and the more often neglected 'policy learning' (Phillips 2000), the same ought to be true in a normative sense. To be effective, policy borrowing must be accompanied by policy learning, which takes account of research on the effects of the policy that will be borrowed in the source system, learning from that, and then applying that knowledge to the borrowing system through careful consideration of national and local histories, cultures and so on. In my view this has not happened with the Rudd/Gillard government's new school accountabilities framework, which functions through NAPLAN and the My School website and which draws on schooling policy developments in the United States, particularly New York, and in England. We need to learn from the effects of the borrowed policies in the source system, not naively implant them within our own national context without evidencing any policy learning at all.

Furthermore, we know that policy is the authoritative allocation of values (Easton 1953; Rizvi and Lingard 2010), which means that ideology is an important component part of any policy—evidence which might result from real policy learning and from a thorough perusal of research are only ever contributing factors, not determining factors in education policy development. Ideology and the *realpolitik* of

policy production might override these; they certainly form a policy pastiche with these other factors in policy construction. And so it seems that this is the case in contemporary Australia with the resulting testing times for schools and teachers. Further, while the Rudd government very successfully intervened in a quasi-Keynesian manner to the global financial crisis and while there is an impressive redistributive element in the National Partnership on Low SES Schools, accountability associated with what the government calls their 'educational revolution' (NAPLAN and My School) is still located within a neo-liberal framework and market choice discourse. A basic assumption is that competition between schools and parental pressures will push up standards, and strengthen accountabilities. There is also at times a parental market choice discourse underpinning the policy. These are all neo-liberal policy frames (Ball 2008).

Additionally, it seems that federal funding of non-government schools, which Whitlam formalised and systematised in the 1970s, for social justice reasons (ostensibly to introduce a needs based approach to the funding of non-government schools, especially Catholic schools) and for pragmatic political reasons of addressing the Catholic vote and the ideological split in the Labor party, is a matter now which no government will address in socially just ways. This appears to be the case for straightforward, pragmatic political reasons and the apparent need as perceived by both major parties to attract the votes of aspirant working class and lower middle class Australians.

In calling for better policy learning and rejecting blind policy borrowing, I accept the need for new educational accountabilities, but these need to be richer and more intelligent than My School and NAPLAN, and must be linked to a new social imaginary of the place of schooling and future society beyond neo-liberalism. Evidence from the highest performing school systems, such as Finland and Korea, suggests the need for 'informed prescription' at the systemic level and support for 'informed professionalism' at the school level within a culture of trust, innovation and on-going learning for all in schools (Schleicher 2008). This evidence suggests the need for intelligent forms of accountability (Sahlberg 2007; Darling-Hammond 2010) and respect and support for teacher professionalism a la Groundwater-Smith's work. Further, very successful schooling systems such as Finland do not have high stakes, standardised testing; rather they have highly educated teachers with masters' degrees and with a high degree of professional autonomy, practising intellectually demanding pedagogies for all students. We know that it is teacher practices of all 'school variables' that have the greatest impact on student learning (Hattie 2009; Hayes et al. 2006). New, richer forms of educational accountability need to recognise this research evidence so we can move to an evidence-informed policy regime that supports teacher professionalism and productive autonomy for schools framed by strong systemic policies and frameworks. At the same time, there needs to be recognition that individual schools need to work in different ways in respect of their specific communities as a move towards rich accountabilities. It is here that Susan Groundwater-Smith's research and collaborative practices become most pertinent.

In terms of policy borrowing, much of the accountability agenda has been borrowed from England and the United States, specifically New York City. Account-

ability and testing reforms there have been subject to devastating criticisms (Hursh 2008) and Australia does much better on PISA than either the United Kingdom or the United States. Hursh (2008) actually links high stakes testing in the United States and specifically in New York with a decline in teaching and learning. It is interesting to hypothesise why these 'reference societies', when it seems that the creation of a global space of measurement of national schooling systems has constituted new and significant reference societies such as Finland and Korea and of relevance to Australia, Canada. Policy as the authoritative allocation of values probably offers some explanation of why Australia has chosen particular reference societies to borrow from, rather than others.

The chapter turns next to a consideration of teacher and principal views of the education revolution. I have garnered these views from 12 one-day workshops I have run around Australia in the past six months on behalf of the MYSA as Travelling Scholar; the interpretations of this professional feedback are of course mine and not necessarily those of MYSA.

Principals, Teachers and the 'Education Revolution'

The workshops focused on NAPLAN and the My School website, more than on the national curriculum, which is still under construction and whose implementation will probably not begin now until 2012. Some commentary is offered on the national curriculum, as some teachers commented on it, but the focus is on NAPLAN and the website.

NAPLAN

Teachers and principals at my workshops on the national agenda were concerned that national testing of literacy and numeracy had been introduced before a national curriculum. This seemed absurd to many teachers. This situation, they thought, encouraged a perception that policy was being developed in an ad hoc fashion, driven politically rather than educationally, and not in a coordinated, planned and thought out way and as such encouraged some scepticism about the broader agenda. It seems to me that if this scepticism changes to cynicism this is a dangerous development in Australian schools. Hope is a productive resource for positive change in schools and particularly for teachers working in schools in poor communities.

Further, teachers thought this situation meant that for many schools previous NAPLAN tests and NAPLAN preparation virtually became the de facto curriculum in some primary schools prior to the May tests at years 3 and 5. The teachers also argued that many of the concepts tested in NAPLAN were sequenced after May in their syllabi and work programs. The introduction of NAPLAN and its high stakes consequences meant that a whole range of concepts, especially in Maths, had to

be dealt with prior to May. This had made a difference to scores, but they also observed, this was a one-off response with a one-off effect. There was the potential here for a focus on the superficial overtaking real and deep learning. Teachers were very wary of this possibility.

Some school systems appeared to encourage teaching to the test. In Queensland, for instance, the Interim Report of the Masters Review of Queensland's NAPLAN performance suggested schools and teachers spend serious time practising the test. Teachers saw a dangerous line between making sure young students, particularly primary schools ones, were test literate and a reductive teaching to the test. Alexander's (2009) review of the effects of high stakes testing in English primary schools shows how teaching to the test has become the norm there with negative consequences for young people's experiences of schooling resulting from a narrowing of the curriculum. Some teachers also thought that Year 9 was a year where some students did not take the tests seriously, particularly Year 9 boys, with consequent effects on outcomes.

Maths teachers saw NAPLAN and the emergent national curriculum as important for upping the conceptual and intellectual demands of Maths teaching across the board. This was a view around the country. Many teachers thought the national curriculum was derived more from the New South Wales approach: very tightly structured syllabuses with little room for any teacher autonomy. This was a view expressed very strongly in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and in the Northern Territory.

The teachers saw some positives associated with NAPLAN, but in my terms anyhow, saw these as positive short terms gains, while also recognising that a test driven system in the long term would have very negative educational outcomes and consequences. The positives included: encouraging a focus on what matters in literacy and numeracy and encouraging a focus on both across the curriculum and across the school. This has precipitated useful professional conversations in some contexts, within schools, between teachers, across year levels and sometimes between schools. This was deemed to be a real positive. Such discussions and the data fed into curriculum planning and pedagogical practices in a positive way, some argued, raising issues of sequencing and what was dealt with when. Teachers and principals saw this as a positive as well. There was also a view that schools now had some useful, base-line data to work with and that this in some ways offered national benchmarks.

All saw NAPLAN as accountability of a kind, but one which was far too reductive and which needed to be complemented in various ways. Many teachers thought that schools now had to prepare strong narratives of what they were attempting to achieve and what they had actually achieved. This was an additional sense of giving an account, the dictionary definition of accountability. Most saw the need for richer, more nuanced forms of accountability, which linked to the broader purposes of schooling, including social purposes. This was a much needed development, teachers argued, for individual schools, for school systems, and as an underpinning of the national approach. Such accountability would go beyond a policy as numbers approach and utilise as well discursive narratives of a school's purposes and achievements.

Teachers recognised that NAPLAN and the publication of school results affected different schools located in different socio-economic communities in different ways. All were sympathetic to and understood these differential effects and their significance for teachers' work. Schools, mainly in high socio-economic areas, argued that the test had minimal effects on them and indeed when all of their students did well, did not provide very useful information for intervention and change purposes. One very successful school intimated that it had as a consequence introduced more regular testing of a different kind so as to intervene around performance. Some saw this as a negative. Very poor performing schools also suggested that the data did not reveal much that they were not already aware of.

Schools in poorer communities felt much greater pressure from the tests and great pressure to teach to the test. This was seen as being positive in terms of articulating what was to be valued, but also very negative in its reductive effects on the width and depth of curriculum. An impoverished primary school curriculum was a potential outcome for schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged communities. It seems without expressing it overtly, workshop participants were recognising the potential for NAPLAN to widen the curriculum gap between schools with different socio-economic locations (cf. Teese 2000) and thus reduce equality of educational opportunities and the potential for addressing the intransigent social class/school performance nexus. Such an outcome would be inequitable in the extreme.

Schools that were part of the National Partnership Low SES Schools also felt this reductive pressure, as accountability for the school's usage of the significant redistributive monies made available to them and for principal performance was constructed mainly in terms of improved NAPLAN results. These schools were very strong advocates for richer and more intelligent constructions of educational accountability—for different and more productive accountability genres at school and system levels. Teachers felt that the improved performance of all schools and systems in 2009 over 2008 reflected some of the negatives associated with teaching to the test and that such pressures were greatest in low SES schools.

Teachers in schools with largely Indigenous students were also very critical of NAPLAN and its negative consequences for them and their students. The cultural fairness and the one-size-fits-all nature of the test were issues raised in relation to Indigenous students. The potentially destructive effects of such data on school, teachers' and students' self-esteem were suggested as a real negative of NAPLAN for Indigenous students.

It was suggested that while parents in the first instance were positive about NAPLAN, they too were becoming wary of its potential negative effects on the width, depth and quality of schooling provided. This was particularly the case, some argued, amongst middle class parents. Many teachers also thought the high stakes nature of NAPLAN was creating anxiety amongst many students, who thought it was they who were being held accountable. There is evidence of this as a consequence of high stakes testing in the English context (Alexander 2009).

Many teachers and principals also questioned the validity and reliability of NAPLAN tests and wanted much more research to be done on this. They also wanted mechanisms for checking on cheating. These same teachers saw NAPLAN as prof-

fering an implicit philosophy of education, which they thought should be more explicitly spelt out. Related, they were also critical of the lack of a cohesive philosophy for the national curriculum and the hermetically sealed nature of the first four draft national curricula in English, Maths, Science and History. In contrast, they liked the implicit notion of the educability of all students and the capacity for all to improve, both at whole school and individual student levels, which underpinned policy approaches to NAPLAN, but at the same time saw this as a reductive construction of both a philosophy of education and of educational accountability.

The My School Website

Teachers and principals saw both positives and negatives of the website. They saw that potentially the website could be linked to educational accountability and the transparency agenda. However, it is fair to say that the overwhelming perspective of teachers was negative about the website and the potential negatives which flowed from it. The strength, all considered, was that the website allowed access to school websites. Here the broader philosophy of a school was articulated. There was a universal view that school websites were becoming more significant for school level accountability and also in relation to the emergent parental market for schooling. The view was that for well educated and informed parents the My School website and access to school websites did provide useful information in relation to choice of school for their children. There was an imperative now, teachers argued, for schools to construct strong narratives of their achievements set against their broader philosophy of education and for these narratives to appear on school websites. There was a consensus as well that there was a pressing need for more educative and productive forms of educational accountability at systemic level and in respect of the national agenda.

Many secondary schools were using the data on the My School website to become better informed about their feeder primary schools. Some schools were also constructing their own like school measures from the website. This was particularly the case with the independent sector.

As they currently stood, there was much concern about the Like School measures and their veracity. The issue of the methodology of the Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA) was raised very regularly in all workshops and multiple anomalies were pointed out in terms of school classifications. The teachers and principals wanted a better index for the classification of schools and the construction of Like School measures. They also wanted more research as to the validity of the data generated. There were also important questions raised as to whether or not such Like School data was best kept for positive policy interventions at system policy and funding levels, rather than made available on a public website. The purpose of the website was queried by many. Some also raised the need for better 'value-added' measures of teacher and school effects and saw such data as potentially useful for policy purposes, rather than useful as publicly available data.

I was very interested how many teachers at the workshops had read and taken close note of Hattie's (2009) book that provides a meta-analysis of the elements of pedagogy that make the biggest differences to student learning. I was also heartened by teacher knowledge of the productive pedagogies research in which I was involved (Lingard et al. 2003; Hayes et al. 2006). Teachers explicitly recognised the significance of teacher pedagogies to student learning, but also recognised that many of the pressures associated with the national agenda sometimes inhibited their pedagogical practices. At the same time, all teachers, those working in more privileged communities and those in disadvantaged areas, acknowledged the significance of student background to school success. Teachers wanted proper policy recognition of the mix of these factors (social class background and pedagogical) in contributing to student performance. They felt school raw performance data on NAPLAN against national averages, which now appeared on the My School website, was not very helpful. In some states there was also a sense that school systems were not being forthright or honest in their responses to the league tables of differential state performance on NAPLAN, failing to acknowledge the impact of different demographies and socio-economic profiles.

Many observed that for a given school their 60 like schools were spread across the country and often they knew very little or nothing about these schools. There was real concern that the publication on the website of the NAPLAN scores against national averages for each school and Like School measures offered a very narrow and reductive measure of a school's worth and achievements. There was also a strong view that all of the publicity about the website demonstrated unequivocally how NAPLAN had become high stakes with all the consequences that flow from that. I also got the sense that schools were moving to be much more data informed—a situation partly informed and driven by the national agenda, NAPLAN and My School. This meant that schools wanted better data than that currently available. They also wanted ongoing research about the data. They also wanted systems to assist in their analysis of data and capacity building in respect of data collection and analysis.

Workshop participants recognised and were worried about what the literature calls the 'mediatisation' of educational policy (Lingard and Rawolle 2004). They were very much aware of how the then education minister (now Prime Minister) Julia Gillard had used the media to push through the My School website and how concessions about what additional data ought to be contained there was to be augmented in response to teacher and Teacher Union demands for expenditure and other measures to be included. They were collectively wary of such mediatisation of policy and wanted more professional and research based input. They saw very clearly the sponsorship of this reform agenda by the Murdoch press and how the Minister used this to win the day, as it were. They were also aware of the internet politics and the argument about the right to information and transparency. Nonetheless, they were sceptical of these developments as they currently stand. I was surprised at the almost universal opposition to the website amongst those members of the teaching profession I worked with in the workshops. They saw different rationales for the website being proffered at different times by politicians, policy makers

and the media; they asked the question: 'who was the implicit readership of the website?' and 'what were its purposes?'.

Conclusion: Working with/Against the National Agenda

This chapter accepts that the broad goals of schooling policy and of the national agenda in schooling for the Rudd/Gillard governments are laudable, namely, higher quality schooling for all and more equitable outcomes. The problem is the policy settings created to achieve these goals, including NAPLAN and the My School website dealt with here, as well as National Partnerships on Low SES Schools and Teacher Quality. The National Partnership is a much needed redistributive policy seeking to improve the schooling performance and opportunity outcomes for schools and students in poor communities. However, it is the framing of these policies by a neo-liberal agenda borrowed from elsewhere that will ensure their goals are not achieved. These policies demonstrate somewhat inept policy borrowing, little policy learning in respect of such borrowing, and a lack of a new social democratic imaginary to underpin policy geared genuinely to achieving laudable goals. Furthermore, the policy settings work with an implicit account of the teaching profession as almost non-thinking implementers of policies set a long way from schools and with very little teacher input. In policies announced during the 2010 federal election, Prime Minister Gillard wants to reward teachers who are achieving improved test outcomes for students with a ten percent salary bonus. This policy again fails to understand the nature of the teaching profession and of the whole school response and collaboration needed to enhance student learning, particularly in schools within the National Partnership Low SES Schools.

Susan Groundwater-Smith's research has demonstrated the collective learning profession that teaching needs to be to enhance both the quality of school outcomes and to open up opportunities for more disadvantaged young people. This would be a collaborative profession with teachers and principals working together within schools to enhance pedagogical and assessment practices through action research, reflections on practice and the like. It would be a collective, collaborative profession that worked in partnership with university colleagues and indeed across schools and which would be informed by research insights, as well as developing insights for other practitioners. We would see teaching as both a research-informed and research–informing profession. Such a profession would also work collaboratively with the multiple communities of contemporary schools. The logics of both NAPLAN and My School work against such a conception of the profession, actually placing individual teachers and schools in competition with each other to achieve a limited set of goals.

Additionally, new and richer forms of accountability are required, which are linked to a policy framework that recognises the importance of SES to students' performance and of intellectually demanding teaching to students' learning. Such accountability needs to be built at the school site through substantive collaborative conversations amongst teachers and with communities. The need to work with

community funds of knowledge for low SES schools is paramount to achieving the goals of more equitable schooling, as are broad policy settings which confront poverty and its associated impacts on individual and community wellbeing. Teachers collectively through their Unions and professional associations also need to pressure governments about richer forms of educational accountability at systemic and national levels. These forms would:

- Recognise the responsibilities of all actors, including governments, systems, schools, students, communities and parents to learning outcomes;
- Acknowledge the broad purposes of schooling;
- Reject the view that improved test results on NAPLAN are necessarily indicative of improved schooling or a more socially just school system;
- Reject the top–down, one-way gaze upon teachers as the sole source and solution to all schooling problems;
- Recognise the centrality of informed teacher judgment and quality of pedagogies to achieving better learning outcomes for all students;
- Value teachers, principals and their professional knowledges and have them inform accountability policy and
- Recognise the need to address poverty.

What is urgently needed is a new social democratic imaginary to underpin a national school reform agenda so that the goals of the Rudd/Gillard agenda can actually have some chance of being achieved. Susan Groundwater-Smith's research, publications and collaborative practices with teacher and school colleagues have much to offer to such reimagining, particularly in relation to the work and nature of the teaching profession necessary to providing more socially just schooling for all students.

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Chapter 17
Postscript: Vale Shirley Grundy

Susan Groundwater-Smith

In his article published in the Festschrift for Immanuel Wallerstein, Fals Borda (2000, p. 633) advocated the need "To practice in such a way that it gives a moral and humanistic orientation to the work of the activist researcher; and, to gain a sense of personal commitment that combines the logic of action and the logic of research." He saw that the duty of the participatory action researcher was not just to identify and analyse the social reality of the conditions under which people live but to be active in remedying those very conditions. He pleaded for those in the academic community to respect grassroots communities and include them as full partners and co-researchers.

I invoke Fals Borda's convictions because they were fully shared by the late Professor Shirley Grundy. While, in recent years, her attention had been directed to being a judicious and ethical academic manager as Dean of Education at Hong Kong University and before that at Deakin University in Victoria, she had nonetheless continued to hold participation to be at the heart of her practice. Indeed, in her contribution to the tribute to the life and works of Fals Borda (Grundy 2007) she sought to examine the application of the principles of participation to the modern university. She argued for accountability to be constructed as a communicative relationship, as a foil to the audit culture that so permeates university management. This places the university in the social rather than technical realm; a social realm that "value(s) wide participation rather than narrow responsibility, and that reconstruct(s) the work of the university as an investigative project rather than a technical implementation of pre-determined objectives" (p. 81).

This ambition on Shirley Grundy's part was emblematic of the ways in which she conducted herself across her academic career. While idealistic, she was also immensely practical. She understood well the intensity and complexity of teachers' work. In the introduction to her eulogy for Shirley, following her recent and sudden death, a dear colleague Professor Sue Willis currently Pro-Vice Chancellor Social Inclusion at Monash University noted:

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> Shirley decided she wanted to be a teacher when she was 7 years old, began her career as a primary teacher and spent three years teaching in some quite isolated areas of the State. I remember her talking with the amusement that only comes with distance, of the fairly basic conditions she confronted on her first appointment at a one-teacher school and of the trials of those first few years. Despite the difficulties and the sometimes loneliness, Shirley blossomed as a teacher and looked back on those days with affection and with a deep understanding of joys and the terrors involved when families trust you with their children and their children's learning. She never forgot what it meant to be "teacher".

Shirley's commitment to participatory action research was motivated by her deeply held conviction that actions should be driven by the Aristotelian concept of praxis, that is the right conduct we expect of every person and of every society. Her beliefs in this direction were clearly and succinctly addressed in her book, *Curriculum: Product or Praxis* (Grundy 1987) that grew out of her doctoral studies. In this work she was insistent upon the need for careful and deep reflection that required of practitioners that they not only make their understandings of their work explicit, but that they also examine how those understandings emerged and were shaped by the conditions of their work.

Shirley believed that we should all be engaged in a transformative act. As Kemmis and McTaggart (2005, p. 568) have noted, "participative action research (PAR) aims to transform both practitioners' theories and practices and the theories and practices of others whose perspectives and practices may help to shape the conditions of life and work in particular local settings". Nowhere was this more evident than in her management of the *Innovative Links Between Universities and Schools for Teacher Professional Development.* The Innovative Links Project 1994–1996 was constructed as a national teaching and learning consortium within the National Professional Development Program. It was conducted within 14 universities across 16 campuses and enabled professional roundtables to be established. Each roundtable, in turn, had one or more academic associates, representatives from participating schools, teachers' unions and employing authorities. The program provided a unique opportunity for all key stakeholders to develop innovative practices, arising from the various challenges offered in the schools themselves, and learn from each other. The range and scope of the project was unparalleled in Australia. It involved one third of all of Australia's universities at a time when many were grappling with a major reconstruction of the tertiary sector following reforms put into place at the beginning of that decade. Shirley Grundy's wisdom and tenacity were key factors in the project's success. Even as a busy coordinator she took the time to publish material that would assist in the development of individual local initiatives (Grundy 1995).

A demonstration of Shirley's adaptability and flexibility was her secondment to the role of District Director of Education in Western Australia. Here she brought to the position the perspectives of an academic who had worked close to practice in the field. In her publication with colleagues (Jasman et al. 1998) she argued that the benefits of such work are reciprocal with practitioners in both spheres learning much about the nature of the given practices and the socio-political contexts in which they occur. As it has already been observed, these frames of reference continued to inform Shirley's work as she moved into administration and management.

At the heart of Shirley's work has been the concept of what I like to think of as 'criticality'; the turning points that give insight as to where the boundaries and borders lie and the degree of their permeability. This she has exercised not only in understanding the various forces that are at work in our society, but how those forces also underpin our own individual practices. In the essay cited in the introduction to this short piece of writing Fals Borda (2000) draws upon the work of C. Wright Mills. As a sociologist Mills was strongly committed to the notion that a person needs to have an understanding of the history of a given society in order to understand that society and their place in it. As he put it:

> What they need, and what they feel they need, is a quality of mind that will help them to use information and to develop reason in order to achieve lucid summation of what is going on in the world and of what may be happening within themselves. (Mills 1959, p. 5)

This carries a particularly poignant meaning in the context of this book. Shortly before her death I spent some days with Shirley and she expressed to me her reservations regarding the chapter that she had proposed to write for it. In that chapter she was to reflect upon aspects of her role as Dean of Education, in particular the ways in which she could support the work of her colleagues. As she reflected upon her role and her relationship with her colleagues, what was happening to her and what was happening to them, she arrived at the painful conclusion that she could not write the chapter as she intended. While the portrayal would draw upon her own reflections of her work it would, in effect, appropriate the work of her peers and thus could not be fairly characterized as participatory. She reached deep into herself to connect her dilemma to her conceptions of praxis and reached the inevitable conclusion that this would not be 'right conduct' for herself or for them.

Shirley Grundy was rational and reasonable, but she was no narrow rationalist. She thought beyond the limits of her own interests and effectively lived an ethical life that cultivated and nurtured the moral virtues that she espoused. Working with her was a privilege, not only because of her capacity for reflective deliberation and her intensity of purpose, but also because of her skills in communicating with insight and humour. She truly knew how to work across the many enterprises that encompass the study of education and did so as a practitioner, a scholar, and most importantly a fully actualized human being.

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Chapter 18
A Final Word

Judyth Sachs and Nicole Mockler

The chapters presented in this book are testament to the contribution Susan Groundwater-Smith has made to the practice, scholarship and understanding of practice in schools and other educational institutions in Australia, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The contributions by scholars and practitioners alike demonstrate how her commitment to education has had significant impact on the "work" of many. In each of the chapters we have seen how Susan's work has provided a strong framework to understand and respond to fundamental questions such as "why are we doing what we are doing?" and "how can we improve what we do?" Her work has provided all of the authors with a touchstone for their common commitment to improving the quality of teaching and enhancing student learning outcomes. Each of the authors amply demonstrates the respect they have for her as a scholar but also the way they delight in Susan the person. All of us have Susan stories!

The chapters in this book recognise the complexities of teacher learning and change, and in particular they highlight the possibilities of practitioner research as a source of revitalization for individual teachers and a source of renewal for the teaching profession. Practitioner inquiry as presented in this book is about understanding the nature of power relationships inside and outside of schools, and about the opportunities for teachers and students to work together toward transformational outcomes. It is the work of someone who is essentially an optimist at heart, and who deeply respects teachers and the complexities of their work. These papers question the impact of audit cultures and the increasing intrusion on teachers' autonomy by the state. They all invoke the importance of collaboration, co-operation, mutual trust and respect as being at the core of a competent and confident teaching profession.

Susan's work has a strong political intent which acts as a call to action to the teaching profession. The political agenda is clearly evident in the last paragraph of one of her recent monographs:

> We conclude with our own call to action—for the teaching profession itself as well as those who serve it, such as teacher educators—to pose a challenge to the compliance agenda in

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> education and all its manifestations. Such a challenge is not likely to be easy, swimming as it is against the tides of compliance, instrumentalism, fundamentalism and neo-liberalism which so categorise the contemporary age. Given what is at stake, however, we can scarcely afford not to work vigorously and strategically to close the gap between contemporary policy and practice and truly generative and transformative practice. (Groundwater-Smith and Mockler 2009, p. 139)

Clearly this corpus of work challenges us to rethink education practice, and to take issue with some of the orthodoxies around how we work to understand the complexities of teachers' work and how students mediate that work. It also makes us think about how to meet the competing, and sometimes oppositional, demands of external accountability and transparency with those of individual autonomy and independence.

In concluding how do we rethink educational practice in ways that are socially responsible, professionally defensible and culturally appropriate? In so doing we need to ask what are some of the consequences for education policy and practice and future scholarship if we do not take the above challenges seriously. We would like to provide three possibilities for future focus.

The first is recognition that teacher learning needs to be inquiry oriented, personal and sustained, individual and collaborative. Importantly, it needs to be supported by school cultures of inquiry and be evidence based where evidence is collected and interrogated to reveal to complex nature of teachers' worlds of learning and teaching and where simple questions provoke thoughtful action.

Second is the development of an evaluative rather than just a reflective culture. The need for evidence to support claims is becoming increasingly important in the current standards-based performance culture. A better understanding of the form and content of teachers' professional knowledge and how teachers arrive at judgments regarding the quality of student learning and the effectiveness of their own practice will be required. Certainly in making the private public and the arcane understood we will contribute to building a respectful culture for and about teaching.

Finally, we believe that the partnership between students and teachers is one that needs to be advanced. Much research on practitioner inquiry has involved the voices and perspectives of teachers; this needs to be balanced with the voices of students. As both the beneficiaries and, to use one of the recurring themes of Susan's work, the "consequential stakeholders" of teachers' expertise they have views that need to be listened to. Students should not be the silent witnesses of teachers' practice.

Susan's work and the contributions offered in this book provide us with an understanding of the political professional landscape and offer us the map to "close the gap". Together they help us to enter the conversation about teacher learning with both a critical eye and an optimistic outlook.

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