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Beginning Teaching

Stories from the Classroom

Springer

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Foreword

Beginning Teachers' Stories

The recruitment and retention of new entrants to the teaching profession has long been an important aspect of education, as so often these new entrants renew and refresh practice in schools. At times there have not been enough recruits or there are high levels of attrition, at other times there have been too many teachers. This has often resulted in either emergency measures to educate them quickly or a pool of unemployed teachers. There have also been concerns about the quality of teaching, the content of the curriculum and the ever-present need for more rigorous assessment procedures. We have witnessed an unwarranted rise in government intervention in teacher education and the spiralling out of control of quality measurement through inspections, evaluations and long lists of standards to be met. Fortunately, despite these problems, many young people still aspire to be teachers and many experienced teachers remain in schools and in universities due to mainly altruistic reasons such as helping to realise others' potential and providing a better life for young people.

Partnership between schools and universities has evolved and developed to enhance the education of teachers. This has at times been subject to political influences and caused issues about the roles of partners in teacher education—see Furlong, Cochran-Smith and Brennan (2009) for a fuller discussion of policy and politics in teacher education. The role of school-based mentors is an important feature of most routes into teaching across the world, but there can also be tensions between the school and the university as they try to weave theory and practice together, and at times student teachers or beginning teachers find themselves to be in difficult places, betwixt and between the partners. All of these phenomena affect how new teachers experience their teaching lives and careers.

Beginning teachers, and the experiences they have, are the focus for this book. In listening to the voices of these new teachers, it is hoped to both understand and improve the quality of teaching, school life and teacher education in general. This book takes a courageous and innovative approach to exploring the experiences, dilemmas and perspectives of beginning teachers. The book tells stories drawn and

developed from a number of research projects worked on by the authors in Australia and Canada. The book therefore draws upon real beginning teachers' lives and careers as researched between 1998 and 2010. It also uses story, first-person account, email communication, telephone conversation and dialogue to illuminate experiences and contains critical commentaries to locate the issues in current literature and research relevant to the field of becoming a teacher. Stories also allow us to learn about the socialisation of the teaching profession, something we know relatively little about. Recent global, governmental initiatives about teaching often focus on statistical evidence rather than qualitative data, and that is why this book will be a welcome addition to the knowledge base about recruitment and attrition.

Michael Apple reminds us of the need to consider the personal and the moral in education. Stories and fictions are a powerful tool in gaining insight into what it means to be beginning teachers: the dilemmas they face, the emotions they experience, the relationships they form and the challenges they face in helping to shape their students' lives.

> Much of the impetus behind personal stories is moral. Education is seen correctly as a way to reawaken ethical and aesthetic sensitivities that, increasingly, have been purged from the scientific discourse of too many educators.

<div align="right">Apple (1996, p. xiii)</div>

This approach makes the research findings alive and emphasises human experiences and gives authentic voices to those teachers in the early stages of their careers. Enjoy the stories and think back to the beginning of your own career. Perhaps there are other books to be written.

<div align="right">
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Acknowledgements

Contents

Chapter 1
Telling Tales Out of School: Sharing the Stories of Beginning Teachers

Why a Book About the Experiences of Beginning Teachers?

This book is about the experiences of beginning teachers or teachers in their first 5 years of teaching. It focuses particularly on teachers in their first 2 years. The intended audience is primarily teacher educators and school-based mentors and leaders. We hope that the journeys undertaken by our graduates and new staff provide compelling and significant insights for teacher educators and school leaders. Our aim is to share new teachers' stories and to highlight through these narratives the major issues inherent in beginning teaching. From these stories and insights, we propose a set of recommendations to support teacher educators and school leaders in enhancing the first years of teaching for beginning teachers.

It would appear that the major workforce planning issue concerning beginning teachers is not their recruitment, although given the aging teacher workforce and other factors, there is a probability that there will be teacher shortages in Australia in the next few years (Owen, Kos, & McKenzie, 2008), a position mirrored in other countries. According to Williams (2002, p. 2, citing Merrow), what is seen as a recruitment problem is actually an issue of retention: 'The teaching pool keeps losing water because no one is paying attention to the leak'. For example, statistics for teacher retention in the United States indicate that 50% of beginning teachers are likely to leave the profession in the next 5 years (Abdallah, 2010). In Australia, conservative indications are that one in four teachers will not remain in the profession for more than 5 years and that the actual figure is likely to exceed this estimate (Stevens, Parker, & Burroughs, 2007). A survey by the Australian Education Union (2006) indicated that over 40% of respondents ($n = 1,207$) did not intend to remain in teaching in 10 years' time. However, in Canada, the situation is different, with supply of teachers exceeding demand in areas that are not isolated. A 2008 report offered the following generalisations:

> Canada has never faced the drastic kind of attrition from teaching in the first five years of the profession that has been evident in other nations, particularly the United States. Teacher retention rates are reasonably high and have stabilized, as induction into the profession has been given much greater attention and resourcing. (Gambhir, Broad, Evans, & Gaskell, 2008, pp. 15–16)

Consequently, the preparation of teachers in teacher education programmes and the retention of beginning teachers remain vexed issues. While retention rates appear to be improving (see e.g. Schuck et al., 2011), the experiences of many teachers in their first 5 years are challenging and deserving of attention. The Australian Education Union survey (2006) indicated that beginning teachers' major concerns were workload, behaviour management, pay and class sizes. Schuck et al., in a longitudinal study completed in 2010, found that student engagement was a major factor in decisions about remaining in the profession, followed by support by colleagues and mentors, and the professional challenges offered by teaching. Stevens et al. (2007) cite stress, frustration and fatigue as reasons that beginning teachers give for leaving the profession. Harrington (2010) notes that teachers' experiences in their first year of teaching are extremely important in determining their attitudes in the long term. She goes on to state that most teachers recollect that their transition into teaching was largely negative. McCormack and Thomas (2005, p. 29) note that beginning teachers often describe 'difficult, lonely and unrewarding teaching experiences' in their first few years of teaching. Other complicating professional factors and personal issues may include moving house, marriage or parenthood, living independently of one's parents for the first time or commuting. Further complicating this is the reality that many teachers' first teaching experience comes as a casual teacher. Here they may know little of the school's processes and personnel, of students' names and of procedures. McCormack and Thomas support widely observed anecdotal evidence that casual teachers are often confronted with more complex issues of management than are their permanent counterparts.

Many policy documents note that the two issues of recruitment and retention are closely related. It is increasingly recognised that recruitment drives without strong subsequent support for beginning teachers have little benefit for the teaching workforce. Attention must be paid to the experiences of beginning teachers so that these can be enhanced. Johnson et al. (2010) suggest that instead of adopting a deficit view of beginning teachers' experiences, teacher educators should rather focus on supporting beginning teachers' capacities to be resilient and empowered. 'The frequently proposed "solution" to such teacher shortages is to "fix" the problems that bedevil beginning teachers and lead them to leave the profession. However, such a beguiling and simplistic response has not worked in the past and is unlikely to be effective in the future because it adopts a deficits perspective by focusing on problematic behaviour rather than enabling behaviour' (p. 2). Mariani (1997) outlined two dimensions and four quadrants of the human condition for teachers: the support and challenge matrix. It appears that the vast majority of beginning teachers experience conditions of high challenge in their work. This does not appear to be debilitating, however, in conditions of high support from colleagues and the school executive, and to a lesser extent, the school system and community.

This book focuses on beginning teachers' experiences. We define a beginning teacher to be one who has taught in a school or schools for up to 5 years, but we focus particularly on teachers in their first 2 years of teaching. In this book, we bring together the findings from a series of research projects that we have conducted over the last decade on the experiences and retention of beginning teachers and the

preparation of their mentors. We present these findings in the form of synthesised narratives that are amalgams of different stories and experiences from participants in our research projects. Our first aim in presenting these narratives is to give beginning teachers the opportunity to have their voices heard. Some of their experiences are common to many; some are unique or idiosyncratic, but they all provide the reader with the opportunity to empathise and understand beginning teachers' experiences in their first few years of teaching. The stories focus on the resilience of teachers, in the manner suggested by Johnson et al. (2010).

A second aim of this book is to remind teacher educators and experienced teachers of the day-to-day events and issues that beginning teachers experience at the start of their careers. For many of us, these events in our lives are becoming increasingly remote, and it is important that we are aware of the experiences that beginning teachers might have. An increased sensitivity to these experiences reminds us of what life as a beginning teacher is like. This awareness informs our teaching and support for beginning teachers, both in teacher education programmes and in induction programmes offered by senior management at schools or by education systems. And so this book aims to provoke us, as teacher educators, both in schools and tertiary programmes, to consider afresh how we can best support new teachers.

Our Research Projects

The authors of this book are teacher educators in two different countries—Australia and Canada. We are also researchers in the field of retention of beginning teachers. We have spent many years working with beginning teachers, finding out about their experiences and learning about their joys and challenges. The stories they told us were about their lives and what had happened to them as they started their careers as teachers. These were not fictional stories but narratives of events and feelings they had experienced.

The stories we present and deconstruct in this book arise from the data collected in a number of studies. In the Canadian setting, an opportunity to understand the early career experience arose from a unique arrangement between two universities that enabled undergraduates to first teach in a secondary school for a 16-week term and then complete all their education course requirements in the following term. The individuals who moved directly from a term's teaching experience into courses about how to teach quickly demonstrated that they were determined to write about their experiences in order to better understand them and share them with each other. Over a period of 3 years, this project resulted in an edited collection titled *Finding a Voice While Learning to Teach* (Featherstone, Munby, & Russell, 1997).

The first of our studies in Australia paved the way for a series of other studies in this area. Schuck and Segal (1998) set out to investigate the impact of reform movements in mathematics and science teacher education by investigating the experiences of seven beginning teachers who were recent graduates of the teacher education programme at an Australian university (Schuck, 2009). The study reported that the nature of this new career dominated all discussions, and the data revealed

that beginning teachers were finding their new careers to be challenging, complex and, in many cases, overwhelming. Their attention to mathematics and science teaching experiences was supplanted by their attention to surviving as beginning teachers. The findings of this study suggested that a significant area for future research concerned the nature of beginning teaching.

As a consequence, Schuck and colleagues worked with their local teacher employing authority to develop a project in which mentor teachers were prepared for effective mentoring and a network of beginning teachers and mentors was established through face-to-face meetings and online interactions (Schuck, Segal, Anderson, & Balding, 2000). Findings of this study indicated that beginning teachers were often too busy and too overwhelmed to access the online network, but, for those who did, this was a valuable way of gaining support. One advantage was that beginning teachers were able to seek confidential help and did not have to approach their in-school mentor. Some beginning teachers felt that their school mentor was indiscreet or in a position of authority, and these factors made it difficult for them to confide in the school mentor. The opportunity to talk about their experiences with mentors outside their school environment was consequently of value. Those beginning teachers who were enjoying effective mentoring within their school did not participate for long in the project as their needs were being met. Another important finding regarded the learning that the mentor group experienced. The protégé-mentor relationship was beneficial to both beginning teacher and mentor and led to greater reflection about their teaching than might have been the case otherwise.

A larger study in 2001 involved researchers from a consortium of Australian universities and a department of education. This study comprised a survey of all graduates of the participating universities followed by focus group meetings with groups of beginning teachers. Under scrutiny was how prepared graduates felt for teaching. Findings indicated that the culture of the school was a factor that beginning teachers had not been prepared for, as was the need to fit with the operational constraints of working within school protocols and practices (Schuck, 2009; Schuck, Brady, & Griffin, 2005).

A study of 22 people who had left teaching early or mid-career investigated some of the mechanisms that led people into and out of the profession and, in particular, considered their reasons for leaving (Buchanan, 2010, 2011). Most of this cohort either considered their subsequent working conditions, including salary and prestige of the job, superior to those of teaching, or gladly accepted a reduction in salary as a consequence of their decision to leave teaching (Buchanan, 2009a). Unsurprisingly, this attrition from teaching constitutes a significant 'brain drain' from the profession (Buchanan, 2009b). A previous study (Buchanan, 2006) investigated some of the inevitable differences between tertiary (pre-service) and primary, in-service contexts, and possible misinterpretations that can result as teachers transition into the latter.

Beginning teachers can be viewed simplistically as an amorphous homogenous mass. In reality, they are as diverse as the populations in which they work, and the pathways they take into the profession vary enormously. This book includes discussion that draws on a body of work that explored the experiences of teachers

from various backgrounds who have taken alternative pathways (Watson, Aubusson, Vozzo, & Steele, 2007). In particular, these studies investigated the support and mentoring of teachers entering teaching through alternative pathways (Vozzo, Aubusson, Steele, & Watson, 2004), their readiness and acceptance as teachers (Aubusson, Watson, Vozzo, & Steele, 2005) and broader questions regarding whether teachers taking alternative pathways make a significant contribution to the profession (Steele, Watson, Vozzo, & Aubusson, 2004). Throughout these studies, it was clear that the cultures of schools can sometimes be less welcoming to those entering the profession from atypical teacher education pathways. On the other hand, these teachers were often highly valued and provided with extensive support by colleagues within and outside their schools. The research highlighted the importance of support networks outside the school placement in contributing to survival and development as teachers. Above all, the work indicated that the experiences of beginning teachers can vary enormously depending on the nature and inclinations of their school community (staff, students and parents) as well as their personal dispositions. The book is also informed by studies of teachers' professional learning experiences (Aubusson & Griffin, 2010; Aubusson, Relich, & Wotherspoon, 1991). In these studies, conducted almost 20 years apart, few differences were found in the professional learning preferences of beginning and experienced teachers.

The most recent study involving three of the four authors of this book was completed in 2010 (Schuck et al., 2011). The study was longitudinal in nature and investigated the reasons that beginning teachers remain in the profession or choose to leave it. Some of the factors identified as important for remaining in the profession are noted above. As well as identifying factors regarding remaining or leaving, the study provided narratives that offer compelling insights into the experiences of some of the beginning teachers. These insights were helpful to the authors in developing some of the stories that appear in this book.

Telling Tales Out of School

We now turn to outlining our argument for presenting beginning teacher research findings as a sequence of synthesised, fictionalised narratives. In what follows, we describe the process and methods used to derive the stories and their implications. The stories in this book are not fiction but are fictionalised, which means that the stories draw on autobiographies and biographies from data collected in interviews, case studies and surveys in the above research projects. The process consists of amalgamating and threading together selected characteristics and behaviours from a number of people to illuminate experience. Any resemblance to persons or events is not coincidental.

Stories seem to speak to all of us. A story allows us to use our imagination, both as writer and reader. A story evokes emotions as well as intellectual responses. In a story, we are able to express our feelings, not just recount a sequence of events.

All of us are storytellers. Polkinghorne (1988) suggests that people make their lives meaningful through the use of story. When the stories are collected in research studies, we use narrative analysis to examine them. Such analysis emphasises the storying of human experiences. Narrative analysis is an important research methodology as story tells us about human experiences and is compelling through its drama and recognisable context. The context is important in the narrative, as are the details of the story. As a research method, narrative analysis provides insights into the life experiences of people. In this case, the insights are into the experiences of beginning teachers.

Stories are a time-honoured way of informing others about what has happened in life and work. We tell stories about the work we do in classrooms and schools to help us make sense of our experiences and to help us reflect on the meaning of decisions we take and dilemmas we experience (Campbell & McNamara, 2007). Elliott (2005) emphasises that the explosion of interest in the concept of narrative in the last 20 years has generated new ways of looking at data. She stresses the need for readable, accessible texts. Elliott (p. 15) also suggests that there are three key features of narrative that link it to human learning and communication: first, narrative has a temporal or chronological dimension providing a series of events or experiences rather than describing the state of affairs; second, narrative communicates the meaning of events or experiences through temporal and evaluative statements; and third, narrative has an important social dimension. Campbell (2000) describes an approach to fictionalising stories from qualitative data as a way to make research findings more accessible to practitioners as well as academics and to provide opportunities to explore others and the self.

In telling our stories, we might add dramatic flavour to give greater intensity to parts of the experience that we think important. We might put events in a certain order to make sense of them. Sometimes we recount them with artistic licence to emphasise the essence of the story. We might at times dim the lights or provide backlighting in order to minimise certain blemishes or arbitrarily expose other imperfections to a harsh spotlight. We do this as a means of analysis of the narratives: to highlight what we see as important in these stories and to gloss over lesser details. In so doing, we are using a method of narrative enquiry. Narratives are an effective way for researchers to create texts that stimulate a reader's imagination about the personal experiences of a research participant.

This book uses the power of story to place its readers into the stories that have been lived and experienced by beginning teachers. Each chapter has a central theme illustrated by a number of stories. These stories are fictionalised accounts of what teachers have experienced in the various research projects in which we have been involved. The stories not only aim to illustrate but also to discuss and comment on issues. The commentaries that follow the stories are invitations for the reader to enter the story and give personal meaning to it, to say, 'So this is what happens when my students start teaching?' or 'How would I react in that situation?' or 'How can I support my students so that they are able to manage this situation?' Perhaps most importantly, these stories have allowed the data that teachers provided to us to retain their personal and human form and, in so doing, act as truer accounts of the experiences than dispassionate reports would provide.

Why Fictionalise Research Accounts?

Teachers often feel frustrated because the data collected from them about their experiences are detached from their voices. The result of such detachment is that their experiences are not presented as they experienced them but as researchers interpreted them. There is a great deal of current research and literature about student voice (Fielding, 2001; Flutter, 2006; Flutter & Ruddock, 2004; Groundwater-Smith, 2007; Rudduck & Mcintyre, 2007), yet we feel it timely to remind ourselves of the importance of teacher voice. The collection by Featherstone et al. (1997) is an early example of attention to the voices of teachers beginning their careers.

In this book, the authors use devices such as emails and first-person accounts that aim to amplify teachers' voices and make research findings more accessible to a broader audience. The data are all authentic; they are not made up. Rather, the fictionalising of the data is the process of storying the data to provide a sequence, a stream that readers can navigate as they digest and make sense of events and their implications. The storying personalises and packages the data and returns them to their owner. The fictionalising process also allows us to breathe life, emotion and drama back into the story in the way that it was heard when the data were collected.

Stories provide an expression of how we live, experience and interact in our worlds. Connelly and Clandinin (1999, p. 95) suggest that 'the identities we have, the stories we live by, tend to show different facets depending on the situation in which we find ourselves'. The value of using story as the vehicle for giving meaning to the data is that it encourages the reader to join with the story's owner to analyse and identify the essence of the story and to consider how we might change that story if it were ours: Where would we invest our courage, our compassion, our hope and our patience today? As in life, we identify with certain characters, vilify or spurn others and draw wisdom or salutary lessons from others still. We may even enjoy basking in the superior knowledge and wisdom we have compared to some players. Like Nelson (2008), for the authors of this book, the telling and retelling of the stories was 'an invitation to attend to the values, beliefs, opinions and assumptions we each held with ourselves' (p. 209), as well as an opportunity for the stories' owners to share their values, beliefs and opinions with us and with each other.

Witherell and Noddings (1991) note the power of myth and imagination for helping us to better understand experiences and relationships. Campbell (2000) suggests that such stories increase access for teachers to educational research findings. She adds that 'telling tales allows authors to demonstrate the importance and influence of cultural settings on teachers' development and provides a rich context for exploration of ideas' (p. 83). We hope that the stories provided here help beginning teachers to share their voices with each other and other interested listeners and help us all to make meaning of their lived experiences. Developing stories from research data also allows for a discussion of ethical issues in teaching and researching in schools and, more specifically in this book, in the entry to the teaching profession. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2007), in their discussion of practitioner research, claim in their title that 'Everything's Ethics', indicating the importance of the need to

consider ethical behaviour in the teaching profession. As Apple (1996, p. 13) identified, much of the impetus behind personal stories is moral and can be seen as giving a voice to the subjectivities of those who have been silenced.

Approaches to Telling Stories in This Book

Story provides ways of systematising and communicating knowledge. In both processes, the context is all important. Yates (2004) notes that researchers often choose to represent their data by using techniques from fiction. She suggests that this is done to provide a way of 'drawing the reader into the topic at issue' (p. 186). She deconstructs the story process as a way of helping to ease the reader into a text that may be drawing on less accessible bodies of theory. The story sets up an experience that is easily visualised, is concrete and is compelling (p. 187).

Any research process involves a number of steps: defining the research questions, determining how to investigate them, collecting the data, analysing them and then synthesising the results into a cohesive whole from which recommendations can be made. So too with the stories used here. A research problem is identified, data are sought that will provide understanding of the problem, data are collected and then expressed in story form. The analysis and synthesis are provided by the story, which is used to highlight the important features of the data, to interpret them in a way that is true to the voices of participants and to provide a direction and culmination of the events in the story's conclusion.

Some authors have used the term scenario or vignette to describe the sort of text used here. Others use narrative or pen portraits (Campbell & McNamara, 2007, p. 105). This book offers stories and distinguishes between stories, scenarios, pen portraits and narratives. Scenarios are often used to indicate a scene and setting developed to illustrate a certain point. They may be authentic, but often scenarios are constructed solely for the purpose of illustration. Pen portraits are similar to vignettes and can be used creatively to illustrate teachers' professional lives, attitudes and perceptions and to raise dilemmas for discussion. Narrative is the primary source of the data, either in written textual form or provided in an interview. Story is used here to indicate that the narrative has been taken and transformed; it has been fictionalised by including changes that are not central to the meaning, and it has been adapted by the researchers to fit the context of the chapter. The story is provided to encourage opportunities for discussion, reflection and action for a wider audience than the participants in the research (Santoro & Allard, 2008).

As we investigated the experiences of beginning teachers in our research studies, we collected data that spoke to us and provided compelling insights. We began accumulating stories of teachers' experiences from the different studies. Over the years, some of these stories have stayed with us, and their power has influenced the way we think about beginning teaching. In sharing our experiences of these stories with each other, we became aware of certain themes that the stories illustrated.

These themes became the focal points of the different chapters of this book, and it was easy to select the stories that illustrated the themes. However, rather than present the stories as cases as is often done in books on this topic, we chose to use the power of story to help readers engage with the human characters and their experiences in a less clinical approach.

As part of the fictionalising, we have ensured that the dramatic message of the story remains. The stories are synthesised from true experiences, but may have been changed in a number of different ways: leading roles in the story may have been given to different actors than those in the original version; at times, the experiences of a number of teachers have been combined to provide a synthesised experience attributed to only one person, and we have reintroduced the feelings of joy, confusion, irritation and concern that we originally heard when participants in our research projects told us about their experiences. Clough (2002, p. 8) claims that the fictionalisation of educational experience offers researchers the opportunity 'to speak to the heart of social consciousness' providing 'anonymity without stripping out the rawness of real happenings'.

As we set about writing each chapter, we thought about the stories that stood out for us on that particular topic. We then selected a few of those stories and transformed them into fictionalised form. We placed them in the appropriate chapter and looked at what they were saying that would help readers to connect with both the stories and the contexts in a positive and valuable way. Thus, the process we used involved choosing the most compelling stories that beginning teachers had told us, deciding how to synthesise them and fictionalise them for maximum clarity and impact and then providing the theoretical background and recommendations that would surround them. As Shakespeare said, 'The play's the thing'.

So if you see yourself in a story, we are pleased and we hope you will see our discussion as useful. If you do not see yourself in any story, we hope that you might imagine yourself into the narrative or will see others that you know, and we hope that you will be able to relate to their stories.

Clandinin and Connelly (1996) have talked about secret, sacred and cover stories. Secret stories are those that teachers experience in their classroom. These are teachers' private stories, not often told to others, and at best told to 'other teachers in other secret places' (p. 25). They often portray the darker side of the teacher's experience. Influential in determining teachers' identities, appraisal of their performance and their self-esteem are the sacred stories. These are the stories that are the myths of good teaching, the ways that teachers are expected to behave and respond to their contexts, 'the theory-driven view of practice' (p. 25). Finally, cover stories are ones that teachers use to project a more professional and effective image to others. They are the stories that align with the cultural practices of the school. In this book, we examine all these stories, perhaps devoting a little more time to the secret stories that cry out to be shared and exposing the cover stories for what they are. Stripping these stories bare and presenting them here is intended to help readers move teacher education forwards.

The Structure of the Book

The chapters in this book follow a similar structure. We introduce a theme based on a topic that has appeared to play an important part in the stories of the beginning teachers in our research studies. We set the context and provide the background for that theme and discuss its place in the lives of beginning teachers. This introduction is then followed by a set of stories and their interpretations. The stories are the fictionalised accounts of data that we have developed as discussed above. We then analyse the stories and consider what we can learn from these stories, as teacher educators and as school leaders.

We hope that readers will find the stories compelling and that you find yourselves asking how you can support the teachers whose stories we are sharing. We hope you will recognise the characters in the stories and gain insights into their experiences as beginning teachers. We hope that the stories will remind you of your own experiences when you started teaching. Above all, we hope that we are doing justice to the beginning teachers whose stories we are telling.

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Chapter 2
The First Months of Teaching

I've got my own classroom … now what?

The first few months of teaching tend to be like a roller-coaster ride for new teachers. Beginning teachers are often overjoyed at having gained positions in schools and look forward to having autonomy in their own classroom. They often spend happy days thinking about how to prepare their classroom to be a warm and welcoming place and plan initial lessons that are designed to captivate and motivate their students. They make appointments with staff at the school to discuss their preparations. They visit the school and form mental pictures of being a teacher there.

In due course, the first day of school arrives. There is an initial sizing up of each other by students and teacher and a honeymoon period in which students give the teacher a little space to settle in. Advice from university lecturers might come to mind for the teacher: 'Make sure that you assert yourself in those first few days'. 'Don't smile at your students for the first month'. 'Remember that you are not their friend but their teacher'. This period is often accompanied by additional demands with respect to administrative matters: filling in the correct forms, marking the roll, preparing work programmes and so on.

Next comes the 'testing' stage, as students decide to test the mettle of the new teacher. Staff too are testing the new teacher and deciding whether she or he fits in, collegially and professionally. Added to these two groups of stakeholders who are assessing the teacher's progress is a third group: parents. Parents often play a major role in the beginning teacher's life in these first months as they too assess whether the teacher is sufficiently competent to provide their children with the kind of attention they feel is required.

The *Beginning Teacher Handbook* (WEAC, n.d.) suggests that beginning teachers go through a series of stages, starting with anticipation, moving to survival and then to disillusionment before becoming refreshed and inspired again. The stories arising from our research seem to corroborate this. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002, p. 105) define the transition to the classroom with all its complexities and challenges as 'praxis shock'. They explain this concept as follows: '"Praxis shock" refers to the teachers' confrontation with the realities and responsibilities of being a classroom

teacher that puts their beliefs and ideas about teaching to the test, challenges some of them, and confirms others'. Kelchtermans and Ballet also draw our attention to the fact that, while much of the literature regarding first days in the classroom deals with the classroom context only, there is considerable praxis shock involved in fitting in with the organisation. They note that socialisation involves not only fitting into the school organisation but also the changes that the organisation may be making as a result of the beginning teacher's actions and beliefs.

Abbott, Moran, and Clarke (2009) indicate that most teachers are not prepared for the heavy workload and are often asked to teach subjects in which they have no particular expertise. The literature indicates that teachers' first months are described negatively for the most part. Capel (1998, p. 393) notes the transition to teaching as 'dramatic and traumatic change' for UK teachers, and in Australia, this transition is seen as being required to 'sink or swim' (Rolley, 2001, p. 400). Apart from workload, teachers are meeting the challenges of being accepted by the staff, dealing with all the necessary administrative tasks, getting to know their students and develop working relationships with them and managing expectations of parents. All of these challenges compete for the teachers' time while they are trying to do what they perceive as the core business of teaching: familiarising themselves with the curriculum and finding ways to teach their students in motivating and interesting ways while meeting prescribed curricular outcomes.

This chapter examines teachers' stories, taking into account the broader definition of praxis shock (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). The stories concern the praxis shock that beginning teachers experience in the classroom, in the organisation and with parents.

I Am in Charge Here: Jenny's Story

Jenny is a diminutive woman in her early 20s. She was fortunate to get a permanent position, teaching mathematics in an all boys' high school. Here is Jenny's account of her first months with regard to her establishment of relationships with her students:

> DAY 1! They're all so big. When the Year 9s come into the room, it feels so full. Must remember who's in charge here. And take Mr Munro's advice to me when I graduated from the teacher education program: 'Don't smile at them for the first term, be stern and formal'.
>
>   'Line up boys and walk in quietly… no, that was more like a stampede, out you go again and try to do this QUIETLY'. Okay, that seemed to go well, students are settling down now. Let's get on with the lesson. And remember not to smile too soon.
>
> (five weeks later)
> Wow, that month passed quickly. Students seem to be doing their work and behaving well. Don't know how I feel about that whispered conversation that

I heard when I went to the dentist and Roddy Campbell was there as well. He pointed me out to the receptionist and told her that I **never** smile—the kids call me The Smiler now. Still it seems to be working.

There is so much preparation … I am sooo tired. And sick, I can't believe how I keep catching the kids' colds—don't think I have had a week without a cold since I started. Makes it hard to be dynamic and interesting in class. Still I had a real buzz in class yesterday, when we made up secret messages in code using algebra and the kids sent me a coded message that said what fun it was.

It is funny teaching at a boarding school. These little Year 7s who are probably missing their parents so much often come in and say 'Good morning Mum' instead of the conventional 'Good morning Miss' that is the school greeting for female staff. It makes them seem so vulnerable. I really seem to be acting as parent in one of my roles here.

(nine weeks later)
We had our first cycle of tests this week. These happen every 6 weeks and go across the whole year, so I was really anxious about how my students would do in the tests. What a blast when my Year 10 class did okay. I wasn't all that thrilled with their results but then Brian told me that they were nicknamed the 'NH class', which I discovered stood for 'No Hopers', the class that everyone had given up on and that the school was waiting for them to leave as soon as they reached the post-compulsory age. I found it absolutely shocking that the Head of Maths should talk about students like this and also share this information with me. But I was pretty proud of how well they had done in the cycle test, considering the others' expectations of them (and me). And Brian was sufficiently impressed to come tell me all this. Still, I think the shock at the way he was describing them must have shown on my face, because he sort of laughed and looked a bit embarrassed after the conversation.

The best part was giving the class their results. They were all thrilled and surprised. I wonder how much my ignorance of their reputation in the school affected my expectations of them and how much my expectations affected how they did. Must work hard at forgetting what Brian told me!

(three months later)
Well, I've been here 3 months now and had my first Parent Meeting Evening. It was so funny when James Watt's mother came bolting up to me, having had me pointed out by the Deputy Principal. She choked back laughter and then said 'So you're the person that James is so terrified of. Do you know that the only homework he seems to do is for you?' As she is a tall woman (about 15 cm taller than I am), she was really amused that her son, equally tall, should be afraid of little old me. Well, I guess the ends justify the means, but do I really want to be feared like this? I think it's time to start smiling and showing a more human side. Hope this doesn't mean that I lose control.

Jenny's story is mainly about her relationship with her students and her developing identity as a teacher. She strives to motivate and engage her students but also is

aware that to do this she must be able to discipline them. Her strategy is to be strict and distant initially and then to relax this facade after the classroom ethos of respect and courtesy has been established. She believes in her students and believes this has resulted in good outcomes for her students. Her diary demonstrates the mix of idealism and pragmatism with which she is approaching these first few months.

Who Can I Turn to? Alison's Cry for Help

Alison's story focuses on relationships with staff:

> Alison had been eagerly anticipating starting at her new school. She had been to visit the school and been shown the classroom she would have for her class of Year 3 students. She was delighted to note the reading corner, with its inviting cushions on the floor and set of colourful books on the shelves. That corner was going to fit well with her plans of encouraging her young students to start reading on their own.
>
> Alison had been a star student in her teacher education primary program and had many ideas about the lessons she was going to give. She had found the maths lessons at her university to be enhanced by the use of concrete materials and was determined to use such materials to explain concepts to her students. She had enjoyed the different resources displayed and demonstrated by her lecturers in Social and Environmental Studies and in Science and was looking forward to using similar resources with her students.
>
> The first day of her new position finally arrived and Alison went off to the school with great enthusiasm and eagerness. She went straight to her new classroom, ready to add to the light and bright atmosphere she had noticed by putting up some posters on the wall. But the classroom looked different. It took a few minutes to work out what had changed. The little book corner was gone—no bookshelf, no books, no cushions and no inviting space for reading.
>
> Somewhat put out by the disappearance of the book corner, Alison put up her posters and then decided to check out the storerooms for available resources. She asked the school secretary where the storerooms were, but the secretary didn't seem to know. She asked one or two of the teachers who were chatting in the staffroom but they didn't seem to want to interrupt their conversation and simply waved vaguely in the direction of the classes across the schoolyard. When Alison found the door that said Storeroom, her next challenge was to find the key. No key to be seen. No one seemed to know where it was. It looked like the storeroom was never used.
>
> The students arrived the next day and Alison became very busy, getting to know her students, prepare her lessons and fit in with the staff. She was unable to find the key to the storeroom, but it was obvious that no one used it so there was unlikely to be anything useful there. Nor could she solve the mystery of the missing reading corner. Alison was still determined to use equipment and resources in her lessons as these had appeared to be so valuable for learning, so she started buying her own materials.

Time passed and Alison was enjoying being a teacher, and getting to know her young charges. She spent a huge amount of time preparing her lessons and seeking out appropriate resources. She kept asking staff what they used, but the others did not seem to be using many concrete materials in their teaching. Because none of the resources Alison wanted to use appeared to be available at the school, Alison had to prepare many weeks in advance, to ensure that she had time to purchase the necessary equipment or materials. To survive, Alison often changed the lesson to one that was more book-oriented. She felt really guilty as she had been convinced by her lecturers at university that hands-on work was much more effective, but she was both time and money poor, and both of these were needed if she was to get the resources she wanted.

About 2 months into her first year, when Alison popped into the classroom of one of the Year 1 teachers to ask for her advice about an upcoming excursion, she was amazed to see … her missing reading corner. The books, cushions and bookshelf were laid out just as they had been in her classroom when she first visited the school. Alison had a dilemma: should she confront the teacher or just keep the peace? She opted for keeping the peace—a staffroom can be a lonely place if you get on the wrong foot with staff.

When Alison had her end-of-term meeting with her supervisor, Matthew, she mentioned the problem she was having with the lack of equipment and how she was spending her own time and money in purchasing materials. Matthew was horrified that Alison had been working in this way and told her to leave it with him. The next day he bounced into her room with a key to the storeroom. Alison immediately visited the storeroom and found it filled with equipment, equipment similar to the materials Alison had been buying with her own money. Alison reflected bitterly on the fact that she had spent a few thousand dollars to buy resources that the school already owned. This was a salient lesson on the territorialism of the existing staff.

Alison's story highlights the oft-heard comment that teaching is a profession that eats its young. Instead of staff being supportive and helpful, they appear to conspire against Alison in her desire to use resources in her lessons. They may simply not feel like bothering to help her, with vivid memories of how they themselves struggled as new teacher, or they may be trying to ensure that the resources are available when they require them for their own classrooms. Some might even suggest that they may be doing this out of a wish to prevent Alison from achieving too much in her teaching, thereby painting them in a bad light. Whatever the case, the school culture at this school is not one of support and help for its new teachers. This not only has the effect of making Alison struggle to use resources in her classroom but also effectively isolates her and makes her wonder who to turn to for advice and support. Fortunately, Alison does turn to her supervisor, Matthew, and shares her experience with him. In a matter of moments, Matthew has resolved the problem for her. It is clear that where support is good in schools, beginning teachers find the journey to be much easier and the transition shock to be far less. Conversely, where this support is missing, life is far more challenging for the teacher.

You Are Too Young to Look After My Tommy

A final story concerns interactions with parents in those first few months of teaching:

The school was delighted to have a young male teacher start there. The Deputy Principal thought it would be an excellent idea to have Lei teach Year 1. There had been all this talk in the newspapers about the shortage of male role models in teaching, particularly in teaching the early years. So this would be a good experiment: the school hadn't had any male teachers in its Stage 1 (Years K-2) classes.

Lei was really pleased; at least he wouldn't have to manage discipline problems that were prevalent in the older years. And he felt comfortable working with young children. He had given a lot of thought to how he would introduce the students to the routines he wanted and to being with each other. He prepared his lessons carefully and eagerly anticipated the start of term.

In the first week, Lei was not completely surprised to see that parents would bring a child to the classroom and then hang around just outside for the first half hour or so. He understood that it was the start of the new year and that they wanted to get to know their child's new teacher. So he didn't comment and carried on teaching, expecting that after that first week, the parents would become more relaxed and leave the class and him to get on with their work. However, when there were still five or six parents peering through the classroom windows for a lengthy period each day in the third week, he started getting a little irritated. So he decided to invite these parents to chat with him at recess on the following Friday. The group of parents accepted the invitation and joined him in the classroom. Lei told them what he was doing with the children and what his goals for the term were. The parents listened attentively and Lei felt the meeting was going well. As they were about to leave, one of them asked a question: 'Excuse me, Mr. Gong, but how old are you?' Lei was taken aback and not quite sure how to answer. Responding 'None of your business' was probably not the way to get these parents on board, but it was what Lei felt like saying. So Lei told them his age—21. A shocked murmur went up from the group. Recess ended and there was no time to respond to this reaction; the bell rang, the parents stood up and left and the children bounded into the classroom.

The next day, the Principal came into the class and sat in on a lesson. She asked Lei to come and see her when he had a moment. At their meeting, after discussing how Lei felt he was going, the Principal told him that two of the parents had spoken to her and asked that their children be transferred to the other Year 1 class, taken by the Assistant Principal, a woman with 22 years of teaching experience. Lei was too young, they explained, to provide what their children needed.

Lei was really upset, because he felt that his students were learning and achieving wonderful outcomes, there were no major discipline issues and he had the impression that his ideas and passion were providing a really positive classroom environment for his students; in fact, dare he say, they were getting

a much better experience than the year 1 class next door, where he could hear the AP shouting at the children about their poor behaviour for much of the school day.

The principal said she was not going to transfer the students at this point, but that she would meet with the parents to discuss all the wonderful initiatives that Lei had introduced. She was very supportive of him and he felt a little better after the meeting. The matter wasn't raised again, but Lei felt anxious about how he was being viewed for the rest of that term.

Lei's challenge involved reassuring parents that he is competent to look after their children. He does all the right things and seems to have provided a positive classroom environment. He meets the challenge of parental concern head-on by inviting the parents to meet with him and hear what he has planned. However, it seems that for some parents, the only factor that is relevant is his age. Luckily, Lei has a supportive principal, and hopefully together they will manage to resolve the situation and allow Lei to continue teaching without feeling anxious about how he is being assessed by the parents.

Interpreting First Experiences

Most of the research on the experiences of beginning teachers focuses on their experiences within the classroom. Issues of authority, classroom management and subject-matter competence are often the focal point of discussion on praxis shock experienced in the first months of teaching (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). Jenny raises a number of issues in her story regarding expectations of the students, the resilience of the teacher and how teachers should portray themselves to the students in the early days. The praxis shock evident in her story centres on Jenny's responsibilities and interactions with her students and on her perspectives on teaching them.

One of the key questions that Jenny is grappling with concerns the image that she wishes to portray to the students. She is aware that she opens herself to discipline problems if she treats the students as her friends; the warnings from her lecturers still ring in her ears. The strategy of being formal and distant seems to be working as a disciplinary method. It also seems effective in getting her students to work hard in her class, as James's mother indicated.

However, there is another aspect to this formal image that Jenny is uncomfortable with: The students perceive her as humourless and formal and appear to be a little frightened of her. When she couples this with her desire to build good relationships with her students, there is a misalignment. She is sympathetic to the students' need for a mother figure, which appears to be the case for students in the first year of high school, and also wants her students to know that she respects and values their contributions. Her dilemma lies in creating the warm and caring relationship she really wants with her students without giving up the control and authority that she has worked hard to develop.

Jenny's teacher educators may have given her some sound advice about how to start the year, but perhaps they should have continued by saying that Jenny needed to find a personal balance between the image of a distant and somewhat scary person that she worked hard at portraying and the 'real' Jenny who believes in her students and is interested in all aspects of their lives. Once Jenny indicated what was acceptable in her class and what was not and had established the classroom ethos she wanted, she would likely have had the freedom to develop relationships with her students in which she could show her interest, respect and concern for them. Certainly, one of the challenges for beginning teachers concerns how they should construct themselves. What sort of image do they want to project to their students? How authoritarian should they be? What sort of classroom ethos would they like? Once they have clarity on these questions, they are more able to develop strategies to become the sort of teacher they would like to be.

It is interesting that Jenny's respect for and belief in her Year 10 class had been apparent to her students and that this appeared to have motivated her students to study for the test. It would be interesting to see how sustained the success of her students will be. Jenny acknowledges that coming to the class with fresh eyes was a factor in their success. Her idealism leads to shock at Brian's cynical view of the students; we can only hope that this view does not always come with experience.

A final point that arises from Jenny's story concerns the need for resilience. Teachers need to be resilient in many ways: psychologically, it is essential for them to have the resilience to believe in themselves after a difficult day, to keep going when exhausted from pitting their will against those of students who wished to be disruptive or from spending long hours preparing lessons; and physically, to maintain their health in less than ideal circumstances. Beginning teachers need that resilience more than most, yet they are the ones who might not have developed this trait yet.

We turn now to Alison's story of praxis shock, which is related to her interactions with the staff in the school organisation. It appears from Alison's story that she is at a school in which most staff are dismissive of, or have forgotten, the challenges of being a new teacher. Far from nurturing and supporting her, they seem disinclined to help her in any way. The teacher who took over the furniture from the reading corner might well have had a good reason for doing so; she might have set up that corner in the classroom herself and brought in the books and cushions to provide an inviting reading area. If she were unaware that Alison had seen the reading corner on her early visit to the classroom, she would not have seen the need to tell her that she was taking it over. Presumably, teachers would feel that having been at the school longer than the newcomer would entitle them to enjoy certain privileges before the new teacher did, so the reading corner incident in itself does not indicate an uncaring or indifferent staff.

However, when the storeroom resources are kept hidden from a new teacher, either wilfully or because no one thought to tell her about them, the picture of the staff and the school becomes a little bleaker. Alison is left to spend a great deal of her hard-earned money and, possibly as serious, to spend hours of precious time purchasing the resources she needs to be the teacher she desires to be. There is an organisational deficit in this situation as well as a personnel one. A mentor or

supervisor should have shown Alison the storeroom and the equipment it held when she first came to the school. While this oversight was remedied when Alison confided in her supervisor, this came too late to prevent the needless expenditure of money and time. Perhaps the lesson to be learned in this situation is that beginning teachers should approach their supervisors more readily when they have a problem. Supervisors will be hard pushed to consider all situations on which they will need to brief their new staff. The beginning teacher needs to raise the issues that are relevant and important to them personally, even though this is often difficult for the newest person in a school.

Nevertheless, Alison's story does raise the importance of the general attitude of staff towards newcomers. The school ethos should have been a welcoming one in which staff are encouraged to support newcomers in any way they can. A school that is a community of practice with shared goals is going to support its staff and gain better outcomes for staff and students than one that is competitive and encourages individual practice within the privacy of the four walls of each classroom.

The third aspect of praxis shock comes from interactions with parents. In Lei's case, he was a competent young man with enthusiasm and commitment to teaching. However, his youth and freshness are not seen as a benefit by some of the parents of the students in his class, as some seek experience instead. Lei tries to assure the parents that he is up to the job and invites them to see what he has planned for the term. But his actions, highly appropriate as they are, are sabotaged by a question from the parents. 'How old are you?' is an improper question for a parent to ask, and its very improperness would have left Lei unprepared to field such a question. Learning how to manage parents and their expectations is an important aspect of becoming a teacher. Including parents in the classroom activities and in discussions about the students' learning and the goals for the students is usually a powerful way of both benefiting from their expertise and building relationships with an important stakeholder group in students' development. For newcomers to the profession, youth and inexperience often make this relationship a difficult one.

Implications

The stories here highlight a number of major themes that confront teachers in their first months. These are praxis shock, authority and control, parents and staff and organisation. We discuss the implications of each of these themes in this section.

Praxis Shock

The experience of starting to teach is often accompanied by what has variously been called 'praxis shock' (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002), 'reality shock' (Gordon & Maxey, 2000) or 'transition shock' (Corcoran, 1981). Veenman describes

such 'reality shock' as 'the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of classroom life' (1984, p. 143). Teachers' views of the classroom and their roles are at odds with the realities of working in schools. Often, there is a realisation that they are poorly prepared for the challenges of the 'real world' of schools and teaching. Anticipation of autonomy and creativity and feelings of idealism and passion come into conflict with the requirements of administration, curriculum, battle-weary staff and recalcitrant students. The challenge for teacher education programmes is to prepare future teachers for the realities of the school while nurturing and fostering their students' idealism and passion.

The literature shows that when a good induction programme exists for beginning teachers, and when new teachers have adequate support from mentor teachers, the reality shock is softened, and the early experiences become far more manageable (Bezzina, 2006; Schuck et al., 2011). Bezzina suggests that it is not possible for teacher education programmes to fully address all the challenges that will be experienced by teachers in their first months. She highlights the importance of teacher learning, of the ongoing nature of teacher growth and development. She argues that a teacher's personal traits and the dispositions teachers adopt are most influential on their journey in these early months. This supports the argument made earlier in this chapter about the need to help teachers develop resilience rather than try to fix problems as they occur. Waters (cited in Bezzina) suggests that programmes that have a focus on developing 'the inner resources' of the teacher (Bezzina, p. 419) will be beneficial in this respect.

Bullough raises other aspects of teacher formation as vital, stating 'midst the diversity of tales of becoming a teacher and studies of the content and form of the story, two conclusions of paramount importance to teacher educators emerge: prior experience and beliefs are central to shaping the story line, as is the context of becoming a teacher' (1997, p. 95). His review of research in this area seems to indicate that one of the most important areas to which teacher educators can contribute is the shaping of teacher beliefs. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002, p. 107) suggest that teachers construct their careers through 'a personal interpretive framework', in which teachers make meaning of their lives as professionals ('the professional self') and enact their knowledge and beliefs about teaching ('subjective educational theory'). They suggest that the tensions and conflicts between these two aspects of their framework, as teachers transition from their teacher education to working in schools, often lead to doubts and modifications of the framework.

It appears that there are two central tasks here for those who support the education of teachers: For teacher educators, a focus on developing resilience and shaping teacher beliefs so that the gap between what is learnt in teacher education programmes and what occurs in the reality of schools is lessened; and for teacher mentors in schools, the need to be supportive and welcoming into the teaching community. Bezzina (2006) highlights the need to better support students in teacher education programmes but suggests that equally important is the need for schools to continue with this support, both during early years and beyond.

Authority and Control

One of the dominant areas that appears central to how beginning teachers experience their first few months in the classroom concerns classroom management. Classroom management includes behaviour management and is allied to teacher authority and control. Numerous studies (Bezzina, 2006; Kim, Stormont, & Espinosa, 2009; Schuck et al., 2011) identify one of the greatest challenges for the beginning teacher as class discipline or behaviour management. Schuck et al. found that one of the most important factors contributing to beginning teachers' choices to remain in teaching concerns their ability to engage their students. Ertesvag (2011) supports this finding, noting that teacher education programmes need to emphasise the quality of teacher-pupil relationships, to better address the area of behaviour management.

McNally, I'anson, Whewell, and Wilson (2005) suggest that despite the agreement in the literature about the challenge of behaviour management for beginning teachers, there is little that is of a practical nature in helping beginning teachers to develop strategies for managing this issue. Yet the way that teachers establish their authority and control in the early months is fundamental for their experience in later months and years. Strategies that can be provided by teacher education programmes are useful but limited in that they are decontextualised, abstract and unlikely to meet the needs of all teachers in all situations. There is an imperative for ongoing support with behaviour management to continue when teachers are in schools. This support could be offered by teacher education institutions or within schools or employing authorities. In Scotland, for example, 'behaviour coordinators' have been appointed in schools to address this priority.

Parents

Parents are becoming increasingly recognised for their importance as stakeholders in their children's education. Fullan (1991, p. 227) notes that 'the closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and education achievement'. However, the 'parent closeness' is nuanced and complex. On the one hand, parent involvement can ensure a better understanding of the complexities and challenges of teaching and schooling. On the other hand, parental involvement is often on an individual basis and operates in terms of parent as consumer, making individual decisions regarding their children (Woods, 1988). The welfare of the school is not of as much interest in their participation. Involving the parent, in this case, can lead to friction and difficulties. While parents have much to offer to schools and classes in terms of their contributions to class learning and expertise in areas that can be of benefit to the class, decisions regarding their children's welfare can be from a limited perspective.

When the additional part of the picture concerns the beginning teacher, parental input can be problematic. Grimsaeth, Nordvik, and Bergsvik (2008) note the

difficulties that beginning teachers might experience in managing parents in a professional way. They note the increasing input that parents feel entitled to have and the arguments that parents put forward regarding the education of their child. Everyone has been in a classroom, and the skills and competencies that teachers need are often invisible to parents. The perception that anyone can teach bolsters a view that the parent is the expert when their children's education is at stake. When young and inexperienced teachers have to manage parental expectations, this is challenging. Teacher education programmes need to ensure that their students are taught how to cooperate and manage relationships with parents. Schools need to support beginning teachers by giving them the authority to make decisions about the children in their charge and to indicate to parents that the person teaching their child is a professional.

Support by Staff and Organisation

Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002) introduce the notion of the 'micro-political perspective' into their discussion of beginning teachers' transition to the school. This perspective takes into account the organisational culture and the socialisation of teachers. It refers to behaviours of the individuals and groups within the organisation which are enacted to further their own interests (as can be seen in the case of Alison and her resources) but also to the community building that exists in many schools. They note that beginning teachers not only have to manage their relationships and responsibilities with students and their understandings and teaching of curriculum but also have to develop and negotiate their place in the school as organisation. Their study found that new teachers seek affirmation from their colleagues and that the construction of their professional selves is very dependent on how they are viewed by their colleagues. Teachers are vulnerable, and external criticism, such as that experienced by Lei, magnifies their vulnerability. Support from understanding colleagues is essential to maintain their self-esteem and belief in what they are doing.

The discussion by Kelchtermans and Ballet highlights the need for teachers to develop a micro-political literacy. They need to be able to read the micro-political culture in the school in order to gain a sense of when it is appropriate to respond and how to respond. Alison needed to develop her understanding of the school culture confronting her and how to manage that. Related to that is the need to develop a set of strategies to handle the micro-politics within the school. Kelchtermans and Ballet stress that the strategies that are appropriate in one school may not work in another. This makes it difficult for teacher education programmes to develop a set of strategies that will work for all. However, knowing that micro-politics is an important aspect of the beginning teacher's experience is useful so that both in teacher education programmes and in induction programmes within schools, sensitivity to this phenomenon and ways of ensuring positive experiences in the micro-political sphere can be developed.

Conclusions

Praxis shock is evident in many stories of the first months of teaching. Teacher education programmes and induction programmes in schools have the challenge of lessening this praxis shock and sensitising students to the micro-political arena that is the school. We can do this by helping our student teachers to develop resilience and to identify the different professional influences that are at play in the school. In schools, we can use our understanding of the micro-political situation that operates in our context to support our new teachers to understand the organisation and to respond appropriately to it. Affirmation of new staff is important for strengthening their self-esteem and giving them the impetus to become the teachers they strive to be.

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Chapter 3
The Kids Today: Alphabet Generations in Transition

It seems that there has always been a perceived generation gap and a tendency to take a deficit view of coming generations:

> Tis the defect of age to rail at the pleasures of youth. (Susannah Centlivre, quoted in Andrews, 1981)

It is not possible here to provide a comprehensive analysis of children and adolescents today. Indeed, it would be impossible in a short space to describe many characteristics of relevant generations. Rather, this chapter highlights some aspects attributed to recent generations and theories of motivation pertinent to a teacher working in schools today. It cautions against allowing generalisations regarding generations to determine how we interact with, view or judge our students and classes. Relevant to this discussion is the impact of technological advances. The influence of such technological developments on the nature, capabilities and interest of learners is extensive, with significant implications. These are considered in Chapter 9.

Generations: Same, Same But Different

The popular media are replete with views on Generations X, Y and Z, Hex, Millennials, Generation Me, the digital generation, the baby boomers and the like (Wyn & Woodman, 2006). Simple definitions are based on years of birth. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005) defines Generations X, Y and Z as being born in the years 1965 to 1981, 1982 to 2000 and 2001 to present, respectively. Here we are primarily concerned with Generations Y and Z. If we are to support beginning teachers to teach these young people, we need to understand them. Sometimes descriptions of generations are laid down as lists of characteristics. It is as if the nature of an entire population and the individuals within it is determined by an accident of birth. For example (adapted from Ivanova & Smrikarov, 2009),

Generation Y:

- Were 'treated as special by their parents' who determined and organised their lives
- Grew up with so much choice that they regard this as a right
- Are pragmatic and rational with a strong career orientation
- Do not respect authority
- Are visual kinaesthetic learners
- Have short attention spans
- Are poor finishers lacking patience and persistence
- Are 'rule followers' and team-oriented

Generation Z is less well known, but some characteristics that have been anticipated include:

- Being driven by 'fun' with education and work playing relatively minor roles in their lives
- Being bad listeners, inattentive and seeking instant gratification
- Being individualistic rather than 'team players'
- Having poor verbal skills but ready to speak out frankly and express opinions
- Being independent
- Having little regard for current 'social norms'

This is not a complete list, and there is insufficient space here to consider the different characterisations of each relevant generation or their merits. Such lists and brief descriptions of these generations tend to emphasise perceived deficits or challenges for education and society. It has ever been thus. In the eighth century BCE, the Greek poet Hesiod lamented:

> I see no hope for the future of our people if they are dependent on frivolous youth of today, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words… When I was young, we were taught to be discreet andrespectful of elders, but the present youth are exceedingly wise [disrespectful] and impatient of restraint. (quoted by Roberts, Edmonds, & Grijalva, 2010)

The short episodes below describe experiences of beginning teachers in classes from kindergarten to year 12. The students range from Generation Z to Generation Y. The stories and discussions not only focus attention on the characteristics reputed to be associated with the generations of students in classes today but also challenge the ways in which we view these generations.

They Make Me Feel…: Linda's Story

Linda was a casual teacher in primary schools. She got a full-time job and joined her class at the start of term 2. She says:

> I got the information on my Year 2 class today: Six ADHD, seven Asthma – no eight Asthma – one severe peanut allergy; one anaphylactic shock in response to extreme temperatures; one autistic and two – hmm two with confidential files marked 'not to leave the office'. How nice it would be to have a class

file that also read: six with lovely temperaments, seven highly self-motivated etc. I suppose none of my students will die if I don't notice they aren't exuding friendliness, but they might if I fail to notice they've stopped breathing. I'm a bit frightened by the two that have to carry Epi-pens with them. It's OK for mum and dad to keep an eye on one, two or three, but I've got nearly 30 to watch and half of them have an illness. I'm not sure I have the training or experience to deal with all of this.

One could be forgiven for suspecting that the large number of students identified with allergies, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and the like is the product of 'helicopter' parents hovering over children and fussing about every minor ailment. With regard to some conditions listed, it is debatable whether there has been an increase in the prevalence of such conditions (Maras & Redmayne, 1997). It is perhaps more likely that there have been improvements in communication between parents and schools, that schools are more aware of the conditions and that schools have become more proactive in ensuring that classroom teachers are better informed about their students. Twenty years ago, it was not unheard of for such information to be filed carefully in an office. A teacher might only be advised of an allergy or disorder after the child was having convulsions on the floor. Nevertheless, the responsibility of taking the class is made all the more daunting because of this advance knowledge, even if many of the potential consequences may not occur. Linda continues:

> It was interesting to get that scary set of information with the first official data on my class, but now I've been teaching them a week. When I started with the class they all wanted to talk at the same time, all wanted my immediate attention. Maybe it's because I'm new and they want to be noticed.
>
> It's week two and it's not just that I'm new. I taught some demanding students in classes on 'prac' but these kids just seem to have no routine at all. If they want something they call out, or just get out of their seats and go to get it, not caring who they disturb. They seem totally unaware of the impact their actions have on others and only care about themselves. They can't pay attention for more than five seconds at time. They are so Gen Z …
>
> Not true. I feel sorry for most of the class. There are really only about five kids that are terrible and they set the rest off. It's very frustrating. Some of them really just want to please me—sometimes that's annoying, 'Miss, Miss, Misss, Miisss'. Which is code for 'look at me, look at me, look at me'. It's so obvious when they know I'm waiting for them to settle down. A lot of them sit waiting patiently with me, with a finger pressed to their lips. It looks funny, but they are gorgeous. I must tell them it's not necessary. It's odd that a small group of self-absorbed kids can make it so hard for everyone. I spoke to one of the troublesome boys' mum after school. She said he has been having trouble transitioning, but it's Year 2. He's been at school for almost two and a half years. Must be a long transition. I feel sorry for the kids who just want to get on with it and learn. It's been a long week. It's Friday afternoon and I hate the person I've become.

By contrast, her friend is also starting with a class mid-year. Linda describes her friend's class:

It's a Kindergarten class at a neighbouring school. Her class is lovely, well behaved and courteous. They're in an excellent routine with a clear, well-understood pattern of activities each day. Once she gets most of the class working away even the reluctant ones tend to follow pretty quickly. They're pretty well motivated in class. I don't know whether they're keen to learn, or just like the stars and rewards she gives them, or see kinder as a first step towards becoming future captains of industry.

Then I think about my class and how hard some of them make it for the others to learn. Kimberly needs plenty of attention and gets a bit ratty if I don't praise her frequently and let her know that I'm interested in what she's doing every moment of the day. There are others who can be a handful. I have to watch Paul and Jake every second because they fight and hit each other. I'm not sure whether they like each other or hate each other. I'm still working it out. I tell myself it is getting better bit by bit... Some days I am so frustrated because it is all back to square one and they are as bad as ever.

A number of themes emerge from Linda's stories. One theme is transition. Transition is often associated with a move from preschool to school, primary school to secondary school, school to university and education to the workplace. Yet transition can occur over a long period and be disrupted (Cote & Levine, 2000). The need for attention in Linda's class is on occasion attributed to her students being Generation Z, but 'attention-seeking behaviour' has been a catch-all phrase for teachers for many years. What is striking is that the behaviour of a small number of students can, at least initially, influence the teacher's perceptions of a whole class and even a generation. Yet as these teachers get to know their students as individuals, they see a variety of people with diverse characteristics who require different teaching responses.

Turning Things Around: Santo's Story

Santo is in his first year of teaching. He was at a 'hard-to-staff' school. He had grown up in the area and wanted to be a teacher to help improve the lives of young people he could identify with—children and youths who reminded him of himself and his friends.

This is Santo's story:

One of his classes was Year 8 (the second year in high school). Santo had a very patient strategy in working with his class. He was in this for the long haul. He had seen what had come of some of his old school friends—suicide, misery and crime. However, he had also seen other outcomes for friends—fulfilling work, families and happiness.

One day Santo went into his Year 8 class and they began to bang on their desks in an obviously planned display. Santo had no idea what had caused them to do this on this day. As they clearly had no interest in learning anything he had to offer, saw no future for themselves arising from an education and no obvious work prospects, it was always difficult to engage them long enough to learn anything. But this day was different. Santo just waited and waited. After about 20 minutes some of the students started yelling at the others to stop and the class settled down. To just sit and wait required enormous patience. He began the lesson but was struck by how irrelevant education was perceived to be by this class, how low their self-esteem was with no prospects and how their response was not so much a response to him but rather an outpouring of their life. It was not done in anger, but constructed as an event to alleviate the boredom.

After the disturbance, Santo thought he had reached a turning point with the class. He thought they had come to a crisis and would now be more willing to work with him. He was wrong. He never managed to build a meaningful learning relationship with Year 8.

In the same way, his Year 7 class was equally disinterested in school and learning science. In some ways it would have been better if they hated science and had a genuine response to it, but he felt as if it barely touched their consciousness. They neither liked nor disliked it, rather they simply ignored it because of its perceived irrelevance. Santo tried to do as much practical work as possible with Year 7. It was hard because it created opportunities for misbehaviour, but the practical work also allowed for social interactions in groups. This seemed to result in a semblance of learning.

He had set up a practical for which they needed gloves but there were no gloves to be had in the school. He bought a box of latex gloves. He had often bought things for his classes. In his first year he spent about $5000 on materials and equipment for teaching his class. It was something that continued for 3 years until he got married. At which time his partner suggested that there might be other things on which they spent their money. The latex gloves were in his laboratory but when he came to get them and use them with his class they were gone—stolen. The practical had to be cancelled and this, above all things throughout the year, punctured his patient disposition. Later, he complained to other teachers in the staff room about how selfish and self-centred the students were. How they didn't even want the gloves, but just wanted a bit of fun at any cost and had no regard for the impact on others. Oddly, he didn't really feel this way about them but he was aggrieved by the events.

Another teacher who had the same class of students for another subject 'blasted' the class during his lesson, telling them that Mr. Santo had bought the gloves and many other things for them so that they could do practical work. This had occurred without Santo's knowledge or consent. The next day he quietly and patiently went about his lesson with Year 7 before lunch. The class was surprisingly well behaved but then again it was a good practical activity. The lesson ended and there were still things to clean up and put away, but he dismissed the class. Some bolted out the door as usual, but again to his surprise

a group of students stayed and began to clean up, put things away and talk to him as they did so. They never said they were sorry or acknowledged the recent events. They simply helped. He later found out the whole sequence of events and realised the class now understood and appreciated the effort he put in for them. They seemed to realise he thought they were worth his effort and had responded. They were by no means perfect, but he found himself looking forward to teaching his Year 7 class in the weeks to come. They were not instantly interested in science but now at least he had the opportunity to get them interested, if he was good enough. He wasn't. But, now that he has been teaching for a few years, he claims the secret is getting to know the kids, their likes and dislikes, whether they play soccer or netball. Letting them see that he is interested in them, that they are important, worth knowing and that each one is worth his time and effort.

Five years later, Santo said that he still does not think he would be capable of 'turning that year 8 class around'. However, he has a set of basic principles that have served him well, which include: patience, liking his students, building a relationship based on getting to know his students, having high expectations, effort and commitment that is palpable as well as being a skilful, resourceful practitioner. Each year, he has to earn the respect of the new classes he takes. He does not see them as Generation X, Y or any other 'Generation'. He knows them as young people in complex sociocultural environments. Many do not value formal school education or the curriculum on offer. To them, it is as if both have been designed for some 'unknown others' of their generation. Many of his students exhibit characteristics of low self-esteem, and many have poor basic skills in literacy and numeracy. It is a challenging teaching environment, but Santo remains committed and resourceful.

Settling the Score: Nola's Story

Nola works at a very different school from that of Santo. Her school draws on a different clientele with very different academic orientations. She says:

I am exhausted. I have just returned the tests to Year 11. It was a nightmare. It seemed everyone wanted an extra mark for this, or to get me to explain why I didn't give a mark for that, and how she got three marks but her friend Liz got five when their answers were almost the same. How I wish they would get a test back, read the feedback, realise they don't quite understand it and ask so that they learn rather than ask to get a better score. The whole class is driven by scores and results. They all want to go to university. Not just any university. It's got to be the best. I swear they all have tutors in at least one subject. I overheard them talking at lunch and they were not swapping YouTube videos. They were exchanging tutor contacts. They're driven and determined to get ahead, get the right degree and the right job. School is just a race to be won or lost. I spoke to Greg about it because he's so good at Maths, but has no interest

in it. I asked him what he thought he was doing Maths for. He told me that for him it was a means to an end. That he does the work and gets good marks. For him it's not about learning, per se, he needs a good score to get into university. We kept talking for a while because I wanted to understand where they're coming from. It frustrated me that he's so happy with the system that's making him jump through hoops. What I find surprising is that he understands the system so well, knows what it is doing and how it impacts on education. He's just using it to get where he wants to go. He knows he wants to be a solicitor. He said, 'The system works. It worked for mum [who is a solicitor] and it will work for me'. I thought teaching would be about more than pumping kids through the test regime. Maybe I am too idealistic.

Secret Gifts: Marina's Story

Marina also had a class in its final year of school, a history class. She says:

> I know I mustn't have favourites, but at the end of the last class I asked Rose, Anthony and Maroon to stay back. When everyone had gone I gave them a book each and thanked them for being in my class. Rose and Anthony were not the top students in the class but they engaged with the ideas and were engrossed in the class discussions. They had made it easier to come to work each day in my first year. They just seemed to get what history is about. I told them not to tell anyone about the books. I didn't know whether they understood why I did it. I actually felt a bit embarrassed. Then I got an email from Anthony. He got it. He has decided to be a teacher—not History though, I'm afraid.

Nola's class is Generation Y, but it exhibits a mix of the Generation Y and Generation X characteristics that are identified above. They are individualistic and competitive, pragmatic and career oriented. They may be rule followers but know how to use the education system and its rules to their advantage. They have the opportunity and capabilities to learn, but at least in Nola's class, they are not so much interested in the intrinsic rewards of knowledge creation as in the extrinsic rewards derived from educational performance. This may be a function of the class being in their final year of school when they compete for university places. They have been shaped by their sociocultural environment and are conforming to many of the standards that are highly valued by the dominant culture's measures of success. Marina's class had much in common with Nola's, but at least some Generation Ys valued ideas and rich conversation as well as the intrinsic worth of learning. It is unclear whether the intrinsic worth of learning is cast out in response to the high-stakes, competitive education environment or merely masked by it. Although very different, Nola's, Marina's and Santo's classes raise important questions about motivation and its implications for teaching and learning. One thing that is clear from the stories is that the differences within Generations Y and Z may be greater and more important to attend to than the differences between these generations.

Implications

The thumbnail sketches of the young, in terms of the generation to which they belong, may be helpful in guiding decisions we make about teaching, learning and catering to their interest, needs and capabilities. Yet we need to take care neither to view members of each generation as a homogenous group nor to accept descriptions without scepticism. It is noteworthy that when each characteristic attributed to a particular generation is analysed in depth, the picture that emerges is almost invariably complex and ambiguous. In several instances, the young people in the stories were perceived to be self-centred as well as being unconcerned by the impacts they have on others. The purported self-centredness or narcissistic tendencies of Generation Y that led them to be labelled 'Generation Me', for example, has been studied with interesting and conflicting results. When Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, and Bushman (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of 85 studies of generational narcissistic scores, they found a moderately statistically significant increase in self-centredness with each generation. On the other hand, when Roberts et al. (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of similar data for similar generations, which included the same 85 studies as Twenge et al. (2008), they did not find fundamental differences between generations in self-centredness. They argued that the observable differences between populations of different ages were better explained in terms of aging or maturation rather than generational difference. In short, younger people of all generations are more narcissistic when they are young than when they are older. Hence, every generation is 'Generation Me'—when it is young.

If a more extensive list of characteristics is considered, mixed results are evident. Some data indicate that there are key differences in generational personality traits such as self-esteem, misery, future expectations and self-confidence (e.g. Twenge, 2006; Twenge & Foster, 2008). By contrast, other analyses of generations (Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2010) find no statistical differences on measures such as egotism, individualism, self-esteem, life satisfaction, happiness, antisocial behaviour or activities such as time spent working, watching television and political activity. Trzesniewski and Donnellan suggest that a more perplexing question is not what personality differences exist between generations, but rather why there is such popular 'persistence of beliefs about cohort-related changes when clear evidence of such effects is fairly limited' (p. 72).

The argument here is not that generational differences do not exist. Rather, our conclusion is that there may be differences, but precisely what these differences are is difficult to say with any certainty, even for Generations X and Y, which have been extensively studied as they move towards and into adulthood. For Generation Z, which is less well studied, being in much earlier stages of development, the evidence is less sound and best viewed as speculation. The critical need is not to know whether there are differences between generations but rather to understand the individuals from the generations that teachers are responsible for teaching.

The uncritical acceptance of generational characterisations is inappropriate. Nevertheless, it would be unwise to ignore generational attributes and their

sociocultural contexts because they are incomplete and can never be universally true. Rather, we need to be informed by them and consider their implications for students, teaching and learning. There are important personality traits that are common among the young that we ought to keep in mind. These include self-esteem, self-centredness, anxiety, confidence, life satisfaction, happiness and many others. There is also an underlying theme indicating that motivations and learning styles of Generations X and Y are different from past generations. They have high priorities, other than study and career, such as leisure, family and their social life.

There is an assumption that young people are transitioning to adulthood, and too often it is assumed that the transition is to adulthood in a world equivalent to that of past generations. The world is changing. Young people are not merely transitioning to adulthood. They are 'shaping new meanings and experiences of adulthood… It is easy to slip into the view that this generation would or should be the same as the previous generation. The point is they cannot, they are doomed to fail transitions, because the circumstances that enabled and shaped previous generations are no longer in existence' (Wyn & Woodman, 2006, p. 511). Unfortunately, education and youth policies are more closely aligned with transitions into the adulthood experienced by a previous generation. The current generation of older school children experiences an overlap between traditional child, adolescent and adult experiences. Many school-aged youth juggle both the heavy demands of long hours of part-time work and full-time school (te Riele & Wyn, 2005). They seek to strike a challenging balance between such diverse demands as work, family and school. In each they may have different identities, levels of responsibilities and roles. According to te Riele and Wyn (p. 135), as a consequence they require 'more flexible (schooling)… appropriate curriculum and facilities, and respectful and caring treatment of young people'. The sociocultural context of each generation is different. The generations are difficult to define, and perhaps, as a consequence, there is a tendency towards such categorisations. Yet when we consider literature on motivations, it is difficult to avoid the conclusions of fundamental views of motivation:

> Motivation is what energises people; it is what causes people to engage in some activities and not others… to expend effort in the activities they engage in and what causes them to persist with activities, often in the face of considerable difficulty. Lack of motivation leads people to put minimal effort into their activities and not to persist with them. (Walker, 2010, p. 2)

For life at school, the relationship between context and motivation is critical. There are complex typologies of motivation (Walker, Pressick-Kilborn, Sainsbury, & MacCallum, 2010), but in broad terms, there are three families of motivation theory that are noteworthy here:

- Cognitive motivation theory, which emphasises the role of cognitive processes and where motivation is primarily viewed as a personal, individual characteristic
- Social cognitive motivation, where the social environment significantly and fundamentally influences individual motivational attributes
- Sociocultural motivational theory, which views motivation as fundamentally social and locates motivation in the interactions between the individual and the sociocultural environment

Given the changing sociocultural context of youth, the social-cognitive and emerging sociocultural approaches seem particularly relevant. They allow the development of some principles for education that might allow us to channel the motivation of students of all ages. Turner and Paris (1995), for example, have suggested characteristics of learning experiences likely to contribute to motivation as a list of Cs including choice, control, challenge and collaboration, to which construction of meaning, consequences and conclusion were later added (Paris, 1997). Notably absent is competition—theorists argue about the effects of competition on long-term motivation (Walker, 2010). By implication, the list of Cs suggests designs for learning in which

- Students have some choice and control regarding what they learn and how they go about their learning
- The learning is intellectually demanding
- There are opportunities for students to work together as teams

It also follows that knowledge needs to be viewed as a human construction, open to scrutiny rather than preordained, that time and effort need to be devoted to establishing the worth of the learning being sought and that actions and decisions should be analysed to determine their consequences. Such learning designs pose a challenge to beginning teachers operating in environments such as those described in the stories above, where competition is prominent, the curriculum is viewed as irrelevant by many and school work concentrates on achievements of individuals rather than collaborative teams. In a sociocultural view, motivation is transformatively internalised from social interactions (Walker, 2010). This implies the need to also focus on a sense of connectedness with others, in particular, interpersonal relations with peers and within sensitive trusted spaces with capable others—such as teachers. More specifically, Walker argues that it is inherently motivational for learning to be organised with regard to the zone of proximal development. Thus, the learner can experience success in new activities and thinking with the support of the capable adult or more capable peer. This too places significant demands on beginning teachers to do as Santo tried to do: to establish trust, create meaningful, respectful relationships, make explicit the value of the learning and its relevance and provide scaffolds for success.

Conclusions

> The children now love luxury; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise. Children are tyrants, not servants of the households. They no longer rise when their elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and tyrannize over their teachers. (Often, and probably falsely, attributed to Socrates)

No doubt, we are all shocked that the young might 'cross their legs' and 'gobble up dainties', even if this was about 2,500 years ago. Perhaps we are shocked that so

many of Santo's classes were uninterested in science or that Greg valued education not for the knowledge it offered but only for the career pathway it provided. It seems that the young consistently and historically fail to live up to expectations and are unwilling to live by the rules of the generations that judge them.

Ausubel (1968, p. vi) famously wrote: 'The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner knows. Ascertain this and teach accordingly'. This remains good advice, but we could add, learn as much as you can about the learner, his or her contexts and find ways to connect with that. Listen to the children and adolescents. By listening, we do not mean only to the words they speak but also to gain a sense of their interests, desires, needs, life, knowledge and nature.

There are challenges for education and teachers beginning their careers with Generations Y and Z. Not the least of which is repositioning learning, teaching and school as a means by which young people can gain control over their future (Wyn & Woodman, 2006).

There is no one size to fit all. This has never been appropriate. It is becoming more problematic. As te Riel and Wyn (2005, p. 119) point out:

> … the concept of mainstreaming which has dominated education and youth policy… is now very outmoded. One of the most significant effects of social change over the last quarter of a century has been to create diversity in the lives of young people … institutional frameworks that are based on assumptions about a mainstream of youth themselves risk becoming obsolete.

There is a growing consensus that current forms of school education may struggle to deliver the needs of the coming generations. What will change and how much change is wise is debatable (this theme is taken up in Chapter 9). New teachers need to be asking how they will influence and be influenced by the school system in which they work, and how they will influence or be influenced by the nature of the students today.

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Chapter 4
The Way We Do Things Around Here: School Culture and Socialisation

Customers in this shop are respectfully asked to say 'please' and 'thank you' when exchanging goods and money

You are unlikely to see a sign like the one above. Yet in many 'Western' contexts, if you do not say thank you at least once when you are buying something, the shopkeeper is unlikely to think highly of you. For those of us who have grown up in such cultures, we have been apprenticed, from an early age, to say thank you. We do not grace newcomers with this inside information—not as conspiracy but because it does not occur to us to do so; the rules of our own culture are so well camouflaged that it is almost impossible for them to appear strange to us and in need of explanation. In any case, explaining to an adult rules such as saying thanks would probably strike us as insulting and condescending.

School culture operates in this way. School is a semiotic, or system of symbols, each of which has meaning to someone who already 'speaks the language', but the same symbols have no meaning, or a deceptive meaning, to outsiders. For an outsider trying to come to grips with a new culture, the experience can be a bit like translating an idiom from another language using a bilingual dictionary. Each word may make sense, but their combination leaves us scratching our heads. In Italian, 'in bocca al lupo' says 'in the mouth of the wolf'. This may seem an unpleasant experience to wish on anyone, but it is best translated as 'good luck'. With the spoken words, the context tells us that the literal meaning cannot be right. With culture, though, we might not be alert to the subtle cues that could tell us that something is amiss.

Schools vary in the specificity and clarity of their culture. Some schools specify much of their culture in written or spoken rules that may even require a new teacher to 'sign off' to commit to their beliefs and practices. Others may have few clear spoken or written rules, yet the culture may be no less pervasive and just as determined in its encouragement of compliance. Upon arrival at a new school, you cannot know in advance what you need to know. You often only discover the norms and mores when you transgress them. This brings to the attention of other teachers your ignorance and the need to inform you about how things are done; the inhabitants of the culture only tend to notice what the newcomer needs to know when things go awry.

Thus, these transgressions actually contribute to your initiation into the rites and rituals of the school culture.

As with any intercultural encounter, the beginning of teaching entails a clash of ideologies, viewpoints and presumptions, as the new teacher and the school engage one another. Such encounters can be momentarily exhilarating, but the romance can be short-lived. Cherubini (2011, p. 6, online version) paints a sobering picture, observing that 'impervious school cultures can figuratively drown teacher idealism, suppress their enthusiasm, consume their emotional resiliences, and inhibit their potential to cope with the challenges of the classroom'. The new teacher comes to the profession armed with a certain set of fantasies about it; the onset of teaching can be a time when the magic mirror breaks. This can be a lonely period of disillusionment. But the news is not all bad.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1996, p. 37) describe school culture as follows:

> [T]he set of guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a school operates particularly in reference to how people relate (or fail to relate) to each other. In simple terms, culture is the way we do things and relate to each other around here.

Beare, Caldwell, and Millikan (1991) note that the nature of a school's culture will depend on a variety of factors, including values, experiences and skills represented in the school, and the school's unique historical, geographic and socio-economic traditions.

Much of the research in the field concerning beginning teachers illustrates how the school culture shapes teachers (Schuck, Brady, & Griffin, 2005), but we should not forget that teachers have shaped and do shape their school culture. In some schools, features of their culture seem all but fixed, surviving changes in staff and remaining embedded in the school's identity, sometimes for hundreds of years. Consider, for example, the antique uniforms that grace some of the most elite schools where students can still be found adorned with quasi-military garb, boaters or high collars and tails. This sometimes gives the impression that change is impossible, but school cultures do change, and change often comes about because new people enter the community with new ideas, new practices and new ways of doing things.

Culture serves a purpose in managing interactions and behaviours to decrease conflict, tensions and faux pas. School culture can invigorate as well as debilitate, support as well as undermine. It at least provides a veneer of relaxed comfort. It offers a sense of belonging to those, the majority, who own it and practise its norms and observe its mores. Omaggio (1986, p. 259) suggests that cultures 'are powerful human creations, affording their members a shared identity, a cohesive framework for selecting, constructing and interpreting perceptions, and for assigning value and meaning in a consistent fashion'. In schools with a strong pedagogical culture, for example, a standard way of teaching permeates most classes, resulting in students secure in knowing what to expect and how to go about their learning. Similarly for the new teacher, it offers a way of going about teaching that is likely to be quickly accepted by staff, students and parents as the newcomers become part of the routine. At the other extreme, a school culture may encourage 'free spirits' and teachers to teach as they see fit, with few controls and little oversight.

It seems clear, therefore, that the school culture has a role in helping teachers to clarify their roles and the expectations that are held of them. It is an important factor in

helping or hindering newly qualified teachers in their quest to become effective teachers, and in increasing their job satisfaction (Woods & Weasmer, 2004). The difficulty arises in making the culture visible to the newcomers. How do we come to understand what the school culture is asking and offering? Why is it that we feel school culture pressures us to know everything and to be in control always? The former is impossible, albeit noble, and the latter is undesirable and impossible. If these things are unachievable for experienced teachers, what do newcomers make of them?

School culture evolves. It is a product of its history. This makes it a moving target for new teachers, albeit very slowly moving in some schools. Unfortunately, many of the school-shaping events that influence school culture are not recorded. This makes it difficult to understand for those who have not lived that history. As a result, many practices and customs of a school may seem petty or foolish. They can, however, often be understood in terms of their antecedents. If we examine each of the stories in this chapter, we can see how the rules and customs that feel like a stone in the shoe of the beginning teachers may have come about.

School cultures vary. For new teachers, this presents a challenge in coming to understand the culture of their school, if they are to enter the community, survive and belong. Yet there is an edge at which the culture may be open to change. Beginning teachers often come with expectations that the school where they begin to teach will have a school culture similar to that in which they were taught or to that where they did their student field experience. Where there is strong similarity, there is probably little adjustment and little learning, as beliefs and assumptions tend not to be challenged. Where the school culture is consistent with the beginning teachers' self-image as teacher, there is often quick immersion. However, where the culture is different and its differences are not articulated, the beginning teacher may struggle to learn the culture.

The following four stories serve to illustrate what can happen as beginning teachers come to terms with elements of a school culture that is new and unfamiliar to them.

Testing Times: Melanie's Story

Melanie had a discomforting experience early in her first year of teaching. It involved the testing of her children's reading abilities. The school uses DRTs (Diagnostic Reading Tests, or 'the Dirts', as everyone at her school affectionately calls them). Melanie was keen to test the children's reading abilities early in the year, so as to be able to place them into appropriate reading groups. However, the day after Melanie had got her class to complete the tests, there was a staff meeting, at which Doreen, the principal, had announced that no one was to test the children's reading until term three.

Melanie felt relieved that she hadn't spent time marking the tests. But she had proceeded with the tests on advice sought from the deputy principal. She recalled that at the staff meeting, she had wondered if Doreen had known what she had done. 'I'm sure she fixed her eyes on Sharon [the Deputy] and me longer than on anyone else. Maybe I was just imagining it—product of a guilty conscience'?,

she added. Raising Melanie's suspicions further, soon after the meeting Doreen dropped in to her classroom, just for a chat, for the first time ever. And Melanie was sure Doreen caught sight of the pile of Dirts sitting on the desk. The lines of communication compounded the problem, as Melanie felt that she couldn't go and directly ask the principal a question.

Melanie also confided that the stress was making her snappy with her husband. She recalled one angry phone conversation where he had retorted 'I'm not one of your fourth class kids!'

Melanie felt with a sense of irony that she was the one being tested in her new school, and nobody seemed to be willing or able to tell her the answers she needed. She was sure that wasn't how education worked, and certainly was not what she had been told back at university! She also wondered why you would wait until term three of a four-term school year to test the children.

The problems had not begun with the testing. Melanie's first attempt to ascertain the children's reading abilities started out optimistically enough. She decided to look at their records from last year. But the children's previous two teachers had interpreted and recorded their results in different ways, making it hard to correlate children's reading abilities and book levels. These two teachers had left, and no one seemed to know whether a blue dot was better or worse than a green triangle. And then there were Walid, Mariam and Clement, who were new to the school.

'Everyone's new here', reflected Melanie. It was only a touch beyond the truth. Three of the four teachers on her grade were new, including her supervisor, Sharon.

The most amusing part in retrospect, Melanie recalled, was taking Sharon's advice and trying to smuggle the Dirts out of the school without being caught by Doreen.

We have only heard Melanie's report of this experience. Principal Doreen might see things quite differently, and it is hard to imagine that she does not. Melanie's frustration, however, is palpable; it extends to being snappy with her husband, who would not be the first partner to have 'teacher voice' used on him. His story would also be instructive, but he is currently listed as being unavailable for comment.

Postscript: Melanie went on to establish reading groups that she found satisfactory and productive by week four of term one. The Dirts incident was not forgotten nor without acrimony, but its intensity faded as the life of the school moved on.

In Melanie's school, there is a fear of taking initiative, and this fear is exacerbated by a principal perceived as distant and unapproachable, and by high recent turnover of staff. This level of turnover may be symptomatic. The consequences of breaking the school taboos, however, are probably less fearful than they may at first appear. Melanie's transgression was merely alerted by an announcement during a staff meeting. This may or may not have been sparked by Melanie's actions. Certainly, her specific actions were not even identified by the principal. There is intrigue and conspiracy borne of the desire to conceal what has been done. It is ironic that the deputy

principal aided and abetted the 'crime' and advised removal of the evidence, thereby enacting the antithesis of the open professional dialogue that is essential for teachers and particularly vital for a new teacher's induction into a school. Here, the critical aspect of school culture that is exposed is not simply that that there are unwritten and unknown rules that are and will be broken. Rather, the message lies in how the breach was managed, both by the beginning teacher and the school executive (principal and deputy principal). The beginning teacher could be forgiven for being fearful in an unfamiliar environment. The more experienced teachers should have been able to put Melanie at her ease and manifest the trust to enable her to openly discuss her minor gaffe and to learn from the experience. It is hard not to read the story and wonder how might things have been different: if Melanie had simply said to the principal that she had conducted the tests as she was not aware of the school policy or if Doreen had been able to discuss the matter quietly and give the impression that she was supportive rather than conducting surveillance. This, however, would appear to be inconsistent with this school's culture.

Perhaps reassurance for the beginning teacher comes from knowing that she might not be the only one unaware of the hidden school rules. In this incident, the deputy principal, also new to the school, was unaware of this rule and reacted by trying to cover up the transgression. However, the story would probably look different if told from the deputy principal's perspective; with experience, such transgressions are not felt as seriously or taken as personally as they are with new teachers, who are unaccustomed to the rough and tumble of school life.

We turn now to Joanne's story, which illustrates how school culture is like street signage. Inadequate street signage is a common complaint amongst visitors to an area. By necessity, street signage is done by people who are familiar with the area, people who do not need said signage. In a school, one of the processes of enculturating oneself into a school is that of forgetting. One forgets the difficulties and the unknowns of the early days. The rules seem so obvious to us once we know them.

By the Book: Joanne's Story

Joanne was thrilled when she got a position at a primary school which had an excellent reputation for its educational outcomes. However, she found it challenging to get to grips with the staff's tacit knowledge about how the school operated. Here is her story about an incident that illustrates the difficulties that new arrivals will often experience in penetrating the school culture.

When I came to the school, I inherited a classroom that was full of stuff. There were old magazines that had been used for cutting out pictures, reading books and puzzle books, and even old textbooks all piled up higgledy-piggledy in the corner. I was quite pleased when I saw them all there and thought they would be really useful. It was just a matter of sorting them and tidying them into neat piles, I thought, and then cataloguing what I had. Then I could send children to choose a book in reading time or use some of the magazines when there was some cutting and pasting to do.

Well, I started sorting through the books and magazines and I discovered that they were all really old and not very appealing. I didn't think that my children would be very pleased if they were told to spend their precious reading time in these dusty old tomes. So I thought I would get rid of them.

While I was thinking of how to dispose of them—there really are a lot of them—I had a brilliant idea. I would give them away to a local charity that regularly held book sales and used the proceeds to support street kids. So I contacted the coordinator of Kids in Need, and he was thrilled. He said he would come to the school and collect them—even better! So I didn't have to go anywhere to get rid of them and things were working out well.

The day that Jeff, the charity coordinator, was going to come and collect the books, it suddenly occurred to me that I should check with someone at the school that it was okay to get rid of the books. So I told the deputy principal what I was intending to do and invited her to have a look at the books so that she would be satisfied that they had reached their use-by date. She said she wouldn't bother to check them, that if I thought they were of no use in the classroom, that was fine by her.

Jeff arrived after school and spent almost an hour loading up all the books into his car to take away. After he had driven away, I looked at the newly created space in the classroom and started planning the display I was going to put there. I went home feeling really good, that something had been achieved.

Next day, back at school, I get a message that the principal, Mr. Amos, wanted to see me. I went to his office at lunchtime, thinking that perhaps he had heard about my initiative in getting rid of the books, so I was anticipating a warm reception. Mr. Amos was wearing his avuncular tone and a look of disappointment and gently rebuked me. His reason for this dissatisfaction: although he was not concerned that the books had been donated to charity, the problem was that I was supposed to donate them to the school-sanctioned charity. This charity (The Sullivans) raised money for struggling families. Apparently, the school and community had come to a decision that this would be the charity that the school supported.

This rule about using the Sullivans as the school charity isn't written anywhere, and yet we are supposed to sniff out the information. And is it so serious if I give to a different charity? It's all so impenetrable….

This incident made Joanne feel that she was being (albeit gently) chided for showing initiative and for not knowing the way things happened at her school.

Joanne's story shows that she faced similar problems to Melanie. Why, she asks plausibly enough, does she have to sniff out information? Her offence comes as a surprising twist at the end as we follow this heroine and her tale. One might have anticipated being censured for cutting up magazines, or for getting rid of books, but neither of these acts caused offence. It was the seemingly innocuous act of giving them to charity that constituted a transgression. And yet, with further knowledge, as in any good narrative, we come to understand that the objection may have been reasonable, given a preexisting relationship with another charity.

What might seem like an inconsequential event to the reader had a debilitating effect on Joanne. The story reminds us that if we are natives of the culture, we are custodians both of the school's codes and practices and of the newcomers, and it is incumbent on us to make sure that we share our understandings of the taken-for-granted with the new teacher.

Perhaps more importantly, it becomes apparent that what appear to be major setbacks to the teacher not yet immersed in the culture are, in reality, mere blips in the journey of becoming a teacher. The antagonists in the story (or the perceived antagonists) often do not realise that they are cast in this role, nor do they generally remain in it for any length of time. As with Melanie's boss Doreen, Mr. Amos probably felt quite pleased with himself that he had not vented his spleen with Joanne but had gently explained the rules to her. So what the story tells us is that we are all fallible; we all make mistakes, and even our more experienced colleagues would have stumbled as they worked to understand the school culture when they entered it.

We now move on to a story that illustrates how the students also maintain the culture and make it challenging for the teacher to introduce changes to the school.

Learning to Teach Differently: Mike's Story

The boys went quietly to the piles of worksheets and started to take one of each.

To the surprise and shock of all, including himself, Mike yelled out, 'NO!' The boys flinched and stopped in their tracks.

Mike instantly sensed that his one-word reaction went completely against his idea of SDL (self-directed learning), because with his exclamation, he was trying to direct what they did. He realised that some boys had a natural instinct to gather one copy of every available page. He chided himself for his reaction. How had this incident arisen?

Mike was a very promising double-degree student in maths and physics who responded positively to the introduction of self-directed learning as part of his physics method subject at university. He had resolved that when he became a teacher, he would trial self-directed learning in his classes. Soon after graduating, Mike found a post in maths and science at a private boys' school. It was time to put his new ideas into practice.

To begin the transition from teacher-directed learning, Mike did some student-taught lessons in which the boys read a section of text and planned a brief lesson to teach their peers the concept. Later, he had the boys do this again but in more depth. The groups planned a 10-min classroom lesson, wrote up a one-page summary of key ideas, prepared two or three example problems and one possible test question and also decided on the homework their peers would complete that night. Just before the school break between terms one and two, he explained the idea of SDL, allowing the boys to ask as many questions as they wished. They had many.

The boys' questions indicated to Mike that they were experiencing fear, excitement and uncertainty. SDL was very different from the way they had been experiencing classes to that point. However, Mike believed that this would soon change as they became familiar with this way of doing things.

He also made parents aware of his efforts by sending them the following note:

We have been working hard in class at a process called self-directed learning, which allows your son more freedom to choose how he learns, while I provide ample rich learning experiences for him to challenge himself. It will help develop many skills that will be invaluable for life-long learning, and it is proving a challenge to the class….

When the boys returned for term two, Mike revisited his ideas of SDL and showed them the possible ways for them to learn: textbook, worksheets, activities, rich learning tasks he had planned, research of maths concepts and important mathematicians and technology exercises. Then he let the boys go.

Mike tried to cover all bases. He had class discussions once a week during the time designated as SDL to let the boys raise concerns and ask questions about the new ways of learning. Especially in the beginning of the unit, he had them write a quick comment at the end of class to indicate what they had learned that day. He tried to find more challenging problems and ideas for the strong boys to conquer, while he led some boys in a bit of more familiar teacher-directed learning when they were struggling.

Just as he felt that he was really going well with this new initiative, the incident occurred. Mike sensed that not only were the boys struggling to get a grasp of this way of doing things, he was as well. He also had to remind himself of the different role that he should be playing. Not directing the learning but not taken out the picture either. He soon realised how easy it is for a teacher to feel like the job is done when the students are working, especially when they are working quietly. He also understood that he had to make an effort to get involved and spark discussions, to have them verbalise their understanding of concepts and even have students teach him the concept.

The day after the incident, Mike spoke privately with the boys to explain that he did not want them to focus on the worksheets but that he had been wrong to stop them from directing their own learning.

But then another issue surfaced. In his maths department, every class sits common assessments at the same time on the same day. This meant that he had to assess them as he normally would, although he would have preferred to tailor the assessment to the self-directed format. The boys were anxious about the assessment, and Mike found it hard to convince them that they would be learning as much maths with the SDL tasks, and that it would not hurt them on the end-of-unit test. They had an instinctive need to try more and more worksheets.

Time passed and the end of the SDL unit arrived …. Mike was eager and anxious to see how the students had fared and what their perceptions were of SDL. He felt that he had learned a lot from the experience and was hoping that the students would feel that it had been worthwhile from their perspective as well. He read their comments carefully. Many affirmed this way of learning. Students noted that they had enjoyed feeling responsible for their own learning and that they had learned about how they learned best. However, Edward and Geoffrey were disappointed and annoyed and complained that they had been disadvantaged in the common test. Edward's father phoned up to indicate his concerns that his son had done poorly in the test as a result of this new way of teaching. 'Freedom and choice are fine in a cake shop, but to get on in life you need discipline and clear direction', he said. Mike wondered if he should try SDL again or just forget about introducing new initiatives.

Mike's challenges to the culture emanated from his different approaches to teaching and learning. These did not have universal appeal. One of the boys even found his exam marks declining. For the new teacher, charged as well as charged up with a sense of responsibility, this can be a bitter blow indeed.

Often, the aspirations and ideals of new teachers are quickly, quietly quenched. Even though the majority of students responded positively to self-directed learning, it only took the negative comments of two students and a parent to undermine Mike's confidence. The reception by other teachers in the school, whether admiring or dismissive, might also influence the new teacher's desire to initiate new practices. Further complicating the mix, if we are doing something for the first time, we are unlikely to perform it seamlessly well. This exposes our fears, excitement and uncertainty. All these things can convince us that this was not the good idea it promised to be.

'I order you to be autonomous!'—Mike's story also conjures up an amusing conundrum. The natural instincts of his students programmed them to collect the full set of worksheets. Even Mike reverted to his natural instincts, in yelling 'No'. Many candidates could be the source of his students' resistance, of their unwillingness or inability to 'get it'. One issue could be the newfound freedom, to which the students were unaccustomed. The boys struggled with the freedoms and the constraints of self-directed learning. This also illustrates the point made above that doing something new does not come easily to us, and Mike's students demonstrated their novice status in their approach. For these students, there was potentially a double getting-it, or not-getting-it. Not only did they have to 'get' the content material but they also had to grasp this new means of getting it. A similar double or multiple getting-it also confronts the new teacher: new processes, new names, new content and new culture. Mike was also coping with the new challenges presented by teaching, as well as a novel way of teaching, certainly one that was different to the way he had been taught. This orchestration of new skills adds to the complex mix.

The story tells us that, just as new teachers have to get accustomed to the new culture of the school, their students have to get accustomed to the new rules and protocols when teachers introduce change into the classroom. An experienced teacher might know that new initiatives take time, support and encouragement. Beginning teachers might be hoping to get time, support and encouragement themselves and forget that their students are also in need of these. We need to encourage beginning teachers, when trying new ways of teaching, to give those new ways time to be accepted by the students and time to be refined by the teacher and to take time to explain to both students and parents the nature, purpose and benefits of the new initiative.

Most of Mike's students, colleagues and parents seemed to take to the new approach like ducks to water. A few seemed to hate it. Our hope is that other Mikes who may read this story will take sustenance from it and know that students also need a chance to get used to new ideas.

Paul's Story: Understanding the Way Things Are

(In this story, the experiences of three beginning teachers at the same school are combined)

The First Faculty Meeting

Paul's first faculty meeting was the science meeting. Four teachers were new to the school this day. Asad, the head teacher, walked them to lab 3. After brief introductions, Asad handed the new programme to the new teachers. The programme for the four years of junior science consisted of two A4 pages (one page printed front and back). The 'programme' for each year was covered in a half page. Indeed, each year was covered in six headings. The year-7 programme consisted of 14 words. Ten weeks of work was rendered elegantly as, for example, 'Matter'.

Oddly Paul was calm. He knew this was not how things were done in his practice teaching school, with its detailed programmes complete with headings, outcomes, activities, text references and resources. However, Paul had only been in one school and how was he to know how things were done in schools. The one thing he knew for certain was that they were not done as he was told they were done at university.

'… Here's the text book. Paul you've got years 7, 8 and 9. Any questions?', Asad asked. The three novices, all at their first school, said nothing. Sandra, who was new to the school but had taught elsewhere, asked where the programmes were.

'The old programmes were no good', Asad explained. 'So we are starting again. We are going to work it out as we go along. We'll have new programs for next year'. Put so reasonably, it seemed perfectly sensible to Paul, at the time.

Asad took them for a tour of the laboratories and classrooms in which they would teach. Paul saw nothing and heard nothing. All he could think was 'I'll be teaching three classes tomorrow and all I have got is a heading—well, three headings. Thank goodness I know how to teach "Elements, Mixtures and Compounds", "Introduction to the Laboratory" and "Motion"'.

The First Term

The first term was a blur of work, each night planning and then delivering each day to classes ever deteriorating in classroom management. A blur of great, friendly people to work with, frequent social outings with other young teachers, Friday afternoons at the pub and students who viewed him a brother—and behaved accordingly.

When asked, only when asked, the experienced teachers and year coordinators were very happy to make suggestions for activities to teach, to provide resources or to have students sent to them if they were too troublesome….

Asad would often ask how it was going. Paul would always respond 'fine', and he believed it most of the time. Yet, he often wondered if he was doing what they wanted, what he should be doing. He worried, 'Did Asad know about year 9? Could he hear them?'.

Paul's year 9 class was very loud. He was trapped by a contradiction in which he rationalised that he knew he must make them quieter. However, he did not want a silent classroom because everyone knows a silent classroom is not indicative of a learning classroom. He knew that he must do something about year 9, but he did not know what to do. He only knew what he did not want, neither a noisy and nor a silent class.

The First Big Test

The mid-year test came. All the junior secondary science teachers met. They had the results by student, by year and by class.

Did they compare classes? No.

Was anything said about the different performance of different classes (or teachers)? No.

Did anybody care about the different performances of classes on the test?

Yes, Paul cared. His classes had come last or second last on everything.

Nothing was said. 'Could they have not noticed?' Paul thought.

He felt hopelessly out of his depth. He felt as though he had failed the teaching test.

They cared, he realised later. However, they did not care about what he thought they cared about. For half the year, he had tried to do what he thought

the school, other teachers, Asad, even the students and parents had wanted him to do. They did not want him to do anything other than teach as he thought he should—new ways of teaching he had learnt about, cutting edge things he would know about as a new teacher. He realised this a few weeks after the mid-year exam when the principal visited.

The First (and Only) Principal Visit

The principal was passing his class as they were doing a heart dissection. She asked if she could come in.

'Of course', Paul said with a calm he did not feel. 'You're welcome anytime'.

Paul continued with the lesson. He kept feeling as though he should perform, but all he did was walk from group to group and talk to them about their dissection—making sure it was loud enough for the principal to hear each gem that passed his lips. Paul knew his heart, but it seemed a little inadequate! She left, only saying thanks. His often difficult year 9 class had been angelic while the principal visited and after she left. 'They really must like me', Paul thought. 'They don't want me to look bad. Maybe they aren't as bad as I thought'.

The principal joined him at morning tea on the next day. She thanked him warmly for the chance to see the class. She was so pleased with the new, first-year-out teachers. The staid, old programmes were gone. There was a lot of practical work happening in science. It was 'wonderful!' Paul was puzzled, 'Wonderful?'

Postscript

For half a year, Paul had been trying to do what they wanted at their school, and all they wanted was what he had to offer. The laissez-faire perception of their school culture that he had constructed or imagined was neither ignorant nor uncaring. The school culture was one that assumed teachers (including beginning teachers) knew what to do, and this school trusted him to teach. He gradually came to take the opportunity to do so. He is now grateful for the chance to spread his wings. Three years on, he sometimes flies at his school, but he wishes he had been more open about his concerns and sought the help that was there for the asking.

Whose school is this? Paul knew that this was not his school, at least at the start. Paul had placed himself on the outside. Teachers offered comfort and reassurance when asked. There was an implicit, open invitation to teach well or as one thinks fit. He was embraced in the social activities and activities beyond the school. Help was available, but it was not volunteered or intrusive.

Paul was constantly comparing himself with more experienced teachers and wanting to achieve what they achieved and do as they did. His expectations of himself

were higher than the expectations others had of him. The principal was delighted with what he was doing. The other teachers were unconcerned that Paul's classes were not achieving the test results that more experienced teachers' classes exhibited. The only person worried about Paul's progress was Paul.

It is clear that Paul learnt to teach in his own way, productively and well by his own account. He was given space for professional growth, but it took time for him to grasp the opportunity. He had interpreted students' inattentiveness as indifference. Paradoxically, he was slow to recognise that others were not critically watching his every move. They only wanted him to find his own way and to assert his own professional preferences rather than adopt those of others. It is hard to know whether the experienced teachers stood back to avoid intruding and damaging Paul's confidence, were unaware of his difficulties or were simply unsure how to help. What is clear is that Paul felt his failures keenly but baulked at seeking the support he needed. He was concerned that, in exposing his difficulties, he would reveal weaknesses and unfitness to teach. Yet the impression remains that help was only a request away.

An underlying feature of the school culture was trust. There were few restrictions on how new teachers went about their work with their classes. Teachers were expected to be able to fulfil their role and staff exhibited confidence in each other. Yet there is a thin line between perceptions of trust and neglect, caring and disinterest and guidance and intrusion. It is asking the impossible for a school culture to strike the perfect balance amongst these. It is difficult for new teachers to know one from the other until they begin to understand the nuances of the culture they have entered.

Implications

Schools are usually characterised by a strong and often implicit culture. Deal (1990, p. 132) suggests that school culture is 'subtle, elusive, intangible'. Certainly, the newly qualified teachers, whose stories we share above, found the school culture to be all of these things. They had to contend with their own arguably distorted views of their contexts and related fears, and with new processes and personalities.

The 'fight or flight' response (Cannon, 1915) has often been used to describe a reaction to acute stress. Melanie and Joanne appear ready for a fight, whereas Mike and Paul seem more inclined to run away from it all, or at least to retreat to the familiar. This is a plausible gut-led reaction in any confronting circumstance. But are there aspects of school culture that make schools conducive to such responses?

The term 'initiation' is on occasion used to describe the at times brutal treatment of newcomers in places such as the armed services, at the hands of their forerunners. We spoke at the outset of the fantasies that the new teacher brings to the profession, but of course the incumbent teachers also bring something to the equation. Earlier we posited three possible motives for an apparent lack of support for Paul from his elder teachers: unwillingness to intrude, unawareness of his difficulties and uncertainty as to how to help. Might there be another, more sinister, motive? Could it be that the culture of schools is so unconsciously competitive that collaboration and help (and

newcomers) find it hard to rise above the water's churning surface for oxygen? If so, it is possible that experienced teachers are quite content to watch newcomers flounder, just as they themselves did in the early days. As with students, so it might be with teachers, that the pressures on them to perform, and to outperform one another, lead them metaphorically to squabble over an extra quarter of a mark here and there. If this is even part of the dynamic in operation, it is likely to frustrate and truncate the lateral thinking, experimentation and risk-taking requisite for innovative teaching. Experienced teachers may need to examine their hearts here, and employers and system operators may need to examine their policies, practices and politics.

Conclusions

Experienced teachers and school executives have a role in making the school culture visible to newcomers. Woods and Weasmer (2004), in their discussion of job satisfaction in schools, suggest that the following factors are critical: the amount of autonomy teachers feel they have, the amount of support available from school executive and the amount of affirmation and recognition that teachers get for their contributions to the school. If we consider the issues raised by our group of beginning teachers, it is clear that had each of these factors been present for Mel, Jo, Paul and Mike, they would have been sharing very different experiences with the others. Further, Woods and Weasmer suggest that when experienced teachers and beginning teachers share their ideas with each other, there are reciprocal benefits. School leaders are very important in developing and encouraging optimal school cultures (Patterson & Patterson, 2004). Their attention to the factors described above facilitates the development of a positive culture.

The situation is not as clear regarding the role of teacher educators in supporting their students to attune to the school cultures in which they will find themselves. The process of acculturation into a school can be a positive one, if teacher educators prepare their students by raising their awareness of the reasons for school culture being as it is and by promoting discussion of ways in which it can work as a useful guide to school expectations. Feiman-Nemser (2003) notes that there are many aspects of teaching that cannot be learnt before arriving at a school, and one of these is an understanding of the school culture. The question then arises as to how best teacher educators can prepare their students to both contribute to the school culture and benefit from its existence. Schuck et al. (2005) recommend that the experiences of recent graduates should be used to initiate discussions in initial teacher education programmes, that practical guidance on the mechanisms for identifying and being socialised into the school culture should be provided and that more interaction with school personnel should occur throughout the teacher education programme.

We need to help our students understand that brushes against the school culture are not indicators of competence or value but primarily a message that more needs to be learned about how things work at their school. As well, school executive and experienced teachers can support their new staff by making the invisible more

apparent, by identifying characteristics of the school culture that are peculiar to their school and by bringing these to their new teachers' attention.

In the meantime, perhaps we can reassure beginning teachers with a story of the Panama Canal and its ships. As ships have grown wider (while the Canal has not) inevitably, some ships have scraped their sides against the Canal walls, thus 'losing some paint'. A ship's captain would tell you that this process is neither pretty nor dignified. But neither does it cause injury. So it is in most new situations, be they a school or elsewhere. The cultural walls are often invisible to the naked eye, so we find them by bumping into them. In most cases, though, the damage will be superficial and cosmetic, and goodwill on both sides will go a long way towards healing. As teacher educators, we may do well to admit to our students that we cannot anticipate principals like Doreen and Mr. Amos, or the other protagonists and predicaments that will face new teachers. We can remind them, however, that all current teachers have experienced similar circumstances and survived to tell the tale.

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Chapter 5
Teacher Identity: A Confidence Trick?

"Big News-------- I'M A BAD SNOWBOARDER~! ! ! ! ! ! !" Spent about 1 1/2 on my B O T tom but now I'm a legend! haha maybe not but you can call me a bad snowboarder at the very least! I've got some awesome bruises—don't you worry—I took photos! ;

The feeling of mastering something new is immeasurably satisfying, as the Facebook excerpt above illustrates. One wonders how the rest of the text might change if we replaced 'snowboarder' with 'teacher'. For the purposes of our discussion, for 'bad' above, read 'good'. What might be the critical teaching moment that elicits such a comment? Does the complexity of teaching perhaps render such a comment unlikely? And dare one enquire as to what the corresponding pedagogical bruises might look like?

How teachers engage both consciously and subliminally in 'sense-making' (Kelchtermans, 2010, p. 610) is central not just to their understanding and practice of teaching and learning but also to an understanding of their 'teacher-selves'. Equally important for teacher retention and satisfaction is the development of a positive identity of the job and one's place in it. The new teacher's belief, or at least hope, that they can make a difference for the better is an important contributor to sustaining them in the profession and lifting them out of 'going through the motions' of the job. A considerable body of literature points to the importance of teacher agency (Bandura, 2000) and efficacy, particularly as predictors of resilience, satisfaction, commitment and retention (LeCornu, 2008; Ross & Gray, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

The development of teacher identity is a complex and emergent phenomenon. Schuck (1998) identified three selves amongst her cohort of prospective primary school teachers: tertiary student, primary student and student-of-teaching. Growth in a teacher's identity is also subtle and incremental and tends to take place while we are busy doing other things (to misappropriate John Lennon). Kelchtermans (2010, p. 612) speaks of 'a thoughtful reconsideration and rethinking of what was until then taken for granted'. He adds that 'teachers' idea of themselves as teachers, their sense of identity, is of much greater importance to them as practitioners than in occupations where the person can easily be separated from the craft' (p. 614).

In this chapter, we look at some of the influences that squeeze and mould new teachers into the profession's images of itself and explore what new teachers might do with this.

Identifying Teaching

'I teach, but I do not feel like a teacher' (Nias, 1989, p. 181). Nias drew on this quote in a study of mid-career teachers. On the one hand, this is perhaps a curious observation. It begs the question of what being a teacher 'feels like', analogous perhaps to the question 'how does it feel to be 18?' which usually elicits the answer, if any, of 'no different'. On the other hand, if significant numbers of teachers feel that they are not part of the profession, that question is likely to have serious morale implications. Identity helps us not only in identifying or recognising ourselves but also in positioning ourselves with regard to others, both within and beyond the profession and in defining the extent and limits of our responsibilities (Wilson & Deaney, 2010), as well as our rights and opportunities.

'How do I know I'm a teacher?' is a question that might at times impel a teacher's philosophy and behaviour in the classroom. The question, or at least the impulse to answer it to our satisfaction, can drive us towards the teacher-as-performer end of the spectrum. Ultimately, teacher identity is heavily bound up in what is (perceived as) good, effective teaching.

It is possible that teachers' desires to have such questions answered drives them away from, or makes them blind to, the complexity of teaching. Nias (1989) detected little difference in terms of teachers' reported confidence in the 10 years between her first and second interviews with them. This elusiveness of confidence is arguably a tension with which the teacher is yoked for the long term. The search for knowledge that one is 'doing it right' is one that is not easily silenced or placated. And yet a high level of unexamined teacher self-confidence may be one of the very elements that thwart the quest for reflection, improvement and lateral alternatives. Indeed, it is those who have never taught who often appear most confident in identifying what is wrong with teaching and what is needed to remedy it. But both teachers and outsiders are at risk of embracing what Kelchtermans (2010, p. 613) calls a 'romantic misconception' of the job.

Hardy (2009, p. 164) distinguished Aristotle's techne (instrumental problem-solving) from the more morally bound praxis. Similarly, Kelchtermans (2010) pointed out that a teacher's own self-concept is often foregrounded in, if not preoccupied with, matters technical. He differentiates formal or factual knowledge from the 'other forms of knowing or understanding that are more informal, experiential, idiosyncratic in nature' (p. 613). These assessments expose the inadequacy of lay views of teaching comprising a suite of skills that can be enacted. Hole (2001, p. 84) illustrated this inadequacy by comparing teaching to the performance of a rain dance, adding, 'even if I could get the steps right, could I bring forth the rain?' As Hole pointed out, knowing the 'right steps' in teaching is insufficient. To extend the

rain dance analogy, what if it does rain subsequently? As with meteorology, so with teaching, there are so many variables that it is difficult to confidently ascribe cause and effect amidst the untidy business that is learning. Nias (1989) observed in a primary/elementary context that 'teaching at its best is a complex and highly skilled activity which holds in balance, and occasionally transcends, the historical socio-logical, philosophical, psychological and practical tensions and constraints of the work itself' (p. 201).

Squeezing into the Profession

Teachers' and teaching's identities are shaped by a variety of forces, internal and external. The beginning teacher enters the professions with expectations, hopefully idealistic, of himself or herself. The forces of both the profession and of lay outsiders are brought to bear on these ideals.

One metaphor for entering the teaching profession, and/or a particular school, is that of attempting entry to a nightclub. Approaching the bouncer, one wonders if one's credentials and identity will be convincing. Presumably, at least our on-paper credentials are in order. But successful entry rests on more than this. Nervousness at this point probably does our cause little good, and yet overconfidence might also be alienating. Similarly, beginning teachers might hope and trust that their knowledge base, their demeanour and their behaviour will convince colleagues, students, community and themselves that they are teachers. Walkington (2005) is rightly critical of an approach or mechanism that simply or primarily serves to socialise beginning teachers and advocates a professional experience model more characterised by consultation and mentoring, in order to acknowledge diversity, rather than the current normative, socialising model based on supervision.

Unsurprisingly, relationships emerge as being crucial to success and satisfaction in teaching. In her study of career-change teachers, Allen (2007) found that while poor relationships with peers may drive a teacher to transfer to another school, poor relationships with students are more likely to drive them from the profession altogether. Nias (1989) interviewed 50 experienced teachers, asking them about their teacher identities. Amongst the most commonly identified contributors to 'feeling like a teacher' were 'being yourself', 'being natural' and 'establishing relationships with children' (pp. 182–187).

Another significant aspect in teaching is control. Nias (1989) noted that it was one of the most commonly occurring aspects of teacher satisfaction. She also noted, however, that the state of control is attained 'in the face of endemic dilemmas, tensions, uncertainties, inconsistencies, paradoxes, and contradictions' (p. 201). Similarly, Kelchtermans (2010, p. 612) observed, with regard to teachers' planning, that its 'evolvement in the work with students can never be fully predicted or controlled'. This lack of control, so characteristic of teaching, has the potential to be highly energising, particularly in the short term. When experienced for long periods, however, lack of control can be potently debilitating.

Career-Change Teachers

Career-change teachers arguably represent a special case. At the same time, their circumstance reminds us that no teacher enters the profession as a blank slate. It is perhaps not unreasonable, or at least not surprising, that career-change teachers enter the profession with a certain sense of entitlement. Returning to the nightclub metaphor, career-change teachers 'look of age' so are unlikely to be asked for identity, let alone be refused admission on that basis. On the one hand, students might be convinced, presuming the beginning teacher to be experienced, and accord her or him more deference than they would to a younger beginning teacher. On the other hand, peers may have unrealistically high expectations of such a person. They may hesitate to offer 'elder support' and may be politely or impolitely aghast at some of their new colleague's decisions and practices that may appear naïve.

It is not just age and maturity that career-change teachers bring to the profession, however; they also bring valuable job skills and experience. They enter the profession with their identities as self-as-chemist, self-as-statistician or whatever previous roles they may have had. Mixed with this existing professional identity will be the perceived level of success they carry from previous work, tied up with their reasons for leaving that profession as well as its relevance to their roles as teachers. All things being equal, they probably have higher professional expectations of themselves, as a function of their age and the background knowledge and experience they bring with them. Career-changers are more likely than their straight-from-school counterparts to be parents, which inevitably alters the reality and perception of what they bring to the profession. This dual identity is probably stronger for secondary than for their primary counterparts. The identity of secondary teachers is more likely to be enmeshed in their subject area, rather than solely as teachers-of-students.

Some career-changers may encounter rudeness on the part of some students that would not have been tolerated in their previous workplaces. They may previously have held senior positions with educationally undreamt of budgets to manage. They may be appalled at what they see as economic inefficiencies or mismanagement on the part of schools and systems, and perhaps at the relatively parsimonious budgets allocated to education. Any perceived or real inefficiencies may extend beyond monetary waste. Such teachers may be more appalled than others at what they see as the waste of time spent in accountability-laden 'constrained professionalism' (Wills & Sandholtz, 2009, p. 1065) and low-level functionary duties, as part of what Samuel (2008, p. 3) called 'a swing back towards teachers as service workers for State agendas'. The propensity for reduction of learning to the measurable and easily assessable is also at odds with the complexity of teaching. When Socrates mused that the unexamined life is not worth living, it is unlikely that he had basic skills tests in mind.

There are other issues for career-changers: It is possible that they have invested more than school-leavers in their decision to enter teaching. They may come with unrealistic expectations of the job, what it can do for them and what they can do for it. It is longer since they were in schools as students, and so the cultural/time gap will be more substantial. It is likely that they will experience more acute

disillusionment if they perceive themselves not to be successful in this new endeavour (Wilson & Deaney, 2010).

These views of mature-age teachers in particular bring us back to teachers' identity: who shapes and has the right to shape it, how and why? Some of the preceding discussion may present a less than shiny view of the profession in its current state and trajectory. There are many causes for concern, but optimism and a sense of agency or teacher efficacy are vital to sustaining newcomers to the profession and, in turn, the profession itself. For the new (or old) teacher, finding their teaching self, their niche, their pedagogical home and their community can be charged with fulfilment. We turn now to the story of a new teacher looking for a professional and personal home.

Knowing Your Place: Greg's Story

'You're my son Jimmy's teacher. He's always talking about Mr. Delaney', said Tony as he looked intently at me, running his fingers through my hair. 'How would you like it?' 'Just fairly short, thanks, Tony. The kids have been calling me "hippie"'.

Born and bred in the city, one thing Greg had not expected was that in a small country town, everyone knows your business as a teacher. Having your hair cut by the parent of a student no longer really fazed him. Anyway, Tony was the only hairdresser (or barber, as Greg was corrected) in town.

Living on a corner block, Greg's washing was there for all to see when he hung it out to dry. 'Doing your laundry online, sir?' quipped one kid he didn't know, but whose eyes from his bicycle vantage point were just high enough to see over the fence. 'Online, online, get it?' He heard the boy and his mates guffawing for what seemed like eight or nine city blocks after they rode past, except that this town didn't have that many blocks. Greg hated to admit it was kind of funny.

Greg was going to correct Tony and say '*Monsieur* Delaney, not Mr.'. He had come to Tallerup to teach French. To his first-ever class, 7A—his favourite class—he had said, 'if you see me in the corridor, you can say "*Bonjour, Monsieur*" to me'. He hadn't anticipated so many *bonjour monsieurs* (*messieurs*? he mused) in the supermarket, coming out of the toilets at the Town Hall-cum-cinema on a Saturday night, etc. When his girlfriend, Carol, visited, the event was great fodder for this gossip-starved town. One kid at school made sure Greg overheard, 'I saw Monsieur and Mrs. Monsieur at the "caf" on Sat-dy'. These kids' wit knew no bounds. Carol hated the town and pressed Greg to return to the city.

In his first term, Greg went to an in-service course for language teachers in isolated areas at the school region's head office. The first speaker said, endearingly, 'I don't know why you think you're isolated. It only took me three hours to get here from the city'. 'It took me 19', Greg said from the back of the room but not in his out-loud voice.

As a French teacher in Tallerup, Greg felt out of place personally and professionally. 'Thank God you're going to Tallerup', his friends had said. 'They won't survive without fluent French out there'.

Everywhere he went, kids. *His* kids.

He joined the football team when the season started. After the first match came the compulsory drinks. They all went back to Bob the captain's place, about 10 kilometres ('seven mile', he had been told) out of town. 'His booze-ups are legendary', he'd heard. Some of Greg's kids were also on the team and went back to Bob's for a drink or so.

This was all too weird. Here he was, drinking with his underage students. What would his lecturers say about this? But the town cop was there and didn't seem to mind. The mayor and the doctor were there. Okay, the mayor and the doctor were the same person, but he was there drinking with minors. Adding to the surreal situation, Greg saw Bob's kids, aged all of 10 or 11—not yet at high school—'paddock-bashing', driving around, kicking up dust in an old ute [utility, or flatbed truck]. Every time they became airborne over mounds—some natural, some they had made themselves—the team members would cheer and raise their beer cans, as if in a toast. The kids were so small that the car looked driverless. Greg drove back to town with only a couple of drinks in him but wondered how some of the others would make it back.

Soon afterwards, a couple of things happened that changed Greg's thinking, at least a little. The next Monday at school, he bumped into some of the kids who had been on the team and had comfortably called him Greg, or even (ugh!) 'Greg-oh' during the match. He remembered how he had stepped out of the way when one of them advanced to give him a congratulatory pat on the backside when he scored a try. He then felt a bit prudish, but he maintained his distance, deciding that stepping forwards again might then look like an invitation for the gesture. He thought (hoped?) he noticed the kid flinch and think better of it at about the same time, too. 'Imagine if I did that to him!' Greg thought later, reflecting on his child protection lectures from university, even though the kid was bigger than him.

But this moment at school wasn't awkward. These same kids now seemed quite happy calling him Mr. Delaney. Yes, some of them made a point in front of their friends saying, in laboured fashion, 'Hi Gr—oops, *Mr.* Delaney', but they knew how to play the game. Greg would have giggled to see any of his own teachers out of school, but these kids were used to it. It was a game new to Greg, but one that these kids had played all their lives; they knew the rules and by and large kept to them, perhaps more than city kids might. Not only did the kids not take advantage of the situation but he also noticed that it helped develop rapport with them, as they came to accept him more. This also seemed to trickle down to the younger kids in his classes; most of his students were in the junior years, where they *had* to do French. Greg still felt he was walking the weekday/weekend tightrope and that the power in this game was all stacked in the kids' favour, but he was gradually feeling more natural, comfortable and skilled in walking it. When his year 7 students asked him, 'What's French for football?' and he

replied, '*le football*', he didn't feel that their laughter was scornful, and he laughed along with them. 'Seriously!' he said, grinning.

At the after-match-bash, as they called it, Bob's wife, Marg, had said, 'I'm doing a roast next Saturday' … (she pronounced it correctly) … 'night. Why don't you come out and join us?' Just as Greg said, 'That'd be lovely. Thanks", Bob added, 'and we can do some piggin' [pig shooting]'.

Piggin'? Piggin'?? Greg had never held a gun in his life. 'At … at night?' he asked, feebly. 'Yeah, spotlight'em. Bang", said Bob, squinting through the crosshairs of his imaginary shotgun. Clearly, Bob knew that Greg needed all available scaffolding to comprehend this concept. 'Nasty recoil', thought Greg.

Greg spent most of the week stewing about it. At least it's not a 'rooin' [kangaroo shooting], he consoled himself. What does one wear to a piggin'? he wondered.

Saturday's dinner (lamb, not pork—one of Bob's own, Greg figured, but didn't ask) was delicious and reminded him of home, and the family's banter-, chatter- and giggle-filled living room echoed of fun, warmth and (at times hard-shelled) love.

As the appointed piggin' hour drew close, all at the table fell silent at a noise on the roof. The two kids gasped, then ran from the table, without excuse. Bob and Marg realised what Greg didn't, that they had smelt it for at least 15 minutes. 'Rain!' Bob cried. It was the first in more than 4 months. With that came an incandescent flash, a whip-crack of thunder and the squealing of two children outside. 'Bloody kids', grumbled Bob, then yelled (rather too loudly for a dinner party, Greg thought) 'git in'ere!' The children, staggering under the weight of laughter, whole-body shivers and mud, appeared at the door like two escapees from a chocolate fondue. Even by Greg's coastal standards, this rain was torrential, exploding down onto the tin roof. There would be no piggin' tonight.

'Sorry Greg. Ground'll be too boggy', explained Bob. Greg tried to muster a plausible measure of disappointment in response. 'The road'll be out, too', added Marg. 'You'll have to stay the night'. This didn't seem at all to be an inconvenience to them. The kids cheered, then shrieked again at the next thunderclap.

The storm cleared just as quickly as it had arrived. Kids bathed and in bed, Bob, Marg and Greg went outside and drank—responsibly as Greg recalls—some red wine. Bob lit a fire in a 44-gallon drum. There was always dry wood. Yellow, dust-veiled lightning retreated grudgingly towards the east. The sky above was now clear, with more stars than Greg could ever remember, bubbling in the heat-shimmer of the fire.

The next morning Greg awoke to the sight of the land refreshed and renewed, the sweet rain smell still lingering. He decided that this place, arid and at times hostile as it was, was one he could love and that might even love him back. He realised, too, that he was beginning to feel like a real teacher. There had been dry spells, but every now and then, something would take him pleasantly by surprise and keep him going. Just like the storm, just like the

changed behaviour of the kids, these feelings of home and teachership had crept up on Greg unnoticed and unannounced.

Now, to convince Carol.

Your first school does not look like the school you went to as a child, even if you teach at the school you attended as a child. The culture and other aspects of the school will have changed, and it will look different from a teacher's perspective in any case. Greg's story was chosen partly because it illustrates a more dramatic inter-cultural change, that from the city to the country. The dissonance might be even greater for a country girl or boy teaching in the city, except that they may well have undertaken their preservice education in a larger community. Just as at Bob's house, in the town and school, Greg felt initially like a guest. Perhaps counterintuitively, efforts on the part of a school to make a newcomer feel welcome, while not to be discouraged, may further contribute to one's real and perceived guest status. What is the appropriate level of confidence to display in such circumstances? Surely there can be no definitive answer.

Some beginning teachers may have attended relatively monocultural schools and may find themselves teaching classes with a dozen or more first languages amongst the students. Teachers from middle-class backgrounds may also be sur-prised at the culture of some schools in lower socio-economic areas. By definition, those who enter teaching are amongst the success stories of education. It may be some time, if ever, since these people have rubbed shoulders with those who really struggle at school.

Greg found that a number of his taken-for-granted rules did not seem to apply in the country. Naturally, underage drinking isn't confined to country areas, but in the city, one is less likely to be confronted by one's own students indulging. It is quite natural that children living on large properties might learn to drive long before they are old enough to have a licence, and many rural residents are quite comfortable with guns, often feared as a symbol of crime by city folk. It is interesting how clearly the images related to the rain stand out in Greg's mind. He had disdain for rainy weekends in the city, as they restricted sport and other activities. This com-munity loved and valued every drop of rain, and Greg learnt to do the same. After some time there, he recalled, he could smell it coming with the best of them.

Despite all the interaction in social situations, making connections with students and the community can be difficult in country towns. It is easy and excusable for locals to assume that most of the teachers are 'blow-ins', who serve enough time to earn transfer points to get back to the city or the coast. They might be less likely, therefore, to invest in their teachers. Moreover, the locals might interpret this as part of a presumed superiority on the part of teachers. If so, the locals will reasonably feel wronged by this. At the risk of perpetuating stereotypes, young women might find some of these cultural adjustments more difficult than young men. Smaller communi-ties can be culturally dominated by men ('blokey', in Australian parlance). There can be an expectation that one will be an enthusiastic sportsman and drinker. As the story illustrates, though, the country folk were probably less judgmental than Greg's friends in the city, and even Greg, for that matter, with his disdain for the pronunciation of Saturday. The country folk took him at face value and made him welcome. Greg had barely met Bob and Marg before being invited to dinner and then to stay the night.

While getting to know the locals can be difficult, in Australia, such locations often have large numbers of young, unattached teachers. This can be a great catalyst for camaraderie amongst the new teachers. Such teachers often find themselves contributing to various cultural, sporting and other activities in these communities. Perhaps best of all for the teachers concerned, these placements offer a new, fresh environment. This can be difficult from a culture-shock point of view, especially for those who might be living away from their parents for the first time (and making their own beds and lunches for the first time?), and/or who may have left partners back home. Most observers would agree that the demands of teaching are considerably more rigorous than those of the preservice preparation that precedes it. By contrast, rural locations can offer a short, traffic-free commute to work. Ironically, for a country person teaching in a big city, the experience can be much more lonely. In any case, the placement does not have to last forever. For the beginning teacher who does not love the new environment, or if the love is unrequited, there is the option of seeking work in another location. No location, of course, will be perfect.

Implications

The first section of this chapter boldly raised the question of what is good, effective teaching but failed to produce a definitive answer. That is perhaps because effective teaching resists definition. Some attempts to define teaching are clumsier than others, however, and we will now look at some services into which teaching should not be pressed.

Do teachers place an intolerable burden on each other, the expectation to be relentlessly interesting? Expecting Greg to enthral his Tallerup students in French is a tall order, as any number of second-language teachers will attest. As one teacher educator mused, reflecting primarily on his own days of school teaching:

> we spend much of our energy cajoling our students to 'eat their greens'. We lead them to and through what we know, instinctively and/or on the basis of our collection of evidence, to be good for them. Not all of them like their greens, at least not all of the time. We will not always be serving everyone's favourite food. I know spinach is good for me; it's just not as much fun as chips or chocolate. Do we finesse our teaching, metaphorically making smiley faces of our plate of spinach? Is that intellectually honest? In any case, older students will be insulted rather than convinced by this ploy. At times, despite our best aeroplane impressions with the spoon, the kids just don't want what's on offer. On the other hand, to what extent do we give students their favourite foods, with less nutritional value? Sometimes it feels like we're the custodial parent, the one who makes the kids clean their teeth, do their homework and the like, because we know it's good for them. We might find ourselves envying the other (imagined?) parent, the one who returns the children to us after every second weekend, high on food colouring and adrenaline experiences. This, and the children themselves, can wear us down over time. Fundamentally, most of us are fairly keen to be liked and thought well of. Kids have noticed this, and they don't hesitate to use it as a weapon, defensive or offensive.

While this might appear a somewhat defeatist view, it does bring to light some of the real or apparent stresses for teachers-as-messengers, teachers-as-waitpersons or whatever metaphor one might choose.

Conclusion

Wilson and Deaney (2010) cite a 'mismatch between an ideal and the actual role identity' (p. 176) as a cause of teacher disillusionment. An informant of theirs (pp. 176–177) recounted:

> I have particular memories of English and science teachers who had the gift of being able to engage with teenage pupils without seeming patronising or overly familiar—maintaining their authority whilst being interesting and interested.

We would not want a new teacher to enter the profession any less than brimming with idealism, as well as desire and determination to make their students' lives and their world better. But this comes at a cost. Newcomers to the profession are likely to project themselves as the ideal teacher, the one who will finally and definitively get this business right—the perfect, composite Lara Croft or Barbie Doll—or whatever the male equivalents might be. Matched with this, teachers may enter the profession with idealised views of their subjects and the importance thereof, and of students, school systems and school politics.

The cold water in these early days of student indifference, resistance or hostility can have teachers 'losing their voice' in more ways than one. As a beginning teacher, it might be difficult to avoid the conclusion or at least the nagging suspicion that you might be one of those teachers you disrespected as a student, the ones who were unable or unwilling to engage their students. Such mismatches demand reconciliation. They could drive teachers into despair or into another profession. Like the dentist who habitually watches a patient squirm under the drill, or the vet who reduces a guard dog with attitude to a quivering mass on the examination table, dealing with resistance or worse in learners must take its toll on a teacher's professional self-esteem. 'If only you knew what was good for you' and 'you'll thank me one day' do not seem enough to sustain teachers in such circumstances.

Teaching can be an isolated and isolating profession, both physically and psychologically, as each teacher retreats behind a closed classroom door. Teacher solidarity and collaboration would appear to amongst the most effective defences against some of these debilitating factors for the beginning teacher. Increased opportunities for team-teaching, mentoring and resource- and idea-sharing are amongst the ways in which this solidarity might express itself. All this takes time and effort, and schools, systems and body politic may need to be prepared to dig deep if they wish to reduce levels of teacher disillusionment and attrition.

For teacher educators, one response may lie in preparing our students for the rigours of the early days of teaching, perhaps by, amongst other things, sharing our own early career stories. Implicit in such stories is the fact that the teacher educator survived to tell the tale. Overconfidence on the part of the teacher educator, or the sharing of a recipe as to how this is done, might well be 'lapped up' as great advice by the students at the time but may be less than helpful in the longer term. At this juncture, the teacher educator may need to resist the need to be seen as having all the right answers, one of the professional hazards mentioned above. Strengthening partnerships with practising teachers may also be helpful in this regard. This might

most readily happen during the formation of the three-way team of tertiary adviser, schoolteacher and student teacher, during professional experience. Student teachers might be encouraged, perhaps via assessment pathways, to ask their supervising practising teachers about their early days in teaching and then to reflect on and analyse the responses.

Establishing one's place in the profession, in a school and a community, and to one's own satisfaction, can be a real confidence trick. 'Acting like a teacher' does not constitute being one. Similarly, 'feeling like a teacher' does not necessarily rescue a teacher from a fraudulence that might be apparent to others. Self-concept or identity is a force for change within the individual (Wilson & Deaney, 2010) and beyond. Teacher identity and agency are vital if the teaching profession, as well as its members, and 'friends of the profession' such as teacher educators, are to be given time, space and licence to analyse, self-correct and renew.

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Chapter 6
Mentoring and Induction: Nourishing or Eating Our Young?

One of the most important factors in determining the success or otherwise of a beginning teacher's early experiences is the amount of support that is available. In this chapter, we deconstruct the notion of mentoring and share some of the stories beginning teachers and their mentors told us about their mentoring experiences. The stories we share below indicate how complex the mentoring relationship can be and indicate the range of differing expectations that may be experienced by both mentors and beginning teachers.

There is an extensive literature on mentoring of beginning teachers that indicates that the quality of mentoring support is critical in determining the success of beginning teachers' experiences (Bezzina, 2006; Schuck et al., 2011). A reading of the literature suggests that the ways in which mentors conceptualise the mentoring relationship largely determine the nature of the support that they provide. Therefore, it is useful to compare a variety of definitions of mentoring from the literature to explain the range of conceptions of mentoring held by teachers.

The historical origins of the word mentor are attributed to Homer's epic, *The Odyssey* (Anderson & Shannon, 1995). Mentor was the person to whom Odysseus entrusted the guardianship of his royal household, including his son Telemarchus while he was absent fighting the Trojan War. Anderson and Shannon assert that mentoring was therefore conceived as an intentional process of guiding and nurturing and that, furthermore, it was an insightful process in which Mentor needed to act as a role model for Telemarchus so that he could grow up to acquire wisdom without rebellion. Lasley (1996) claims that the relationship between Mentor and Telemarchus was more complex than the simple unidirectional guiding of a protégé. During the mentoring process, the mentor is also changed so that mentoring is seen as a two-way relationship that is based on mutual growth.

Currently, the notion of mentoring retains a great deal of the historical meaning attributed to it by Anderson and Shannon (1995), especially in business settings. There, mentors are perceived as influential people, usually older than their protégés, who may protect, teach, nurture, support, coach and promote. Often, the protégé follows the mentor up the organisational ladder. It is only in the last two decades that mentoring has been perceived to have a role within education in Australia,

although formal mentoring programmes have existed within the USA since the 1970s (Ganser & Koskela, 1997). In England, mentoring has been an important aspect of initial teacher education since partnership with schools became a requirement in the early 1990s. It has also been a requirement for induction from 1999.

Assessment of practice has been a controversial feature of the role of mentor. As with most complex concepts, there is no agreement in the literature as to what constitutes a definition of mentoring. Yendol-Hoppey (2007) discusses the variety of metaphors that exist in the literature: coach, opener of doors, counsellor, teacher-guardian and master of the craft (p. 669). She suggests that the mentoring role lacks clarity and guidance due to the ambiguity of these definitions and metaphors.

This chapter will consider the stories of beginning teachers about mentoring and supervision, as well as the stories of mentors as they strive to support these new teachers. The stories will highlight the reciprocal nature of mentoring, with its mutual benefits. They will also interrogate the mentoring relationship from the perspective of beginning teachers.

We start with a story from a mentor's perspective, about the reciprocal benefits of mentoring. This story is then followed by some stories about the mentoring relationship that indicate the complexity and nuances involved in establishing effective mentoring experiences.

What Do I Get Out of This? A Mentor's Perspective

Lyle was the mentor for a beginning teacher, Mark, and took his role seriously. He met with Mark on a regular basis, and the two of them would visit each other's classrooms and observe each other's teaching on a regular basis. In this way, Lyle was able to give Mark advice that was based on specific events occurring in Mark's classroom. Interestingly, he also found that he was questioning his own teaching when he sat in Mark's classroom and watched Mark interact with his students or initiate an innovative approach. He resolved to try some of the exciting new ideas that Mark was using in his own class.

When, in turn, Mark observed his classes, Lyle really looked forward to the discussion the two of them would have afterwards, in which both of them would reflect on the lesson and Lyle would be forced to articulate to both of them his underlying rationale for the actions he took. Lyle found that he was spending far more time thinking about his own teaching since he had started mentoring Mark.

He was taken aback when he discussed his plans for supporting Mark with others in the staffroom one day. Lanie started complaining about 'young teachers fresh out of uni' and how they did not seem to know the basics. Jan joined in with a cynical comment about the enthusiasm the 'new, young things' showed and how that would change, give them a year or two. Both of them were mentors of new teachers, and both of them were quite negative about how much time the mentoring of their new charges was taking. Lanie

said she was not interested in sitting in on any classes. 'Where', she asked, 'was the time allowance for doing that?' Jan and Lanie agreed that it would be too disruptive to have the new teachers sit in on their classes.

Lyle stopped and thought about it. It was true that there was only a very small workload allocation for mentoring new teachers, but he did not feel that the size of the allocation was at all relevant in his decision to mentor Mark. It seemed to him that the others felt that the new teachers took up their limited time and were quite an inconvenience. Why then did he feel differently? When he thought about some of Mark's lessons that he had observed, he remembered the excitement he had felt at observing Mark experimenting with new ways of teaching and how he had come away from the lessons with lots of new ideas for his own teaching. So for him, mentoring was challenging his thinking about his own practice, and he was an equal beneficiary in the process.

In conversation with his old friend, Caroline, who taught at a school on the other side of the city, he was relieved to find that Caroline too found mentoring to be a valuable experience. She told him that it was refreshing and making her rethink her practice to interact with a beginning teacher and to have discussions about teaching. She had not realised how starved of stimulating discussions about teaching she had been. Lyle realised that it was not so much the nature of the task of mentoring that dictated whether it would be worthwhile or not, but more the disposition that he and Caroline brought to it—a readiness to learn from the experience and gain as much as they gave.

Lyle's reflections highlight that mentoring and supervision can be beneficial for both protégé and mentor. By carefully considering how best to help his protégé, Mark, Lyle found that he too was benefitting from the mentoring relationship. Articulating helpful strategies to Mark encouraged Lyle to reflect on his practice and assess why he did the things he did.

As well, Lyle found it valuable to have a chance to see what ideas Mark implemented in his classroom. Lyle found that observing Mark at work, exuding enthusiasm, energy and idealism, was having a positive effect on his own work. It prompted him to start experimenting again and to be innovative at a time when his practice had become routine and taken for granted. Having a newcomer to work with was energising.

As happened with two of Lyle's colleagues at school, mentors may see mentoring of beginning teachers as a chore, taking up valuable time and of little benefit to their own personal growth and development. Realising that the process is in fact two way can remove much of the hesitation that an experienced teacher may have in volunteering for the role of mentor. Gordon (1991) emphasises the benefits that occur for the mentor in terms of the professional growth that is reported by mentor teachers. If teachers are aware of these benefits, this might compensate for the small (or non-existent) allocation they gain for being mentors.

We now move to the beginning teachers and their many, varying experiences with their mentors. Some are positive and supportive experiences while others range from non-existent to difficult and problematic. Georgie had a positive relationship with her mentor, which helped her overcome obstacles.

Help Wanted! Please Apply Within

Georgie got a position teaching at a primary school at the beginning of the year. Things started getting on top of her as the year went by. She had a bit of a meltdown towards the end of the third term but it had a good ending! This is the story about how Georgie resolved her problems.

> As the third term progressed, everything was getting to be too much for Georgie. She felt overwhelmed. Georgie thought she was falling behind the other classes and that she was doing a bad job and it was time to give up.
>
> Georgie told her partner, Steve, about her feelings. He was very supportive but, not being a teacher, he could not convince Georgie that she was actually doing okay. Georgie kept saying to him 'Well, of course you would say that. But you should see me in the classroom'. Although Georgie did not want to share her feelings of inadequacy with her mentor, Steve encouraged her to do so. Georgie kept procrastinating until she had a really bad day, where she felt that she was coping so badly and her students were learning so little, that she owed it to all of them to leave the school and leave teaching.
>
> That's when Georgie did something smart! She went to Gwen, her mentor, and told her she had dropped the ball and what was she to do. Gwen was terrific and said this is common after a term or two of teaching and made a lot of really useful suggestions about how to get going again. She provided a set of strategies that Georgie could use in class to maintain order and to focus on the desired learning. She offered to come into Georgie's classroom and observe her and provide some feedback. Georgie accepted, with trepidation, and invited Gwen into a few lessons. Gwen was very encouraging and highlighted the good ideas, excellent use of resources and patience that Georgie was showing. They discussed the noise levels and tossed around a number of ideas about how to manage those.
>
> Georgie trialled Gwen's suggestions. Some worked really well, others did not. But the big difference was that Gwen had indicated that what Georgie was doing had worth. That Georgie was being really hard on herself and that things were better than she had felt they were. The result: a reinvigorated Georgie, back again with lots of energy to pick up the ball and keep running!
>
> The following year, Gwen asked Georgie to be a mentor herself! Georgie was surprised, terrified but also quite pleased that Gwen thought she was up to it. She resolved to be as supportive to the new teacher she was now mentoring as Gwen had been to her, and to encourage her to ask questions at any point, no matter how stupid they might appear.

Georgie's story demonstrates how a sympathetic and understanding mentor is often all that is needed to help the beginning teacher to face and learn from the professional challenges of teaching.

Georgie's experience of being appointed a mentor in her second year of teaching is not uncommon. In hard-to-staff schools, often teachers who have been there for longer than a year are regarded as old-timers. It is likely that the beginning teacher

that Georgie mentors will benefit from her recent experiences, and she is likely to be more empathetic to newcomers' experiences as her memories will still be really fresh in her mind. As well, Georgie is likely to learn from the experience. However, her appointment highlights all the demands that are made on newcomers' time and the expectations, sometimes unrealistic, that are held for them by other members of the staff and executive. It is important to bear in mind all the new challenges that a beginning teacher has to manage when they begin to teach and not overload them with other tasks because of their energy and enthusiasm.

Blurring Roles

Marg really envied people with understanding mentors. She knew that in her region, beginning teachers were supposed to have two different people to support them as new teachers. As she explained in an email to a friend who was teaching overseas, "The one is the supervisor—each teacher has a supervisor and that person is their boss and signs off on various things like leave and accreditation. The other is a mentor, who is supposed to be there to help and guide you when you are new. I know we are supposed to have a mentor as well as a supervisor, but I don't seem to have one'.

Tony is Marg's supervisor, and as she continued rather plaintively, 'That's all there is. I always feel I'm being judged by Tony, so I can't go to him when I feel like everything is going wrong. I can just picture him writing a report on me, and saying Marg is willing but just doesn't have a clue. So all I can do is muddle on by myself. Tony has to sign off on my accreditation documents and say that I have met all the required teacher competencies at the end of my probation. If I share my problems with him, I don't see how he can do that, because he'd be aware that I'm struggling and not really competent at all'.

'Anyway, I just don't feel comfortable going to him with problems—he's always so busy and also so competent—he would never understand my problems. Tony is just a model of confidence and competence. He obviously never had any of the problems that I'm experiencing. I can just picture him arriving at a school on his first day of teaching ever, the perfect teacher, with all the answers. No matter how I try, I can't picture him having doubts about lessons, or whether the students are getting it. So how can I go to him, and tell him that I don't know how to deal with the three boys who are always misbehaving, or that I'm at a loss as to how to help Jesse who looks at me blankly when I give a set of instructions to the class?'

'It's clear to me that I just have to soldier on by myself and that when I am with Tony I have to play the role of the confident teacher. Not one who suffers from uncertainty that can be paralysing at times, like I do'.

Mentors and supervisors of teachers are often two distinct roles. Both support beginning teachers but in different ways. Sometimes employing authorities try to keep the roles and the personnel in those roles separate, but this does not always

happen. Marg indicates the difficulties that can arise when the two roles are held by one person, or as in her case, there is no mentor, only a supervisor. The roles of mentor and supervisor are different in her context. The mentor nurtures and supports the newcomer and provides guidance on effective practice. The supervisor is a line manager and is required to participate in accreditation processes with the beginning teacher. Knowing that the supervisor is the person signing off on accreditation and on promotion puts the novice in an uncomfortable position when seeking help. Marg is unwilling to admit to Tony that she is struggling, being mindful that he will have to write a report on her. We do not know whether Marg is right or not—perhaps Tony is really good at separating his mentoring role from his supervisory one. But if the beginning teacher perceives this to be a problem, then a problem it is.

Many teacher-employing authorities do understand these difficulties and create separate roles for supervisor and mentor. In such cases, the mentor is supposed to be a different person from the supervisor. In practice, this sometimes does not happen, especially in small and remote schools. The lack of a mentor can lead to the situation Marg describes. Marg's story suggests the need to have different people in the two roles. However, having two different people in these roles may also contribute tensions. What happens if they offer opposing advice? And often, supervisors are the most suitable mentors as they have deeper insights into the experiences of the beginning teacher. So the lack of a mentor may not be the full story contributing to Marg's discomfort. Another possible tension in Marg's and Tony's relationship may be the personality differences they exhibit: Tony is a confident teacher, filled with self-assurance while Marg is exhibiting self-doubt about her efficacy as a teacher. This difference could contribute to the distance in their relationship and the feeling of imbalance in power that Marg obviously feels.

Georgie's story emphasises a very different approach to supporting beginning teachers. She is able to take a chance and expose her weaknesses to Gwen, her mentor. This is not always the case as mentoring is very dependent on the individual attitudes, skills and dispositions of mentors. A number of researchers (Campbell & Kane, 1998; Edwards & Collinson, 1996; Furlong & Maynard, 1995) describe problems of interpersonal relations, including getting 'too close' to your mentor and understanding how teachers learn.

In this case however, Georgie is able to regain control of her work and start to enjoy teaching again. Georgie's story is not an uncommon one. Beginning teachers often hold back on seeking help when they are struggling, for a number of reasons. They might feel that they are inadequate and so feel ashamed to share that with a mentor or supervisor; they might feel that the problem is not important enough to disturb a busy person (as in Marg's case) and they might feel that someone else would have handled the problem better and so they need to try harder. A similar situation is reported in Schuck (2009). Annie had a child in her class with acute behaviour difficulties. Annie struggled to manage the situation, and as a result, her health and her relationship with the other students suffered. Eventually, when Annie could not cope any further, she went to the principal and in telling the story, broke down. The child was moved to the parallel class taught by the experienced assistant principal and shortly after that, the child was sent to a special school for children with

behavioural disorders. Annie had not realised that she was dealing with a child whom experienced teachers would also find challenging. Annie had convinced herself she was a failure at teaching. Once the child had moved out of her class, Annie was able to give her best to the class and she started to enjoy teaching. Her story and Georgie's both highlight the importance of seeking support as soon as it is required.

Georgie's experience also suggests that it would have been beneficial if Gwen had been sensitive to the fact that Georgie was struggling before she came to see Gwen. If a beginning teacher does not feel comfortable taking the risk of confiding in their mentor, they could well become so overwhelmed that they might decide to leave the profession. A mentor who reads the signs as soon as they appear could avert this crisis by offering early support to the beginning teacher.

A Problem Shared …

Joanne had a supportive mentor in Carlene and felt that she could tell her anything. However, she recently found herself in a really tricky situation with Carlene. She had gone to Carlene to get advice about how to manage her class better—they seem to get really restless after lunch break and Joanne did not know how to keep them focused. Well, Carlene gave her some good strategies to use and Maggie was really pleased with the way their meeting had gone.

Next day, Ahmed came up to Joanne in the staffroom and said, in a friendly and reassuring tone, 'I hear you are having trouble with your class in the afternoons. Don't worry, lots of kids get restless later in the day'.

Joanne was really upset—she wondered if Carlene told everybody in the staffroom all the things she told her in confidence. She didn't really want the whole staff to know she was battling. It wasn't that Ahmed came over as patronising or thinking less of her, on the contrary, she knew he was just being supportive and helpful. Still, she wasn't happy that something she had told Carlene, and assumed it was in confidence, was being shared with others.

Joanne felt that she couldn't trust Carlene anymore and that she would have to think twice before she confided in her about anything happening in her professional and personal life.

What was Joanne to do? Could she complain to Carlene or about Carlene to the principal of the school? Beginning teachers find themselves in a difficult position and not often able to make a complaint without antagonising schools and principals. Bubb and Earley's (2006) quotation of a newly qualified teacher (NQT) from a national chat room illustrates how bad things can be.

Schools can be dog eat dog places. Established teachers take the best resources, the best classrooms, and the best classes so that they can get by. NQTs get the crap. Once these guys leave, the NQTs become the established ones and so it goes on….

Bubb and Earley imply that this may have something to do with the high attrition rate in the first 3 years of teaching. Another factor could be the high turnover of

teachers in challenging schools where new teachers often get placed because that is where the vacancies are.

We are reminded of our obligations as mentors and supervisors through Joanne's story of her encounter with Carlene. Mentoring is highly dependent on having a relationship that contains mutual trust and respect. Without these elements, it is hard to see the relationship working. Joanne feels that Carlene has not kept her confidences when Carlene shared her story with others, even though this might have been well intentioned. While Ahmed's comment seems harmless and possibly supportive, it indicates that Joanne does not have the choice to keep her difficulties confidential. Carlene might well be surprised at Joanne's reaction, having meant no harm in telling Ahmed the story and possibly asking him for advice on how she might best support Joanne. It is possible that Joanne could rectify the situation by expressing her desire to keep their conversations confidential. A useful conversation between the two could be one in which they both discuss their expectations and desires for the relationship between them.

A number of issues are highlighted in the above narratives. These include the value of mentoring from the mentor's perspective, mentors' roles in averting crisis points experienced by beginning teachers, the need to agree on confidentiality in mentoring relationships and the tensions that may exist in supervisory relationships.

Implications

The provision of strong support in the first years of teaching has been shown to be critical for the development and growth of beginning teachers (Bezzina, 2006; Breaux & Wong, 2002; Schuck et al., 2011). Where induction programmes are poor or non-existent, beginning teachers often feel, stressed, isolated or ill-equipped to deal with the realities of the classroom (Bezzina, 2006; Freiberg, 2002; Schuck et al., 2011). Conversely, where strong induction programmes exist and support for the beginning teacher is consistent and constructive, beginning teachers appear to manage the challenges of the classroom and the organisation far more readily and appropriately than their less fortunate colleagues (Bezzina, 2006; Breaux & Wong, 2002). It is clear from the literature that mentoring is extremely variable, sometimes superb, sometimes weak and sometimes non-existent (Schuck & Segal, 2000; Schuck et al., 2011).

A great deal of the literature on mentoring and induction has focused on the nature of support that is shown to benefit beginning teachers. Feiman-Nemser (2001) suggests that 'educative mentoring' should help beginning teachers grow through a focus on both inward and outward scrutiny, using tools of reflection, dialogue and inquiry. Fayne and Ortquist-Ahrens (2006) suggest that educative mentoring is characterised by good listening, that is, being available to listen in a non-judgemental way. Anderson and Shannon (1995, pp. 29–30) identify three critical aspects of mentoring: that mentoring is a nurturing process, that it involves acting as a role model and that the mentor must exhibit certain dispositions, including

being caring and encouraging. In contrast, McNally and Martin (1998) note that mentors must challenge as well as support beginning teachers but add that mentors generally find it much harder to challenge teachers' beliefs and views than to interact through active listening and support.

In the research studies conducted over the last two decades with beginning teacher and their mentors, one important finding has been that mentors often need support and professional development to do justice to their role (Schuck & Segal, 2000). This point is supported by research, which suggests that mentors benefit from courses on learning how to mentor (Achinstein &Villar, 2002; Schuck, 2003; Totterdell, Woodroffe, Bubb, Daly, & Smart, 2004). Such courses enable mentors to become aware of the different models of mentoring that exist, as well as understand the different demands required at different stages of the process. Yendol-Hoppey (2007) agrees, suggesting that too few classroom teachers have strong mentoring practices that can support beginning teachers.

The literature also strongly indicates that mentoring relationships are of mutual benefit to mentor and protégé (Schuck, 2003; Woods & Weasmer, 2002). The mentor gains fresh perspectives and is challenged to reassess their taken-for-granted perspectives and assumptions. Both mentor and protégé are encouraged to reflect on their practice. This literature aligns with Lyle's positive feelings about being a mentor.

Effective mentoring has been described in the literature as a process that reduces isolation, socialises new teachers into the workplace and familiarises them with professional practice (Carter & Francis, 2001). Further, the mentoring relationship is often described as going through a number of phases. These phases have been described in various terms in the literature but generally are aligned to Kram's (1983) four stages of initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition. Initiation is the period in which the mentoring relationship forms. Cultivation is the second phase, and Kram suggests that in this phase, the two partners learn more about each other and maximise their gains from participating in the relationship. The third phase involves the decrease of mentor functions and increase of protégé autonomy. Finally, the redefinition phase moves the relationship to a more mutually supportive relationship (Chao, 1997; Kram, 1983).

In an elaborated representation of the relationship between mentor and newly qualified teacher that underpins their mentor-training programme, Gray and Gray (1985) propose a five-step model of training that advances from levels 1 to 5. In levels 1 and 2, the power in the mentoring relationship is invested in the mentors as they have the knowledge and experience of their school context. At these stages, mentors meet the needs of beginning teachers by informing them about location of resources, acting as role models, protecting them from criticism, building up a good relationship and so on. In the later stages, beginning teachers take an equal role in the decision-making and propose solutions to their own problems. Mentors take a backwards step, giving the protégés more responsibility in the relationship, but do not withdraw support until they are confident that their protégés can function autonomously. Also built into the model is an evaluation by the mentors of the protégés' effects on them, but Gray and Gray do not emphasise this aspect.

Another model of mentoring pedagogy was studied by McNally and Martin (1998), who examined methods that experienced mentors used to promote the

development of novice teachers who were learning to teach in schools in England. Using Daloz's (1986) model of support, challenge and vision as a premise for mentoring, McNally and Martin investigated mentors' perceptions of how they construed and carried out their roles in relation to the novice teacher learning to teach. They found that mentors tended to focus on the support role rather than the other two aspects.

To assess the value of mentoring of beginning teachers, we need to be mindful of the aims of that mentoring process. Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005) emphasise the importance of basing induction programmes and policies on 'dependable ideas about new teachers as learners, the nature of educative mentoring, and the role of schools in new teacher induction' (p. 693). They identify a number of factors that will enhance mentoring and inductive processes. These include responding to the changing needs of beginning teachers and trying to ensure that what they learn from experience will assist them to enhance their teaching. As well, the mentor needs to have a well-developed notion of what good teaching comprises. Mentors need a range of strategies to help beginning teachers get to grips with both the practical and the intellectual demands of teaching. And importantly, they need to model an interest in learning alongside the beginning teacher.

This concept of bidirectional influence of mentor on protégé and vice versa is apparent in some definitions of the mentoring relationship. For Thompson (1999), a successful mentoring relationship is a caring relationship founded upon 'shared experiences that facilitate a reciprocal process of constructing and examining knowledge' (p. 6). Thompson grounds her definition of mentoring in feminist pedagogy. Earlier, Healy and Welchert (1990) proposed a definition of mentoring that is both functional, comprehensive, theoretically derived and differentiated from supervisor/subordinate interactions. They proclaim mentoring to be:

> A dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment between an advanced career incumbent (mentor) and a beginner (protégé) aimed at promoting the career development of both. (p. 17)

However, it may be that because teachers construct themselves as the 'person in charge', that mentor teachers find this bidirectionality to be a challenge.

Vonk (1996), in supporting Healy and Welchert's (1990) definition of mentoring, maintains that within this dynamic relationship, both mentors and beginning teachers benefit. Beginning teachers are assisted in their quest for a professional identity; mentors, to contribute to this professional development, must reflect on their own practice and on their own self-images as teachers. Healy and Welchert are adamant that this benefit to the mentor must be no serendipitous by-product of the relationship. Rather it is a 'sine qua non of mentoring' (p. 18). According to Healy and Welchert, the research of Phillips (1977) and Kram (1985) supports the inference that in a successful mentoring relationship each party must regard the relationship as reciprocal and that protégé and mentor grow to increasingly esteem each other. In such a reciprocal relationship, both protégé and mentor have responsibilities for promoting each other's growth. This is seen to be occurring in Lyle's mentoring activities.

In addition, research with beginning teachers (Schuck, 2003) supports the differentiation of mentoring relationships from other dyadic relationships, a differentiation that is inherent in the Healy and Welchert (1990) definition. We discuss in Marg's story the limitations of schools appointing mentors who are also the beginning teachers' supervisors.

Traditional mentoring relationships usually involve the mentor and protégé in a one-to-one relationship in which trust is developed and a personal relationship is carefully fostered (Barnett, 1995). Generally, the mentor has roles of nurturing, acting as role model, encouraging, counselling and befriending the protégé (Anderson & Shannon, 1995) as Lyle and Gwen did in the stories above. However, many mentoring relationships do not achieve these features due to incompatibilities between mentor and protégé (Long, 1997), the existence of power differentials (Martinez, 1992) as in Tony and Marg's case, lack of interest or time on the part of the mentor as might be the case with Lanie and Jan in their mentoring roles or unrealistic expectations on the part of the protégé.

The high rate of attrition for newly appointed teachers is a matter of concern internationally. Very closely aligned to the issue of retention are research findings that show that the effective induction and support of new teachers is vital in ensuring the transition from neophyte to competent and confident practising professional (Carter & Francis, 2001; Ewing & Manuel, 2005). Research also indicates that the quality of induction programmes is variable in Australian schools (McRae, Ainsworth, Groves, Rowland, & Zbar, 2000) and is a key factor in the high rate of attrition amongst teachers in their first years of employment.

The importance of early experiences and the quality of support for beginning teachers are highlighted in international research as well. Halford (1998) considered the support offered to beginning teachers to be so inadequate when compared to other professions that education is provocatively noted as 'the profession that eats its young' (p. 33). Flores (2001) found, in her study of 14 beginning teachers in six schools in Portugal, that most of the teachers did not find their working conditions supportive, and that those who did find the workplace supportive were more likely to seek and act upon advice and to develop a more confident and positive attitude to teaching.

Beginning teachers often leave the profession in their first 3 years of teaching, due to lack of appropriate support (Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Odell & Ferraro, 1992). The nature of the school culture is found to be one of the factors affecting the quality of induction support (Yendel-Hoppey, 2007). Positive and supportive workplace conditions lead to higher morale, stronger commitment to teaching and intentions to remain in the profession (Weiss, 1999). A study by Angelle (2002) suggests that schools support beginning teachers differentially, dependent on the effectiveness of the school as a whole. She found that the mentoring programmes in schools designated as effective were far more dynamic and proactive than those in the schools designated as less effective. The latter were found to be limited to fulfilling mandatory requirements and were often of a 'sink or swim' variety (Angelle).

Conclusions

Research indicates that it is necessary to support mentors by offering them preparation and training so that they are supported in thinking about mentoring in an expanded way. This process is likely to enhance their mentoring as they become aware of the different aspects of their role that are beneficial to beginning teachers. These factors include providing challenge and vision of good teaching and knowing how to encourage such teaching.

It is valuable to recognise that the mentoring process changes as the beginning teacher develops. It goes through a number of different stages in which different support is required from the mentor. Mentors need to be aware of this and support the protégé differently according to their stage of development in learning to be a teacher.

The benefits of the mentoring relationship should be mutual. Mentors need to be aware of how they can grow through the process. This enhances the process for mentors and provides a strong model to the beginning teachers of teachers learning through their careers.

Finally, we suggest that trust is an essential component of the relationship, and both mentor and protégé needs to ensure they are not breaking this trust in any way. Mutual respect is essential for the relationship to be viable.

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Chapter 7
Professional Challenges in the Life of a New Teacher

Virtually, every new teacher finds the first year of teaching to be overwhelmingly demanding and challenging. There is nothing that can prepare new teachers for the hundreds of big and little tasks that they must learn to do quickly, accurately and thoughtfully. One of the greatest challenges involves the highly personal process of changing old habits in order to create new routines that will allow the new teachers to complete the more mundane aspects of teaching while maintaining a focus on the big picture of helping students learn.

This chapter provides perspectives from three new teachers. The experiences they recount here suggest that the differences between new teachers and experienced teachers (more than 2 years of experience) are more significant than we might assume. The features of schools and professional development activities that experienced teachers, administrators and teacher educators readily take for granted are not seen that way by these new teachers. After 2 years of experience, the individual who continues in a teaching career has probably developed most of the new habits and routines required for at least minimal success as a teacher. During the first 2 years of teaching, the fads and fashions of the moment have the potential to distract the new teacher from the process of developing habits and routines that will sustain a teaching career that displays a central focus on the quality of student learning.

To set the stage for the stories in this chapter, we summarise findings about the first year of teaching that were reported in major reviews of literature in 1984 and 1999. One of the most intriguing features of Veenman's (1984) review is that it reads as though it could have been published quite recently; little appears to have changed in almost 30 years. To summarise the findings of more than 80 studies published after 1960, Veenman wrote as follows:

> The eight most frequently perceived problems were (in rank order) classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, insufficient materials and supplies, and dealing with problems of individual students (p. 160).

Veenman continues the review of literature by reporting three developmental perspectives. The first perspective is one of developmental stages of concerns, set out by Fuller and Bown (1975). Survival concerns come first, including survival in teaching, 'class control of students, being liked by students, and being evaluated' (p. 191). Concerns about the teaching setting come next, including constraints, frustrations, teaching methods and skills. Finally, new teachers reach the stage of concerns about student learning, students' personal needs and teacher-student relationships. The second perspective identified by Veenman is one of cognitive development, with individuals who work at a higher level of cognitive development appearing to act more successfully in their classrooms. The third perspective on teacher development is grounded in socialisation so that elements of the school setting come into consideration.

Almost 15 years later, Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1998) reported their analysis of more than 90 studies of learning to teach. Only seven studies met the standards they set for studies of the first year of teaching, and six of these produced similar themes: 'The six case studies point to a common theme, an incongruity between the preservice year and the first year of teaching. Preservice teachers' university experiences and their student teaching did not prepare them for classroom realities' (p. 157). They later report that 'these seven studies confirm the widely held view that the first year of teaching is a culture shock for beginning teachers, especially those who are poorly prepared for it' (p. 158). The following quotation summarises their analysis of studies of the first year of teaching:

> What students learn in their preservice classes often clashes with preconceived notions about teaching and what they see happening in schools. Most found teaching more difficult than they previously thought it would be. Their struggles with classroom management challenged many of their beliefs and caused anger, which was hard to balance with their humanistic concerns. The need for control became very apparent to the beginning teacher, often at the expense of alternative ways of teaching. (p. 158)

These reviews suggest that the challenges facing new teachers are both complex and stable over time. As Lortie (1975) pointed out long ago, every prospective teacher brings a deeply rooted and unique set of beliefs formed during an extensive 'apprenticeship of observation' over their many years as students. Beliefs are not easily identified or changed in the teacher education classroom; in the practicum classroom setting, the pressures to perform well from the outset also make it difficult to identify and modify beliefs that support particular teaching actions. These two reviews of literature related to learning to teach provide a backdrop against which we can view the stories of three teachers concerning some of the professional challenges they faced in their first year of teaching.

To obtain realistic data for this chapter, we invited former students to contribute analyses of their personal experiences in their first year of teaching. Barbara chose to write about the overwhelming number of acronyms used by teachers and about the challenge of developing good assessment practices as the school's assessment policies are being changed. Ned focuses on his experiences of a new teacher induction programme that was intended to support his continuing professional development as a new teacher. Anne describes the impact of a school improvement programme that was underway in her first year of teaching and goes on to explain

that the reality of a class full of apathetic students can be overwhelming for a new teacher. Anne also echoes Barbara's concern about the many acronyms that confused her first year of teaching.

Acronyms and Changing Policies: Barbara's Story

I felt decently prepared for my first official practicum, with a grasp of the minutiae of the teaching profession. Having done several teaching placements during my undergraduate degree, I felt that I knew how a school operated, that I was up to date with the latest buzz words of the profession, and that I could assimilate myself into almost any school setting. Whether it was during a placement in a host school or in starting my first full-time contract position, I soon realised that there were many things that I didn't have a clue about. I would listen to chatter between teachers in the staffroom or between my associate teacher and an administrator and I would realise that I could be listening to a foreign language. I was confronted with short forms for which I didn't know the long forms, acronyms of unknown origin, and paperwork that everyone expected me to know intuitively how to complete.

At first, I did not take attendance properly and I did not know what an LPS teacher was. I heard administrators speak of LTOs and entitlement and had no idea how they were connected to each other. Do you get entitlement from doing an LTO? I had trouble distinguishing between credit recovery and credit rescue. I heard about DI and differentiated instruction and wasn't sure if they were the same thing (they are!). I was surprised by the significance placed on the results of provincial assessments by department heads and administration, despite the fact that we told students that it did not really matter how well they did. I didn't know how to fill out any of the forms for leave or reimbursement. A new teacher reading this paragraph and not knowing any of these buzz words or acronyms would know how I felt in the earliest days of my career as a teacher.

I was also confused by the ever-changing latest-and-greatest fad. Assessment and evaluation was the biggest source of my confusion for the longest time, and it may still be a personal source of confusion. I remember being told that a student's overall mark should reflect her or his most recent and most consistent results. As a teacher, I was to look at a student's marks and use my professional judgment to create a mark for the student. I got used to this way of thinking and could come up with a mark that was pretty close to what any other, more experienced, teacher would suggest but in the next year the rules changed. The student's mark was now to be based on the most consistent effort, and nothing else. The most recent achievements were no longer a concern. Once again, I was looking at things through a new lens and trying to figure out how to evaluate students. It's not that it's hard to create a mark by looking for consistencies in a student's marks, but I had to think about how to change my thinking, which leads me to think about WHY I'm changing my thinking, which generally gives me a headache and causes me to

spend a great deal of time annoying all my teacher friends with the debate I am having with myself.

I think the biggest issue we face as new teachers when it comes to buzz words, acronyms, and changing initiatives is that we are never really told what any of it means, yet we feel pressured to use the terms, if only to sound like we know what we are doing. We just add them to our vocabulary and use them in the context that everybody else does, pretending to know what we are talking about. I can honestly say that I still have no idea what an LPS teacher is. I know what the job is and I know what an LPS teacher does for my students, but LPS means nothing to me. (I think it's learning programme support.) Does it matter? Am I a bad teacher for not knowing? If I make a fair mark for a student and everyone around me thinks that it's a fair mark, but I never use the term 'most consistent', have I failed? As new teachers we have to take it upon ourselves to remove some of the mysticism surrounding this jargon. Say what you mean and leave out all of the neat, tidy, all-encompassing nouns. I just try to explain myself and what I think is important in education. I have come to realise that jargon and buzz words are surface features of teaching. They are window dressing. I want to be successful as a teacher, not because I can talk about it in all the latest jargon, but because I teach well and my students learn well and because I care about education.

Barbara's story relates to the discussion in Chapter 4 about learning a new language and the analogy to 'learning' a new school. Here, Barbara literally needs to learn a new language. For those of us who do not work in the same jurisdiction as Barbara, or are newcomers, the discussion above could well have been in a foreign language. We are not aware that LPS stands for learning and performance support and LTO for long-term occasional (teacher). Nor are our lives made richer by this knowledge. Each country, and indeed, each region or jurisdiction has its own set of idiosyncratic acronyms which seem to exist mainly to puzzle and challenge the uninitiated.

The Induction Programme for New Teachers: Ned's Story

As one of the lucky graduates who secured a full-time appointment at the start of my teaching career, I entered the new school with anticipation and the nervous sweats. I was appointed as a long-term occasional (LTO) teacher, so I was not yet on track to a permanent contract. Being an LTO for your first year of teaching is a challenge, because you are expected to fill someone else's shoes and make sure that you get involved with the school as fast as possible so that your principal will remember you favourably when hiring season comes around again. You work to please everyone. I was privileged to be in a department that was very willing to share resources, which made my life wonderful. In the first few weeks at my school, my principal told me that she was trying to get me signed up for NTIP (the New Teacher Induction Programme).

This is when I realised that everything in education is an acronym, which can be very annoying for a new teacher. NTIP is a programme mandated by the government for every new teacher, but the primary criterion at the time was that you need to be a contract teacher. I was a lowly LTO. After back-and-forth conversations with the board office and the principal, it was decided that I was not welcome in NTIP because I did not have the right title, so I went on my way, teaching blindly for that first year of full-time teaching.

June came around and, after some sleepless nights and many hours in conversation with many principals and teachers, I accepted a contract position at the school where I had been teaching. It was only a one-third contract, but nevertheless it was a contract. Now that I was a contract teacher, I had the right title to become involved with the NTIP and I was signed up with an experienced teacher as my mentor. This person was my department head, with whom I had developed a positive relationship as an LTO, so I was ready to start.

During my first year of teaching I did meet several teachers who were participating in NTIP. After hearing their stories and complaints, I must admit that I did not enter the programme with an open mind. I was told that the programme was not applicable and that it was just another hoop to be jumped through. I was also told that it felt a lot like teachers college. My experience of teachers college had been a mixture of great learning and frequent frustration. Unfortunately, most people seem to look back on those experiences and remember the bad features more clearly than the good ones. If NTIP was going to be a repeat of the Faculty of Education experience, I had it set in my head that I would not enjoy it.

As a new teacher, your worst nightmare is to miss school. Preparing lessons for your replacement means double the normal work and it all needs to be done way ahead of time. Our first NTIP meeting was for a full day on a Friday in September, which meant I had to prepare three classes' worth of material and that material had to be teachable by a teacher who probably would not have my subject qualifications (mathematics and physics). After completing my paper work and letting the office know where I would be, I made my way to the 8:30 a.m. meeting. I arrived early (always a good idea when you are the new guy) and found the room packed with teachers from every grade level. The board rented a hall and had lunch catered in for the meeting; we sat, listened and participated in small activities all day. In the morning we discussed our 'colour' (personality tests), which then led to 'Now think of your students and how you are going to reach all the different colours in your classroom'. This felt exactly like teachers college! The difficulty with having teachers from all grade levels in the same room is that high school is a totally different world. The meeting was run by a retired primary teacher. Need I say more?

After lunch, we discussed our NTIP goals and how we were going to use our time. We were given OT (Occasional Teacher) coverage for 6 days during the year for my mentor and me to spend as we saw best to improve our teaching (not just mine, but also the mentor's). I remember leaving the meeting thinking of all the work that had been added to my plate as a result of this

programme that was meant to help me. Trust me, you don't want to add more to your plate as a new teacher if you don't have to.

My department head and I decided that we would observe each other in our classrooms, which seemed like a great idea until the morning of the first observation. It hit me that my department head was coming into my classroom to watch me teach, and this sounded like an evaluation (another thing dreaded by a new teacher). After calming my nerves I taught the class and misspelt Pythagorean Theorem. I was pleased when my department head said that I did a good job, but I never did get to watch her teach and I don't really remember how that failed to happen. That evaluation word crept up again, but this time it was official. Another part of the NTIP is that you need two satisfactory evaluations from your school's administrators to pass the programme. Now I was petrified. Evaluations are not just simply 'pop in for 5 minutes to see that everything is okay, you pass'. I had to produce exemplars, lesson plans, outlines, and classroom management strategies. This is a lot to ask of a first-year teacher, particularly when I recalled that NTIP was put into place 'to empower the first-year teacher and to make the first year of teaching survivable'; words straight out of the mouth of a speaker at the first meeting.

There were three meetings during the year where we were separated into the age groups that we taught, which made for better discussions. All the meetings followed the same pattern. In the morning we focused on differentiation in the classroom and appropriate everyday activities. In the afternoon we discussed processes and procedures in our schools and expanded on the morning discussions. The morning session was run by a consultant from the school board office, and the afternoon sessions were run by a principal with the help of two vice-principals. The afternoon sessions seemed very informative and let us see how schools other than our own operate. The morning sessions had a lot of discussion about pedagogy, but they fell short in terms of real-world application. For example, we watched a video of a typical applied science class learning about Bohr diagrams; the teacher had set up multiple stations that used different methods to teach the same concept, the Bohr model of the atom. The idea and implementation were well done, but our table all agreed that this strategy would be unduly demanding on the teacher. The teacher would have to initially design all the stations and then set them up. During the class one would be pulled in five different directions and be unable to give complete instructions to the whole class. Then we asked: 'How would one assess the students on this concept: as one group or according to the stations that they chose?' This is a lot of effort for the small return of understanding a single concept. I am not saying the Bohr model is not worth the effort, but at some point we need to weigh the effort against the students' potential gains in understanding.

After finishing the evaluations, meetings, and professional development, and attending the celebration lunch, I finally could say that I had finished the NTIP. Now, as a third-year teacher looking back on his second year of teach-

ing, I cannot say that I took a lot from NTIP, but I can say that the ideas and support provided by the programme were helpful enough for me as a first-year teacher. It was encouraging to know that my school board and school administrators realise that teaching is difficult at the best of times and even more difficult in the first few years. My opinion is that the concept of NTIP is sound, but the delivery and implementation of the programme need to be examined carefully and adjusted accordingly.

Ned notes difficulties experienced by teachers who are supposed to engage in professional development while coping with an often overwhelming workload. While intended to help the new teacher to grow and develop, these programmes often place undue stress on the beginning teacher.

School Improvement and Student Reality: Anne's Story

One of the biggest initiatives that I find frustrating as a new teacher involves School Improvement Plans and School Accreditation. In the two schools where I have taught in my first 2 years of teaching, this has been a big issue. Every school in my province is required to go through School Accreditation, a 5-year process in which the school sets goals as a team and then enacts them through a rigorous process of standardised tests and data collection. Millions of dollars have been spent on this provincial initiative, which pulls many teachers out of the classroom and adds hours to the committee's workload. The whole point of the process is to make schools better places to learn and to make teachers better teachers, but not many people I talk to think it is worth anything. Although I do think the discussions that it initiates are excellent, especially as a teacher who is just beginning a career. So while I do think some of the work is worthwhile, overall, it seems to be a waste of everyone's time and effort.

I found education's acronyms overwhelming from the very start of my pre-service programme. Luckily, one of my close friends was a concurrent (or double-degree) student whose mother was a principal, so she already knew the jargon and acronyms. I would sit beside her in lectures and ask her what each acronym meant. I remember joking that there should be a class on all the acronyms, as there seemed to be one for every aspect of teaching and you are told once what it stands for and then expected to remember it forever. Teaching in another jurisdiction, I had to learn a whole new set of jargon and acronyms. It was overwhelming and I also found that it reinforced the fact that I was a 'new' teacher, as if I needed to be reminded! As I've been teaching a little longer, I have figured out most of them, given that they are all so similar and many school boards and provinces have similar programmes and initiatives.

Another point concerns the fact that many of the fancy new methods of teaching that we learn in our studies fail in a classroom of real children. Children have bad days, there are full moons, there are days where there are

too many substitute teachers in the school, and there are days when there is a chance of rain! Children never need an excuse to be rowdy. Personally, I am starting to learn how to structure my classroom so that I can try new approaches and do lots of co-operative learning and learning with manipulatives, all that good stuff we were taught in our pre-service programme. Trying new approaches is a long process and the guidelines and expectations need to be made clear to the students, but I am learning that it is possible. Yet the reality is that it often depends on the students.

I am a firm believer that every child is capable of participating in this kind of learning, but the reality is that there are many day-to-day factors (class size, students absent/present, time of day, amount of sugar consumed recently, the teacher they had in the previous period, and so on) that can make it impossible for students and the teacher to try new teaching ideas, be they fads or ideas with real value. For example, this year I have the 'class from hell', a group of Grade 9s who hate my math class and I have no idea why. They used to be two classes of 18 but lost enough students that they were combined into a single class this year. According to their teachers last year, they were very difficult to control as two classes of 18. Imagine what they are like this year! And do they ever have a reputation! I actually dread seeing them walk through my door. I have been completely and totally unable to teach the way I normally do. Every day I manage to get about 10 minutes of teaching time in which I am not disciplining them or asking them to be quiet. I love to teach mathematics and I normally do all sorts of activities and interactive lessons. This class is so difficult that I have been reduced to being a worksheets teacher who just hands out worksheets and assigns homework from the textbook. I am only able to review homework on their good days. On bad days I give them seat work and try to keep them in my room rather than wandering in the halls. Most days I send some students to the office. In short, the class is a nightmare and I feel like a failure because I am not teaching them the way I know is best (the way I was taught in my pre-service programme and the way I enjoy and find effective). Sadly, I have been reduced to that boring teacher who gets blamed for not teaching the students anything. What I'm beginning to realise is that I just need to survive this class. I can't do any of those neat activities that I learned or would like to try; this collection of students can't handle it. They don't tell you about these possibilities during your initial teacher training, nor do they tell you about the reality of student apathy.

Anne's story is one of reality shock or culture shock as noted in a number of the chapters. She has wonderful ideals and desires to make her lessons exciting and active, but these ideas are being destroyed by the reality of a class that is difficult to manage and for whom a triumph in teaching is to keep them in the classroom for the maths period. Anne's practice has had to adjust to the realities of apathy and disruption in the classroom, realities that she did not have exposure to in her teacher education programme.

Fads, Fashions and Professional Challenges

Where do we REALLY learn to teach? Is it true that 'we teach as we were taught'? The four of us have had the pleasure of teaching new teachers for more than 20 years, and we are still working to explore and understand the complexities of the process of learning to teach. We have come to appreciate two very important aspects of learning to teach.

1. *We learn far more than we realise by watching our own teachers teach us when we are students, from the first year of primary education to the last year of secondary and on into university and other post-secondary studies.*

Everyone who attends school learns a great deal about teaching. Because teaching looks easy (and good teaching looks even easier), the culture we grow up in tends to assume that anyone can teach. The only way to correct that gross misunderstanding is to experience the first year of teaching. As students, we have access to our teachers' behaviours but not to their thinking about teaching and learning. Attempting to teach in new and unfamiliar ways is discomforting for both teacher and students, and thus it should not be surprising that we tend to teach as we were taught (and not as we were told to teach in a pre-service programme). Lortie (1975) referred to our learning about teaching by watching our teachers as an 'apprenticeship of observation', an incomplete apprenticeship because the purpose of attending school is not to learn how to teach.

2. *Learning to teach is uniquely different from our formal, classroom-based learning experiences*. A great deal of formal schooling involves sitting and listening, an apparently necessary consequence of being in groups of 20 (in primary) to 500 or more (in university).

Little that we do in school prepares us for learning from experience, yet learning to teach is all about learning from experience. When prospective teachers move into the teacher education classroom, they may write the date in a notebook and then discover that the class has ended without anything more being entered. The content of the lesson may have seemed too obvious to require recording; alternatively, it may have seemed so far removed from learning how to plan lessons or manage students that there seemed to be no point in recording anything. Prospective teachers yearn for first-hand experiences of teaching, and they do learn a great deal while in their practicum placements, which are always rated as the single most important feature of a pre-service teacher education programme. While in the teacher education classroom, they are likely to focus more on *how* they are being taught than on *what* they are being taught, for the obvious reason that actions definitely speak louder than words when both actions and words are directed to the same topic of how to teach. It is much easier to imagine a teacher-preparation programme that consisted solely of practicum experiences than one that consisted solely of education classes. The unfamiliar challenges of learning from experience contribute profoundly to the intensity and complexity of the first year or two of teaching.

Conclusions

As Barbara, Ned and Anne indicate in their contributions to this chapter, fads and often fleeting fashions in the professional world of teaching can easily disrupt and distract the new teacher who is working to develop and clarify a personal philosophy of education and to focus on the big picture issue of the quality of students' learning. They simply add to the challenges already facing the beginning teacher. Barbara urges teachers to say what they mean in the simplest way possible, avoiding the jargon that may be the fashion of the day but also has the potential to confuse students and their parents. Ned was pleased to know that administrators were trying to support him as a new teacher, but he felt that the processes used in the induction programme needed to be improved. Anne recognised the potential of school improvement efforts but saw too little value for the time and effort required. Because she moved from one state to another to begin teaching, she was faced with an entirely unfamiliar set of jargon while her real challenge was to find ways to foster the learning of a class of students who had largely been turned off learning. Each of these three new teachers wanted to focus on becoming the best possible teacher. Educational fads and fashions seem to have considerable potential for distracting the new teacher who is trying to learn from experience in order to develop routines that improve the quality of students' learning.

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Chapter 8
Teaching Here and There: Substitute Teaching

Less than 'real' teachers? (Lunay & Lock, 2006, p. 171)

Wenger's (1998) description of teaching as a community of practice has been widely embraced. Gaining entry to and membership of such a community can be difficult for any newcomer. For the substitute teacher, however, especially one teaching in several schools, this process of initiation can be immensely more complicated. Shilling (1991, p. 3) refers to substitute teachers as 'working on the margins' (p. 3), while Harrington (2010, p. 279) warns of the risk of such teachers, 'not being taken seriously by fellow teachers and students'. Access to professional development is also more difficult in such circumstances, as schools are usually unwilling to pay either the wages of a substitute teacher to attend such offerings, or the corresponding fees (Harrington). Exacerbating this, Lunay and Lock (2006, p. 1, online version) report 'pervasive, enduring systemic problems' undermining the capacity and potential of the substitute teacher. They call for efforts to contribute to 'the overall reduction of … estrangement and disconnection' (p. 3, online version).

A number of different terms are used for non-permanent teachers. The term 'substitute' is mainly used here. Many of the terms applied to this status of teaching are arguably deficit in nature. The word 'casual' suggests relaxed, to the point of indifference, or comfortable (as in casual clothing) or even disengaged (a casual affair). The 'sub' in substitute whispers 'inferior' or 'beneath'. Both 'relief' and 'supply' suggest that such teachers are seen as a commodity and remind us of the vicissitudes commensurate with their temporary status. Expressions used facetiously in reference to such teachers include 'a warm body' (Abdal-Haqq, 1997; Edelman, 2003), 'able to fog up a mirror' and 'vertical'. In truth, such terms probably reveal more about the difficulties in securing substitute teachers than any intended attack on their qualities or dedication. Nevertheless, such terms do little to promote the esteem of these professionals as individuals or a group. In short, such teachers are at times viewed as 'a last resort'. Intriguingly, while schools anecdotally report difficulties in finding substitute staff, those available to teach on this basis complain of underemployment (Phipo, 1998). From the beginning teacher's point of view, the entry into teaching is akin to a 'game of snakes and ladders' (Ewing, 2006, p. 30).

According to Lunay and Lock (2006, p. 1, online version), students might typically experience an accumulation of a year's worth of instruction from substitute teachers over the course of their school life. This corresponds to between 7% and 8% of a 13-year school experience. Lunay and Lock conclude that the substitute workforce is therefore a vital part of the teaching workforce, not just a stopgap.

Establishing the Problems

Some of this first subsection may make for discouraging reading for anyone in, or watching, the profession. Students, schools and systems can combine to throw some icy water on the fire of the beginning teacher's enthusiasm to teach and make a difference. Teachers can and regularly do survive the substitute experience, however, just as we will see that the correspondents in our story, Beverly, Steve and Melinda did.

The task of establishing oneself in the teaching (or any) profession is never without its problems. The multiplicity of expectations such as establishing classroom routines and expectations, while advancing the curriculum, is demanding for any new teacher. The complexities are multiplied, however, if one is working across several schools, each with its own corporate knowledge, including names of key personnel, processes and expectations—many of them assumed and unwritten.

The added constraints besetting substitute teachers are, of course, not new. Shilling (1991) pointed to their lower status compared to that of their permanent colleagues and, referring to research conducted in the UK, reported that substitutes, 'needed to be first-rate teachers to cope with the job' (p. 5). Shilling goes on to describe the work of a substitute teacher as offering, 'little job satisfaction, control over their work or career prospects'.

Teaching on a substitute basis does have its compensations. These are usually offset by other factors, however. There is usually less of a burden with regard to ongoing planning, programming and marking, but for this, teachers sacrifice the satisfaction gained by seeing progress over time in a child or a class, or having more control, in a curricular sense, over their classes. Daily pay rates are typically higher than those of full-time staff, but this is to compensate for the lack of work available during holidays, and the absence of conditions such as sick leave and the like (Buchanan, 2011).

Lunay and Lock (2006) distinguished three conditions to describe the real and perceived condition of 46 substitute teachers in a study of theirs: powerlessness, isolation and meaninglessness. These three, when aggregated, can constitute a powerfully demotivating and demoralising burden, lending a very existential bleakness to any workplace, particularly a temporary one. The combination of powerlessness and isolation is perhaps particularly debilitating. With regard to issues of power:

- Substitute teachers are relatively powerless before their students, who very much feel 'on home ground'. Classroom management is problematic for all teachers and especially for beginning teachers, where it may contribute to feelings of alienation. Nowhere is it more problematic, however, than for substitute teachers. Despite this, containing their students and keeping their classes quiet is probably an

important predictor of these teachers' re-employment. That is, high accountability and expectations are exercised over substitute teachers, in a context of offering them low levels of authority and support. By contrast, at least in some circumstances, the children in their care have low levels of accountability for their behaviour. It is reasonable for senior staff to want to avoid or at least minimise dealing with other teachers' discipline problems, but one wonders if there is a flight from responsibility among some school leaders. Ironically, retreat from dealing with discipline problems can only exacerbate and conflagrate them in the long term. O'Connor (2009) lays at the feet of principals the responsibility for supporting substitute teachers, but the responsibility may need to be more broadly shared among school personnel. Disruptions to other workers (other children and teachers, in a school context) at the level exhibited by some school students would not be tolerated in most other professions. This is also an issue of occupational health and safety, again for children and teachers, who should not be left unsupported in the face of incivility in the classroom and should be guaranteed a workplace free from verbal or physical abuse, threats and bullying. Buchanan (2010) observed that researchers, systems and teachers alike appear to be reticent in grappling with such matters, and student discipline may have become an issue that 'dare not speak its name' (p. 208).

- Substitute teachers are powerless to criticise their schools, for fear of not being rehired. Even in relatively favourable circumstances, teaching can be a very isolating business, as each teacher retreats to her or his classroom. The isolation and lack of support can be or appear particularly crushing for the substitute teacher.
- Perhaps most fundamentally, substitute teachers are powerless to secure work and may spend much time 'waiting for the phone call' on a daily basis (Buchanan, 2011). Ewing (2006) surveyed 267 beginning teachers and asked them to nominate the four most important obstacle factors for beginning teachers from a list of 18 factors. She found that job security ranked second highest as an obstacle factor after workload, with 37% of nominations (p. 33). Job security was also listed as a support factor or positive aspect of the profession by 16% of respondents, making it the tenth most commonly chosen factor.

With regard to Lunay and Lock's (2006) third condition, meaninglessness, the cognate 'pointlessness' also comes to mind, as substitute teachers in particular struggle against what they see as hostilities, in the context of a lack of support. While all teachers are potentially heir to some of these metaphorical slings and arrows, substitute teachers in Lunay and Lock's study expressed significant frustration at what they saw as a lack of equity with their tenured colleagues. In reference to the workplace generally, Gladwell (2008, p. 149) enumerates three essential contributors to job satisfaction: 'autonomy, complexity and a connection between effort and reward'. While teaching, particularly in its substitute guise, offers much complexity, it can be somewhat grudging in dispensing autonomy and reward for effort.

Some of the problems are beyond the scope of educational systems to remedy. There exists a significant socio-economic mismatch between many teachers and those schools that are most difficult to staff. As a result of this, it is likely that small numbers of teachers may live in areas where substitute or permanent teachers may

be needed, and large numbers may live in places where there is little substitute employment available. Hudson and Hudson (2008) point out that this is yet more problematic in rural and remote areas that are typically difficult to staff.

As McCormack and Thomas (2005, p. 17) have observed, the transition to teaching for many in New South Wales, Australia, is 'by way of "substitute, contract or relief" teaching whereby they can teach in several schools for periods ranging from days to a term or even yearly blocks of time'. Drawing on the work of Shilling, McCormack, and Thomas (2005, p. 18) describe substitute teaching as 'a highly demanding form of teaching, substantially different from regular teaching, and characterised by lack of continuity, status or support', occupying a low priority in academic research and government policy. Their study of selected graduates operating in the substitute-teaching mode indicated low levels of satisfaction and high levels of frustration. These findings echo those of Tromans, Daws, Limerick, and Brannock (2001) who studied the beginning teacher on temporary engagement in Queensland, Australia. Their findings suggested that the lack of job security and variability in employment practices served to destabilise and disorient this group. They conclude that with increasing devolution to schools to make decisions about the employment of substitute teachers, it is critical that the teachers and the schools are aware of their rights and responsibilities. This is clearly an industrial as well as professional issue.

The narrative in this chapter highlights some of the challenges peculiar to, or more problematic for, substitute teachers than for their permanent counterparts. These include isolation, as well as the perception and reality of a lack of support, and classroom management problems. The narrative comprises edited emails between Beverly and a group of her graduate peers.

Out in the Cold: Beverly's Story

From: Beverley@wayout.com

To: classof10@uni.com

Hi everyone,
Here I am at home—no work again today. As a substitute teacher, I feel really left out in the cold. (No bad jokes about living up in the Mountains, please! Or about chilling!) I recently spent 2 weeks clutching my phone each morning as time and hope drained away. Not one call. Then, 2 days ago, three calls for the same day. I know the other two won't ring back. They never do once you tell them no.

Compared to the City, there aren't many schools up here, but there seem to be lots of teachers wanting substitute work. It's hard to get established. And relying on public transport, I just can't realistically get to schools down in the 'burbs by 8:30.

The other day when I did get some teaching, I stayed back for a staff meeting (gotta impress, you know—and anyway, I'm information-starved about how schools run). The boss was going on about an upcoming PD [Professional

Development] day, and said, 'It'd be really valuable, especially for b …', then stopped in her tracks as her eyes caught mine. She then uncomfortably 'ahemed' and went on. I don't know if the 'b' on the end of 'for' was going to be 'beginning teachers', or 'Beverly'. Either way, she must have realised that the school wouldn't shoulder the cost of sending me. I can't blame them I guess, but it made me think of myself as B for burden on the place, rather than a potential asset. I'm not their responsibility, I suppose. If I'm not earning full-time, though, it's a burden on me to pay for PDs, too.

That's the problem, really. I feel like a stray or a refugee. Is it melodramatic to say 'boat teacher'? It feels like I'm everyone's problem, but no one's responsibility. Everyone just looks the other way. Doesn't do much for my personal or professional self-esteem. Like, finding a mentor is so hard when you don't have regular or predictable contact with anyone. And all the rules are in their favour. I did 8 weeks straight at Crystal Falls, but it was on different classes, it wasn't a 'block', so, no holiday pay. And the tax thing. Don't get me started. I seem to be taxed at the highest rate every time. I'll get a lot of it back in a year, but might be pretty hungry in the meantime.

Still, I've made choices I guess. Being tied to the one place seems a bit scary. And seeing all these schools and teachers in operation is a sort of PD, really. It's given me a great grounding if I do ever get a job…

Oh, yeah, and I thought I was a lefty until I started teaching (shut up everyone!).

Subject: re: substitute teaching

From: Steve@whatever
27 08 09 5: 15 PM

To: classof10@uni.com

Hey Bev,
Sorry to hear you're not gettin' any. Actually, it's been a while since you emailed, so I thought maybe you were getting more work now. Still, if you have to suffer, Crystal Falls is a nice place to do so. I don't want to sound unsympathetic, but you could move down to the burbs, couldn't you? Instead of being a leftie mountains pinkie greenie? And your position does have its compensations. I loved your blogs from Japan and Mexico. Great pix, by the way. Oh yeah, can I use some of your Mayan photos and some of your blog stuff with one of my classes? Tell us about the lefty thing, too. I can't believe you've gone soft.

Subject: re: substitute teaching

From: Bev@wayout.com
01 10 09 7: 13 PM

To: classof10@uni.com

Hey, Steve—where I live—UP TO ME, OKAY?? Still, since you feel the need to ask, it's heaps cheaper to live up here compared to the City.

B

Subject: re: substitute teaching

From: Steve@whatever
01 10 09 7: 19 PM

To: Bev@wayout.com

Umm, sorry Bev. Wasn't meaning to have a go at you. Big mouth got me into trouble. Yeah, yeah, not the first time.
    Hope things pick up for you hey,

Steve

From Melinda@pedagog.edu

To classof10@uni.com

Hi ladies and gents … and Steve,
Bev, I still remember my early substitute days. One of the things I found was that they expect you to just know everything. In more or less the same breath, they tell you to forget everything you learnt at uni—a bit insulting. I wouldn't tell a new kid at my school to forget everything they learnt at their last school. Then in the next moment they say, 'didn't you learn that at uni?' Still, some of the stuff they didn't tell us at uni. On my first day at one school, I taught all day and did two playground duties, so I didn't speak to another grown up after 8:30. I had a Kindy class—pretty intense bunch of 5-year-olds. Anyway, by about 2:45, there were more and more parents glaring at me through the window. Turns out, Kindy finishes at 2:30, not 3 when the other kids go home. No bells or anything to tell you. They just expect you to know…
    It's kind of funny, I guess … now.
    The next day I actually made it into the staffroom for a coffee, but that didn't end happily either. I used someone else's coffee cup, which was viewed dimly. What was I thinking? 37 cups there and I reach out and grab '49% sweetheart 51% bitch'! What are they teaching at uni these days?
    Sounds cheesy, but hang in there, Bev. I remember being on the point of giving up ever finding full-time work, when I was offered two jobs in the one week—ain't that the way? There's a class out there that will be yours one day.

Mel

Subject: re: substitute teaching

From: Bev@wayout.com
01 10 09 7: 13 PM

To: classof10@uni.com

Hi all, and thanks Mel,

I've had a chance to calm down after my spew at Steve's email. Yes, Steve, you can use my photos and blog. Full APA referencing, okay?? (And sorry for the reply-all.)

Pinkie greenie??

Anyway, the Mountains aren't the trendy, yuppie place you might think. Because housing is cheaper up here, you get a lot of single parent and low income or unemployed families. A lot of people seem to be here running away from something. If I move I'll have to give up my part-time evening and weekend work, which—sadly—I need to keep me going at the moment.

The os travels have been fun, and it's really good for my (and Steve's!) teaching. Whenever the kids don't want to do spelling or something, they say, 'tell us about overseas again, miss'.

Yeah, I am getting more work now. I just got a call for tomorrow, which means I now have a full week, and 2 days already for next week, which will probably fill up. One of the schools I turned down did ring me back—must be desperate, hey?

I had a few days' work at a school just around the corner from home (not Crystal Falls—that's about 40 km away, an hour by train!—and very middle class by comparison). This was a low socio economic school with heaps of community programmes to support kids and caregivers, so I was able to work closely with the school counsellor and regional behavioural therapist to help 3 kids in my class. I'm now confident to work on any class from K-6 including low ability and autistic kids. I've seen different ways to implement literacy, structuring reading groups, maths sessions, teaching culturally sensitive perspectives, and so many teaching styles to complement and inform mine—and some I'll politely reject.

One great thing about being in different schools is watching behaviour management techniques. I've learnt a lot watching other teachers work and seeing the links between a school's policies and the way they've been developed to meet the needs of the kids and the community. These have been great experiences and I know that even though there have been hard times these experiences have been invaluable, and ones that I may not have had if I had gone straight into full time teaching. It's a bit like travelling—you forget that you were living beneath the official UN poverty line (okay, not quite) but you remember the good times and all the things you learnt. Still, sometimes it feels like the benefits have come despite everything, and not because of everything, if that makes sense.

My snap-out-of-leftie experiences? I have actually ventured into the suburbs to do some work. A friend mentioned me to a principal there. Not what you know but who you know, hey? Some feral kids down there. But will tell you more some other time. Gotta prepare some work for tomorrow.

They were good photos, weren't they? Aaah, Mexico…

Adios

Beverly's experiences reflect the positive and negative aspects of substitute teaching. This is helpful in reminding us that there are nuances to the role of substitute teaching.

Okay, hands up all those of you who have been substitutes at one time or another. Up straight, now. I thought so—most of you.

The preceding email conversation offers considerable advice for beginning teachers. Beverly's account highlights some of the added complexities for the vast numbers of beginning teachers who choose, or are chosen by, a substitute-teaching situation. She also touches on some of the advantages. As Beverly points out, in her part of the world, rents are cheaper than in the City, so that limits her options for living in a place where she would have more work opportunities. Principals of suburban schools might well look at a potential substitute teacher's CV, see 'Crystal Falls' or more remote locations as the place of residence and move on to the next person on the list, knowing that Beverly would not be able to travel to school for a 9:00 a.m. start or earlier. For Beverly, this is exacerbated by her reliance on public transport. While neither of these things should be used to discriminate against her, Beverley perhaps wisely feels constrained to conceal both of these circumstances from potential employers if possible. Both of these factors—low rent residence, no car—are at the same time causes and effects of her underemployment, even though they might also be lifestyle choices on her part, and indeed consistent with Steve's construct of her as a 'leftie'.

Of course, some supply teachers choose that status, as it suits their lifestyles and dovetails with other obligations. Despite Beverly's plaintive email, she has managed to use her time in enjoyable and learningful pursuits, such as travel. Her travels are even having beneficial outcomes for Steve and one of his classes and certainly appeal to some of Beverly's own students. To be sure, there are worse vices for children than wanting to hear and see an international travelogue. As an aside, social networking sites are no doubt providing opportunities for peer support, development and resource sharing that were undreamt of until recently—and also combating some of the real and perceived isolation to which teachers are prone. One can perhaps picture Beverly sitting at home feeling even more isolated and forlorn but for the opportunity to email or text colleague friends.

Beverly also recognises the value of the on-the-job training she is getting, but as she poignantly points out, the benefits seem to accrue despite everything, rather than because of everything. She seems to be having trouble finding allies and advocates, so crucial in any profession, but particularly as one finds one's way into the early years of teaching. The connections are also important in terms of knowing gatekeepers, as Beverly has come to appreciate.

Melinda's recollections are also telling, in terms of the burdens placed on her with regard to playground duties. Teaching has at times been described as the profession that eats its young. Nowhere is this more the case than with substitute staff. It may be difficult to resist the temptation to give a substitute teacher playground duties, classes or other responsibilities over and above those of the teacher being replaced. And Melinda is right. University will not and cannot teach you everything.

It cannot possibly cover all the contingencies that will happen in the early hours or years of your teaching. A pre-service or beginning teacher reading this chapter will become apprised of the coffee cup issue. But that is but one of an infinite number of thorny issues that can arise in a school or in any shared workplace. The only thing we can assert confidently is that the early years will hold surprises. Students and colleagues will produce the unexpected. Occasionally, these things will be alarming, confronting and upsetting. Fortunately, however, they will also on occasion be charming, amusing and heart-warming.

Beverly points out the cost in terms of both pragmatics and her personal and professional self-esteem. As she observes, living out of the city is a metaphor for her perceived exclusion from employment as well as from opportunities for professional development. As her curt response to Steve suggests, this circumstance seems to be 'getting under her skin'.

Even though it is clear that there are external circumstances militating against Beverly getting more work, it must be difficult for her to resist a nagging feeling that it might be something about her that contributes to the problem. Melinda conceded that her advice might sound 'cheesy', and yet it is important to try and maintain hope. The next offer might be a permanent one, and the beginning teacher will enter that job armed with various substitute experiences and ideas. If a substitute teacher could know in advance that he/she was going to secure permanent employment at the end of, say, three or four terms, this interim status might be considerably less stressful, perhaps even welcomed. Even for the substitute teacher, having become well known in one or two schools, the challenges become less intense, and one is treated more or less as one of the permanent staff. Naturally, though, this takes some time.

Postscript: Beverly has since secured a full-time teaching job locally, working with children with high support needs. She wrote:

> There are many challenges to contend with … extreme levels of anxiety in all my kids, violence in some and lots of screaming, hitting and behaviour management needed every second. There are also nice times, these kids see the world in a different way and I'm very interested and working hard to meet their needs as best I can. They love and need structure, routine, visuals…so on. It's a unique experience, let's just say that!;) I'm working with a really supportive team and am really enjoying teaching in the Mountains and to finally have paid holidays!! and of course continuity and ownership over my teaching.

Implications

by choice or necessity … (McCormack & Thomas, 2005, p. 17)

While for Beverly, as a generalist primary schoolteacher, teaching outside her field is not a problem; this can significantly complicate matters for secondary school substitute teachers (Ingersoll, 1998) as well as for their students (McCormack &

Thomas, 2005). Behaviour management problems also proliferate among this older group. One of Buchanan's (2009) informants reported inconsistencies between faculties at the one secondary school, recounting, 'support was patchy; whereas some faculties would be highly obliging in outlining work that a class could do, in other cases … I couldn't believe the people who delighted in watching you get eaten' (para 17). McCormack and Thomas's (2005, p. 28) substitute primary school respondents recorded significantly lower levels of satisfaction than did their permanent counterparts ($p = 0.002$). The difference was smaller between the two secondary school cohorts.

The above issues beg the question as to why some teachers opt for this mode of teaching. Reasons, according to Shilling (1991), include flexibility, to supplement other income, and as a means to entering, or re-entering, the full-time workforce. It may be advantageous on a temporary basis for some teachers, if they take on other responsibilities such as caring for their own children, or elderly parents. Many substitute teachers, however, do not do so by choice, but are unable to acquire full-time work locally. It is likely that the highest proportion of substitute teachers is to be found among those in the early years of their career. Some of these teachers are perhaps becoming disillusioned with and doubting themselves and/or the system. As Korthagen (2004) suggests, the enthusiasm and idealism of the beginning teacher may well be fragile and easily quashed. McCormack and Thomas's (2005) early career substitute respondents described their circumstances as follows: 'a nightmare for me', 'no job security' and 'the disappointment of not gaining a position is extreme after 4 years of studying, building hope and a $14,000 HECS [tertiary student loan] debt' (p. 22).

One factor conspicuous by its recurrence in teacher retention and attrition literature is that of relationships. Schuck, Brady, and Griffin (2005) identified four conditions as being central to a sense of belonging among new teachers: relationships, communication, support as opposed to isolation and leadership. Each of these is rendered more complex for the substitute teacher. Indeed, all four of Schuck et al.'s conditions could be subsumed by the first: relationships. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2010) nominated relationships as the first of their domains or conditions of teacher support. While they do not refer specifically to substitute teachers, the elements that constitute their 'relationships' domain include a sense of belonging and acceptance, as well as collective ownership (p. 3). Another important contributor to school culture and new teacher well-being is 'belongingness' (Johnson et al., p. 4). It stands to reason that however scarce these resources might be in any particular school, it is the substitute staff who will have the most difficulty in gaining access to them. Duggleby and Badali (2007) interviewed seven teachers in Saskatchewan and found that many of the problems facing substitute teachers were symptoms of feeling that they did not belong anywhere or to anyone. It emerged that professional associations did not explicitly include them in professional development activities. Similarly, schools are unwilling to invest in the professional development of their substitute staff. Duggleby and Badali also noted the morale-sapping effects of feeling that one was consigned to substitute teaching for the long term. It is sadly ironic that such a rapport-heavy and relationship-dependent profession as teaching is not characterised by better collegial relationships.

In an even more damning account, Ryan, Chait, and Taylor (2003, p. 2) refer to

> … the maligned substitute teacher. As an institution, the substitute teacher works effectively. The device assures school administrators, and parents that children who might otherwise run amok will remain under control. But the job of the substitute teacher is singularly unattractive. Adherence to minimum standards—not trying to teach but merely trying to keep order—is as or more challenging than actually teaching.

It should perhaps be added that the above is an aside, rather than part of a sustained discussion of substitute teaching. Still, it does offer at least one public perception of substitute teaching.

For beginning teachers, the equation or trade-off is the quest to 'secure the combination of tenure and a desirable work location' (Ewing, 2006, p. 36). This poses problems and frustrations for teachers systems and schools alike. Harrington (2010) found that in an online forum she hosted for beginning teachers, the substitute/supply teaching 'stream' attracted more than half of the postings, 735 out of 1,401 (p. 276). While this seems high, it is considerably less than Harrington's (February 9, 2011, Email exchange with Ingrid Harrington, personal communication) estimate of the proportion of graduate teachers in her cohort, 90–95%. Of these substitute hits, 36% (Harrington, p. 277) sought advice on securing longer-term substitute teaching or permanent work. This zeal to move beyond substitute status, for whatever reason, is also significant. The next most prominent theme in this stream of the forum, with 30% of postings, is related to behaviour management. The third main theme (20% of postings) concerned handy hints for substitute teachers. Interestingly, positive news stories accounted for only 2% of the substitutes' postings. As Harrington observed, 'there were numerous re-counts of classroom experiences characterised by inappropriate behaviours, a lack of support from the school and an overall sense of despair and hopelessness from the teachers themselves' (p. 277).

Conclusions

While much remains to be done to assist and support substitute teachers, considerable improvements have been established (Patterson, 2004). As Patterson points out, achieving equity between substitute teachers and their permanent counterparts is a multifaceted issue and includes matters such as the capacity for long-term substitute teachers to attain the same salary rates as their experienced permanent colleagues. Strategies in New South Wales, Australia, for example, include a scheme for short-term fixed appointments in schools with substitute shortages, a fully automated call centre, online and other support for substitute relief teachers experiencing difficulties, priority transfer for some to permanent positions and accelerating priority for employment based upon substitute service. The state and teachers' unions claim credit for these improvements and with some justification in each case.

McCormack and Thomas (2003, p. 7) speak of 'critical colleagueship' undertaken by experienced and supported mentors as an important parallel to more formal

supervision and assessment of beginning teachers. Provision of such a service to substitute teachers is no doubt more difficult, but equally it is more necessary. Such support networks are finding their ways into schools.

Lunay and Lock (2006) discern ongoing systemic problems with regard to substitute teacher satisfaction, as well as the unpredictable day-to-day crises. We recognise that these are not easy obstacles to overcome. Various systems are approaching the problem in a variety of ways, such as offering 'peripatetic' placements, wherein a teacher is assured of a certain number of days' work at a number of schools in a limited geographic area. One recommendation by Lunay and Lock is for the allocation of 'frequent teacher points', which could entitle a substitute teacher to a certain level of professional development. McCormack and Thomas (2005) noted without surprise that in schools where there are high levels of support and collegiality, there are fewer problems and higher levels of satisfaction among substitutes. A simple sharing of best practice among schools would further improve this. Attracting good substitute staff is an investment in a school's smooth running and should be seen as an investment by all schools.

Many of the solutions or at least responses are local in scope—changes in culture, attitudes and behaviour at the school level. One final piece of advice for beginning teachers is that, having secured permanent employment and particularly having progressed into positions of leadership at a school, it is important not to be ignorant or dismissive of the plight of the substitute teachers in their care. After all, an important component of learning is remembering.

As indicated at the outset, substitute teachers cannot be considered an add-on or accessory by education systems or the broader community, but need to be considered an integral component of the workforce. More sophisticated ways of describing the problem will do no harm, but neither will they help. Metaphorically talking louder about the problem will not fix it either. 'The notion of the relief teacher being viewed as a mere stand in for the "real" teacher … needs to be dispelled sooner rather than later' (Lunay & Lock, 2006, p. 14, online version).

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Chapter 9
Butterfly Brains and Digital Natives Inhabiting Schools in Transition

> In the next 5 years, for the field of teacher education to realize the potential of newer digital technologies, we need to energize all teacher educators to engage in more tech-savvy practices and to conduct quality research that provides guidance in resolving the wicked problems around developing tech-savvy teachers who can use these technologies (Borko, Whitcomb, & Liston, 2009, p. 7).

When the term 'butterfly brains' was coined, Maras, Redmayne, Hall, Braithwaite, and Prio (1997, p. 49) used it facetiously to attract attention to work on children with attention deficit disorders. However, it also conjures up an image of an intellectually flighty generation unable to sustain prolonged engagement with knowledge deemed basic by its betters. This is a problem which caused Bauerlein, a naive baby boomer suffering the classical defect of age, to describe a whole generation as the 'dumbest', arguing that the digital age has stupefied the young (Bauerlein, 2008). Moreover, the butterfly brain imagery is consistent with more idealistic visions of the young as 'digital natives' (Prensky, 2001, p. 1). Specifically, it is consistent with a misunderstood, beautiful and creative creature that is flexibly multitasking its way through life, leisure, school and work. Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in between.

Patterns of cognition associated with flitting rapidly from one thought to the next and shallow thinking may be a consequence of life in a digital age, but the evidence is by no means clear. Before we heap blame of a perceived shortcoming of youth on the Internet, we might pause to consider comments on the effects of other socially significant media such as television. Long before the advent of the Internet, one of the criticisms of Sesame Street's frequent, rapid and sudden transitions was concern about its possible impact on the capacity of children and young adults to learn, concentrate and sustain attention. While the perception has been resilient among the public, evidence from longitudinal studies has not indicated attention problems associated with watching children's programmes but has indicated higher levels of achievement amongst children whose television diets had a preponderance of children's programmes (Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, & Wright, 2001; Huston & Wright, 1998).

For Generation Z, which is growing up with the Internet, it is probably too early for research to provide a definitive assessment of the impact of the Internet on brain function. However, if we take a sociocultural view of learning rather than a psychological, cognitive view, then the attempt to understand the potential impacts of the Internet become more compelling. A sociocultural perspective on learning emphasises the role of interactions among learners, their environment and tools (Putnam & Borko, 2000). There is little doubt that changes to our digital environments have a profound impact on this learning context. It is not just that the nature, pace and style of communication have changed and continue to change but that the rate of change is unprecedented. Let us take one example, Facebook, which now seems to be virtually everywhere. It is worth remembering that Facebook only arrived on the scene in 2004. In April 2011, there were over 500 million 'active users', and 50% of these 'log on to Facebook in any given day' (Facebook Pressroom, 2011).

Generation Y began its life before the Internet, but Generation Z has experienced a world in which the Internet has always been present and, arguably, become omnipresent. Generation Z may once not have been permitted on Facebook, but their expectations of their virtual worlds are the subject of, sometimes humorous, speculation. Buchel (2008), for example, has handed down 'The Ten Commandments of Generation Z':

1. You shall always be connected.
2. You shall always be mobile.
3. You shall use computers at work.
4. You shall use computers at play.
5. You shall have many friends that you will never meet.
6. You shall have a second life.
7. You shall be ultra-independent.
8. You shall multitask.
9. You shall always be in demand.
10. You shall invent a whole new language.

The changing nature of digital tools and the fluid patterns of occupation of Web 2.0 spaces form part of the context of modern life, the implications of which need to be considered by beginning teachers (Schuck, Aubusson, & Kearney, 2010).

The challenge is not merely for education systems and teachers to consider the implications for school-based formal learning but to recognise that social networking and digital technologies are providing an alternative to schools as sites of learning (Heppell, 2000). This chapter considers implications of the changing digital environment occupied by many young people and of the ways in which this environment interacts with schooling. It then speculates on the nature of future schooling (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation [CERI], 2001). The stories here challenge us to prepare graduates to teach present generations with the flexibility of mind to adjust to and exploit rapidly changing digital contexts of the future. There are many ways in which to report on beginning teachers' experiences with technologies in the first few years of teaching. This chapter describes experiences with several different technologies and digital environments that may confront or engage them.

Smartphones: Rani's Blog

I had a great class today. I got them to use their phones to take photographs of the experiment to post them on the school intranet as part of their prac report. It was awesome. I've lost count of the times we have used phones to look up the answers to all sorts of questions that come up in class. I'm getting a bit worried though because I've realised that only some of the questions are good. Like the other day we wanted to find out what radioactive Thorium was because it was all over the news. But today someone asked if hot cross buns were Australian and the next thing I knew, we had wasted 20 minutes of my class looking at the history of hot cross buns on the Internet.

Then there's always someone who forgets to turn off the ring … I don't know whether they are a distraction or a learning tool. Maybe it's both. My kids seem to get constantly sidetracked. Me too. Some of the other teachers can't stand the phones. One was complaining that her students were texting each other in class. They were so good at it she didn't know what was going on for a while because they were texting with their phones in their pockets. We discussed the issue at a staff meeting last week—again. I don't know which way we are going to go. The principal thinks they have potential for learning and teaching but they do use them for bullying. Some kids are fixated with the things. Some teachers want them handed in at the start and collected at the end of the day. They can be a nuisance but … I wouldn't want to be without mine.

Almost any technology can be used for good or ill. A pen can write a sonnet or scratch foul language into a desk. Smartphones with their many applications, video and still cameras, note taking and recording capabilities as well Internet access are not so much phones as complex devices in which only one function is the phone. Here we have a device of extraordinary potential. In the palm of the hand, it can provide access to information far greater than the largest, traditional paper-based library. Yet it can be a source of distraction, disruption and the means by which youth are hurt. It can be used to digitally capture events for learning, but it can also capture private events. When combined with web spaces like YouTube, it can become anything from a place of public ridicule and degradation to a site of the highest creative expression. Rani glimpses the varied views of smartphones that a beginning teacher may be confronted with in a school. There is a challenge to us to exploit its potential for learning while at the same time ameliorating its potential as a source of distraction, harm, illegal and unethical behaviour.

The Interactive Whiteboard: Ivan's Vignette

Ivan has been working in his new school for a term. He has been employed for 12 months replacing a teacher on maternity leave. The principal would like to keep him at the school permanently, but there is no permanent position available. Three

weeks into his second term, he described his experiences with his interactive white-board (IWB):

> I don't use it as much as I should. It takes too long to prepare. I used to use it more on prac with Year 5 and 6 (10- and 11-year-olds) but now I've got Year 1 (six-year-olds). None of the stuff I put into Notebook for my Year 6 is any use now. If I want to use the IWB properly, it takes ages to search through the resources to find what I need. I just don't have that kind of time. I know it might be worth the investment but I need time to invest. Next year I could be anywhere, any school or no school, with any class at any level. The things I prepare now may be just as useless as all my work with Year 6. So I use it all the time in class and I do the right things. I get kids to come out and interact with it. We've done some nice little presentations. We use it to get on the Internet and look up all sorts of things. It's great for that kind of thing. The kids like it. At least I'm doing more than using it as a glorified whiteboard. But in the end, I know I am not using it to its potential. I keep thinking I should use it better. I could have a whole bank of activities and teaching idea stored there but 12 weeks on I've got nothing. Perhaps, if the other Year 1 teacher were keen, we'd be able to do more. We do a lot of maths and literacy planning together but she isn't that keen on collaborating with the IWB.
>
> I'm forgetting how to use it well and how to use the packages which come with it. I'm fine with day-to-day use but someone asked me about using Notebook, storing activities and lessons. I just said that I'd forgotten how to do most of it and couldn't be much help. That can't be good. I've got friends that seem to have their life's work in it already but they are in schools where everybody is using them and there is a big push in the school. Then there's Brian (a friend who graduated at the same time). He's so glad he doesn't have an IWB. It's amazing. It just takes the pressure off to perform.

Technologies can be used in a variety of ways. Developing the skills to use technology and becoming a capable user takes time and requires incentive. Beginning teachers' experiences with technologies such as IWBs vary enormously; some have never taught in a room with an IWB and suddenly find themselves faced with one in their first year of teaching, unsure of what to do with it. Others have ample access during their pre-service professional experience, a swag of resources and boundless enthusiasm for the technology, only to discover themselves deprived of one in their school and bereft of the opportunity to teach as they would like. There are those who, despite the explanations of lack of time and minimal incentives, feel guilty for not making the most of this or other technologies, as Ivan hints in his story. Some are happy with technology-poor environments because it eliminates expectations for them to engage with technology. Many see the potential of IWBs and other technologies and would like to do more. There is a sense that there is some threshold over which they must step, or would like to step, into a technology-rich, teaching-learning experience. Some seem constrained by their teaching beliefs, inexperience and/or opportunity due to competing pressures and access constraints. Others find themselves in highly supportive environments in which they exploit the IWBs to levels which they find satisfying.

Agile Learning Spaces: Terry's Story

Terry began teaching year 6 in a school which was very different from anything he had seen before. The school consisted of buildings of various ages dating from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. In 2009, the school moved to open classes in which year groups were placed together in a single large room where once suites of three classes had existed. Instead of teaching one class of 25–30 students, Terry found himself in a huge room called the 'dormitory' where he co-teaches a year group of 85 students with two other teachers.

> You think I'd arrived in digital generation heaven but when I first saw the classroom I was bit taken aback … It is one big room converted from three normal sized rooms. The room has two large LCD screens and clusters of desks and chairs obviously arranged for different sized groups of students to work together. There's no whiteboard and no IWB. There's glass on one of the walls that everyone obviously writes on … It was a bit daunting but also exciting.
>
> It's mid-term three and I've got the hang of this now. The room doesn't seem anywhere near as big when it's full of children. We've got 30 laptops and last week we got 30 iPads. That's plenty for anything we want to do … We plan everything together. That's very time consuming and makes for long days at school. I sometimes envy my friends who do most of their planning at home … I thought it would be really hard work planning how to use the technology but it's not. The other two teachers say they are Beatles because they use the 'Let it be' strategy. When they first changed over to the dormitory, they were not keen. They started out thinking of all sorts of things to do with the laptops but now it just happens. I was thinking out things to do with the iPads but in the end we just put them out, set down some rules and they started to use them. It makes a big difference when we go outside. We never took the laptops out but the iPads are a different story. We have most things pretty well planned out as projects, except for the maths and literacy sessions. So the children just use the technology when they need it. Sometimes they are researching, other times they are just writing. There are lots of applications but these don't get used as much as they used to. It's amazing what the kids can do. They think nothing of taking photos and videos, producing short digital videos and presenting things. This term their project is their life story. It's not much different from the journal I had to keep in primary school but the digital capabilities make it an incredible production … I do like it but it is much harder to keep track of what they are learning. The other teachers have this tracking system that keeps a map of who's doing what. It works okay but we keep saying we need to come up with something better. I think they are learning something. I'm sure they are. All those kids working away but they can't work without talking. That's fair enough, there's a lot of group work, usually two or more on each computer but the noise! I'm still not used to it … It works okay with this group. I'm not so sure my class last year would have coped with this lack of structure. I'm sure some of them would have gotten

completely lost. It isn't going too well here with kindergarten but my class is fine. There are really only half a dozen that need special attention and help, the rest just charge on. A lot of teachers don't like these open classes but we like it. Mind you, it would be pretty awful if you didn't get along.

Much has been said of twenty-first-century learning, but achieving it remains a challenge. At Terry's school, a change in teaching and learning has been promoted by a significant change to the physical environment and unusual access to technology. As a beginning teacher, Terry has had to adapt to an environment 'different from anything he has seen' which has challenged his expectations about planning, preparation, teaching and learning. He has been supported by an experienced pair of teachers who seem to have resolved any of the problems that this environment may have presented. They have a relaxed disposition and simply allow the technology to work for them whenever it is appropriate. Certainly, they have designed the learning experiences to facilitate exploitation of the technology and to ensure its usefulness. However, the teaching and learning do not appear to be driven by the technology per se. The technology is a tool, influential and powerful but not all consuming. This pedagogy, which fluidly incorporates technology, contrasts with Terry's initial thinking and beliefs about how to make the most of information and communication technology (ICT).

Like most beginning teachers, Terry has come through a schooling and university experience where technology was not as ubiquitous as it is in the school in which he is teaching. Nor has his university teacher education programme equipped him with all he needs to know to optimise the environment. He seems to be willing, for now, to follow the lead of his more experienced co-teachers. He seems to have been originally daunted but learnt quickly from his experienced colleagues. He remains sceptical regarding whether the approach taken here would work elsewhere and notes that other teachers are not enjoying the new order. He seems to believe that the students are learning, but at the same time he suggests that he would like to obtain further evidence to confirm his view. School environments of beginning teachers vary a great deal, and the key to Terry's success with a rich ICT environment appears to be an open mind, a willingness to adapt and the opportunity to learn from others. At the same time, he realises that there are many aspects that have come together to make his early teaching with ICT a great experience, including supportive colleagues whom he genuinely likes, a class with which a routine became well established, a match between classroom environment and pedagogy and an exceptional access to resources.

Technological Poverty? Tania's Experiences

In stark contrast to Terry, Tania operates in a technologically less-rich environment that is situated in a less affluent location than Terry's school. She teaches a year 2 class. There are two year 2 and two year 1 classes at the school, each with 27–30 students. All the classrooms have IWBs. There are nine computers, which the four classes share.

In year 2, the classes work in small maths groups each day. When in their maths groups they use the computers. They work on a rotation system with a pair of students working at a computer in each session. Other than this, one of the computers can be booked for the afternoon session after lunch. This seems fair but it really isn't. Some of the children have much better access to computers at home than others. Some of my students have everything that opens and shuts with bells and whistles at home. A few of them can do more than I can and I'm not bad. I don't think they are improving their technology skills one iota at school. Some of my other kids have nothing at home. I think it would be much fairer to let the children who need it to have much more access. I can see why they set things up the way they did. It is a simple and easy to manage but I don't think it is the best way to do things. I've talked to a couple of other teachers about changing the system. They seem to agree but they aren't sure what to do. They think some parents will complain if we don't keep the access equal. So I do the best I can in the afternoons. Even if I only have some of my kids playing games as a reward, I always make sure most of those who need to get a better go get the reward. I'd like to stop doing maths all the time on the computer but the other teachers like the package and say it's working. It might be helping their maths skills but we could be doing so much more. At uni we could do so much with digital capture, movie making and creative presentations. I hardly saw any of that on prac and it's impossible here. Only one computer has Internet access and a lot of the things I'd really like to do need the Internet. Until that gets better I haven't much drive to change things really. Meanwhile I'll plug along with the IWB when we want to Google something.

The school digital divide is apparent if we compare the experiences of Tania and Terry. The school environments in which these teachers work have very different ICT opportunities. It seems impossible to imagine how Tania could implement the technology-rich, open-learning pedagogy that Terry has come to enjoy in his first year of teaching. Tania seems to have the technological skills and desire to exploit the learning opportunities made possible by ICT tools but is stymied primarily by a lack of resources and also the existing management system of computer use. She has general ideas about how she could improve her teaching but doubts whether she can influence the teaching-with-ICT practices at the school. In any case, she seems certain that she cannot work with the current ICTs in the ways she would like to and she is reluctant to push for a change which would remain well short of what she would like to do.

Some beginning teachers appear to be unprepared by their teacher education courses to use ICT effectively for learning. Such teachers, like Brian, may be delighted when they have the good luck to be in a technology-poor environment where expectations are low and easily met. On the other hand, others like Tania emerge from their teacher education course with the skill and enthusiasm to work in twenty-first-century classes but are frustrated when they cannot do so. Further, Tania is well aware of a digital divide in society that is manifested in her classroom. She sees schools as a place where the disadvantage might be addressed and counteracted, and she is disappointed that she cannot.

A Bevy of Laptops: Gai's Story

Gai went to a school with ample access to technology, but they were unsure what to do with it.

> I had never heard the term 'half mast' before with reference to a laptop until I came here. The students were sitting in their normal places with their shiny new laptops. Every Year 8 student in the country got one and so did all the teachers in my school. The interesting thing is that not much has changed. I know that the teachers in my department say laptops at half mast to mean that the students have to lower the screens on all their laptops and pay attention to the teacher at the front of the class. I thought it was silly but now I find that I am doing it too. I thought I'd be different but the program hasn't changed and the assessment hasn't changed and the tests haven't changed and there are going to be workshops and professional development but it hasn't happened yet. I do get them using them for writing and research but we have a long way to go. But I get a bit embarrassed when I get asked how it's going. The funny thing is that everyone was keen to get these things but I don't think they are sure what to do with them. I was surprised when the head teacher asked me about ideas. He seemed to assume I'd have learnt all about it. I guess I did, but the things I learnt to do don't quite fit with what's in the program, the outcomes and activities they are doing. When he asked me what I thought at the staff meeting, I said all this and found myself parroting a lot of things my lecturer said at uni. I was scared that they think I was an upstart but they were so nice. It's created work with a lot of changes to be made. But at least I feel as though I knew something useful.

It is not unusual for beginning teachers to be surprised by the ways in which schools operate. Gai sees obvious distinctions between the way she has learnt that technology can enhance learning and the ways in which laptops are being used in the school. On the other hand, Gai has not had to manage the changes arising from the challenges arising from the 'laptop for every child' policy. The organisation of the class, to which Gai refers with its implicit pedagogy, seems at odds with the affordances of the technology. The teachers are interested in using the technologies more effectively but are unclear how to achieve this. The pedagogy and practices in her school have evolved over a long period of time. The site has been invaded by a technology new to the classrooms, and it is disturbing the teaching-learning balance. There is a mismatch of the teaching-learning tool with the teaching-learning dispositions and practices. The outcome is incongruity, apropos Papert (1997). The new teacher, fresh from university and a teacher education course that included ICT-related pedagogies, is thrust into the role of advisor, if not expert. This contrasts with the experience of Terry, who entered a school with innovative technology-related practices where ICTs were ubiquitous but unobtrusive. They had become a seamless part of the teaching-learning environment that no longer required special planning, preparation and change management. Despite his recent university courses and being labelled as a member of the digital generation, Terry was cast as a welcome novice rather than as an expert in the school's technology-rich environment.

Implications

Schools are changing as they belatedly respond to the digital revolution that is reshaping the Western society (Warschauer, 2007; Weston, 1997). The place of school as the principal site of learning for children and adolescents is being confronted by patterns of engagement in digital, virtual and social environments (Heppell, 2000). The future of schooling is unpredictable with various alternatives possible, many of which are very different from our current models (CERI, 2001). Some of these futures are highly compatible with patterns of student digital engagement and twenty-first-century learning, while others lie starkly at odds with schooling being perpetuated as status quo (Schuck et al., 2010).

There are concerns in governments and among employers that education and teachers have been slow adopters of technologies that have become ubiquitous in the workplace and home (Peck, Cuban, & Kirkpatrick, 2002; Phelps, Graham, & Kerr, 2004). Yet the evidence from the beginning teachers, reported in this chapter, indicates that the patterns of adoption and engagement with technologies vary considerably in the richness of technology as well as ICT-related pedagogy. Creation of a population of beginning teachers able to adapt to and contribute to the enrichment of these disparate technological environments will continue to present challenges for teacher education.

Teachers are expected not merely to be technologically competent but to have the capacity to effectively integrate knowledge skills and understandings, pedagogies, technologies and curriculum to create productive learning environments. The expectation is well captured in the extension of Shulman's (1986) Pedagogical Content Knowledge that is expressed as Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), a term coined by Mishra and Koehler (2006). The complexity of this teacher professional knowledge is evident in the following description of its characteristics:

> Underlying truly effective and highly skilled teaching with technology, we argue, is technological pedagogical content knowledge. TPACK is different from knowledge of its individual component concepts and their intersections. It arises instead from multiple interactions among content, pedagogical, technological, and contextual knowledge. TPACK encompasses understanding and communicating representations of concepts using technologies; pedagogical techniques that apply technologies appropriately to teach content in differentiated ways according to students' learning needs; knowledge of what makes concepts difficult or easy to learn and how technology can help redress conceptual challenges; knowledge of students' prior content-related understanding and epistemological assumptions, along with related technological expertise or lack thereof; and knowledge of how technologies can be used to build on existing understanding to help students develop new epistemologies or strengthen old ones. TPACK is a form of professional knowledge that technologically and pedagogically adept, curriculum-oriented teachers use when they teach (Harris, Mishra, & Koehler, 2009, p. 10).

TPACK presents a significant challenge for teacher education. Notably, it does not merely require of teachers with discrete technological capability, curriculum knowledge and pedagogical competence; it requires a thorough integration of these as professional knowledge. Many of our young graduates could be broadly considered part of a digital generation (Prensky, 2001), but the notion of a digital generation based on chronology of birth is flawed (Bennett & Maton, 2010). Many who might be considered notionally of this group are limited in their use of technology. Most operate as consumers rather than creative producers in digital environments (Bennett

& Maton, 2010; Rikhye, Cook, & Berge, 2009). This chapter has largely avoided the debate regarding whether the neurology and thinking of recent and coming generations is and will be fundamentally different as a consequence of extensive engagement with digital environments (Prensky, 2003). Rather, we have focussed on the reality of the technologically changing and challenging environments of modern schools into which our beginning teachers go.

The metaphor of the digital immigrant (Prensky, 2001) is useful in this context because it speaks to a gap between the expectations, orientations and practices of a generation of learners and teachers as well as to a divide between the bulk of recent education graduates and the majority of their school colleagues. Prensky describes the fundamental problem as a lack of shared experience that results in an inability for each to appreciate and to understand the other. The life of the immigrant, digital and otherwise, is fraught with challenges as different cultures meet. As best we can, we need to equip our beginning teachers to anticipate and manage these challenges. This will require teacher educators themselves to develop technological pedagogical content knowledge.

Beyond these pedagogical challenges, Tania has expressed a deeper concern regarding fairness in a digital age, a perception that is given further emphasis by the beginning teachers' descriptions of learning environments that vary greatly in terms of ICT access and opportunity. At a time when learning in and beyond school has become dependent on digital technologies, we risk further disempowering of the disadvantaged (Remtulla, 2007). Mason and Dodds (2005) put the case succinctly:

> We seem to be at a pivotal point in addressing inequities. Failure to provide adequate technological resources for all translates into failure to provide quality education, creating an even greater divide between affluent and poor. (p. 26)

Ogilvy (2006) argues that it is educationally unacceptable and economically destructive if the benefits of digital access extend only to the privileged and that our whole society is impaired if some are denied the tools needed to learn and succeed. Somekh (2007) has described a digital divide in which disadvantaged citizens are denied intellectual, social, educational and cultural capital. Currently, high-socioeconomic-status learners are reaping greater benefits from ICT use than low-socioeconomic-status learners (Warschauer, 2007). Thus, a digital age has potential to exacerbate rather ameliorate the education gap between rich and poor. If schools have a responsibility to curb disadvantage (Beare, 2001), then our beginning teachers not only have to develop TPACK but also need to find ways to influence the distribution of educational resources, at least at the local level, and in the long term through departmental and government policy.

Conclusions

The conception of the digital native was never intended as a universal description of a generation. It has brought to the fore images of children, adolescents and young adults living much of their lives in virtual worlds, engaging in social network spaces

as extraordinary consumers of digital media as well as creators of virtual worlds. While an accurate portrayal of some, this image of a generation has been criticised as some argue that many are not digitally literate and others engage with digital media in superficial ways without exploiting their potential. Thus, the nature of a generation of learners is digitally diverse.

We are undergoing a period of upheaval in schools, a digital revolution if you like. During this period, the nature of school environments is varying enormously in terms of patterns of ICT access and pedagogy. Some schools have radically shifted their practice, while others are struggling with technological change as established pedagogies strive for relevance with a new generation of learners and teachers. At the same time, technologies are sometimes being thrust upon schools without the professional support required for teachers either to learn how to integrate technology meaningfully with current practice or to embrace and adapt new emerging practices.

Our beginning teachers find themselves in worlds of schooling that are changing. The tools of the trade are new and often digitally based. The tools and sociocultural school environments are interacting, generating new and different learning places. It is perhaps impossible to create a population of teachers fully formed and equipped with the skills to operate effectively in each of the different circumstances that exist. However, we can raise awareness, build TPACK, encourage values for social justice and promote the flexibility of mind that enables them to contribute genuinely to the learning experiences of students in whatever environment they encounter. In the best of all worlds, this chapter would be obsolete before it is published. However, this seems unlikely because school in transition as a result of changing technology is likely to become the normal experience of each generation of learners and teacher education graduates.

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Chapter 10
Teacher Professional Standards: Induction, Professional Learning and Certification

> Professional standards for teaching hold promise for mobilizing reforms of teaching careers and helping to structure learning opportunities that reflect the complex, reciprocal nature of teaching work. (Darling-Hammond, 2008, p. 49)

Graduates emerge from university with a teacher qualification in hand, ready to embark on their career as teachers. Even within the limited set of nations considered in this chapter (Australia, Canada, the UK and the USA), what happens next varies across countries, states/provinces and districts. The first years of teaching have usually included an extended induction or probation period with varying degrees of support, surveillance and accountability. Over the last 25 years, there has been a trend towards establishing teacher professional standards that control entry to the teaching profession. A small mountain of literature is available on what teachers are required to do to be licensed to teach in different jurisdictions and the procedures that must be followed. This chapter focuses on standards-based certification and induction. First, it reports on the similarities and differences in the process in a small sample of jurisdictions, then it explores beginning teachers' experiences of standards-based induction leading to certification and finally it considers the role of standards and certification in initial and long-term professional learning before suggesting implications for teacher educators.

In the UK and Australia, over the last 10–15 years, probation periods for teachers in their first year tend to have been replaced by induction. This has implied a shift from beginning teachers being expected (largely through their own initiative) to prove themselves to be satisfactory and to beginning teachers being provided with assistance to achieve specified teaching standards (e.g. see Table 10.1). This is part of a broad trend in teacher education. In the past, the aim was to screen out the weak or incompetent. However, the trend now is for such processes to encourage teacher development as much as to rank candidates. The processes aim to improve practice, the decisions that are made and the advice given to promote teacher learning (Darling-Hammond, 2008). Nevertheless, standards-based induction often serves a dual purpose. In Scotland, for example, terms such as 'probation' and 'induction' are both used to describe the period during which a teacher with a

Table 10.1 Current or proposed professional standards for threshold entry to the profession (abbreviated)

England, e.g. Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA, 2006)	Australia, e.g. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2011)	Canada, e.g. Ontario College of Teachers (OCT, 2011a)	USA, e.g. Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC, 2011)
• Seek and use opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues • Show a commitment to their professional development • Plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils in their classes with special educational needs • Liaise effectively with parents or carers on pupils' progress and achievements • Work effectively as part of a team • Secure a standard of behaviour that enables pupils to learn…in the context of the behaviour policy of the school	Professional knowledge • Know students and how they learn • Know the content and how to teach it Professional practice • Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning • Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments • Assess and provide feedback and report on student learning Professional engagement • Engage in professional learning • Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community	Commitment to students and student learning • Dedicate their care and commitment to students Leadership in learning communities • Promote and participate in learning communities Ongoing professional learning • Commitment to ongoing professional learning Professional knowledge • Strive to be current in their professional knowledge and its relationship to practice Professional practice • Apply professional knowledge and experience to promote student learning	Teachers • Understand how learners grow and develop • Use understanding of differences and diverse cultures • Collaborate to create learning environments • Understand the disciplines they teach • Understand how to engage learners • Use multiple methods of assessment • Plan instruction that supports every student • Use a variety of instructional strategies • Engage in ongoing professional learning • Seek appropriate leadership

university qualification becomes certified as a member of the teaching profession (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2011), and in the USA, assessment of achievement has for some time featured prominently in literature on standards (US Department of Education [USDE], 1998).

Almost all jurisdictions provide extensive information on government and teacher professional association websites for beginning teachers to access, such as the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA, 2011, http://www.tda.gov.uk/) and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2011, http://www.aitsl.edu.au/teach-landing.html). In the UK, new teachers are Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and must successfully complete an induction before being accredited with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). For full-time teachers, the induction period is usually 1 year. The purpose of the induction is described similarly in different parts of the UK. A typical description is below:

> The induction period is designed to ensure all newly qualified teachers are supported in their first year of teaching after gaining Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). It combines a personalized programme of development, support and professional dialogue, with monitoring and an assessment of performance against the core standards. (TDA, 2011)

During this time, they receive support, are mentored and have a reduced teaching load. The Professional Standards for Teachers (TDA, 2007) provides a framework for the NQTs' professional development. Although there is much in common in the processes that operate in the UK, there are also differences. In England and Wales, there is mutual recognition of periods of successful induction, but this does not extend to Scotland and Northern Ireland, despite the overarching similarities.

In Australia, a similar pattern to that in the UK is in place in some states, but there is no uniform system, although all states have recently agreed to adopt a single national system (AITSL, 2011), which is soon to be implemented. At the time of writing, the details of the certification process are not in place, but they are likely to follow the pattern in states that already have systems in operation. In Victoria and New South Wales (NSW), for example, the Provisionally Registered Teacher (PRT) or New Scheme Teacher (NST), respectively, provides a portfolio of evidence demonstrating their achievement of professional teaching standards (Ingvarson, Kleinhenz, Khoo, & Wilkinson, 2007; NSW Institute of Teachers, n.d.). As in the UK, the induction period is intended to provide a professional learning opportunity for beginning teachers to develop their skills and capabilities. This is consistent with a widening trend to develop and use teaching standards linked to teacher certification as a means to enhance teaching quality and thereby student learning. As Ingvarson and Hattie (2008) point out:

> One of the main reasons for establishing a certification system is to increase the effectiveness of professional development for teachers. It is primarily by engaging more teachers in more effective modes of professional learning that (it) can make a major contribution to improving student learning. (p. 9)

In both the UK and Australia, the professional standards describe a sequence of levels of professional accomplishment (see Table 10.2). In England, there is a relationship between salary and recognition of achievement of standards, which

Table 10.2 Levels of professional standards in the UK and Australia

England (TDA, 2011)	Australia (AITSL, 2011)
Qualified	Graduate
Threshold	Proficient
Excellent	Highly accomplished
Advanced skills	Lead

provides an incentive to progress through the levels of certification. In Australia, at the time of writing, the standards are not yet widely linked to teacher pay scales, although some employers do link them.

In the UK, the first standard (Qualified) and, in Australia, the second standard (Proficient) are minimum standards against which a beginning teacher is assessed for acceptance into the profession. Thus, teachers must demonstrate the achievement of these standards in order to be eligible for continuing employment. Achievement of the standards provides a licence to teach. This goes under a variety of certifications such as the following: Qualified Teacher, Professional Competence or Proficient Teacher Status.

In the USA and Canada, the patterns of teacher accreditation, registration or certification are more complex. There is significant variation across states and provinces. Each has operated as an independent educational jurisdiction, and there has been no agreed national system of teacher accreditation. Recently, however, most states in the USA are working with a revised set of interstate core standards:

> The updating of the core teaching standards was driven not only by new understandings of learners and learning but also by the new imperative that every student can and must achieve to high standards. Educators are now being held to new levels of accountability for improved student outcomes. These standards embrace this new emphasis and describe what effective teaching that leads to improved student achievement looks like. (InTASC, 2011, p. 3)

These standards have been much influenced by the four domains of the Danielson framework: planning and preparation, classroom environment, professional responsibilities and instruction (see e.g. Danielson et al., 2009).

In Canada, each province has a mechanism for certification, and teachers qualified or certified to teach in one province can apply for certification in others (see e.g. Manitoba Education, n.d.; Ontario College of Teachers, 2011b). Typically, teacher education programmes are accredited by professional teacher associations in each province, such as the Ontario College of Teachers (Ontario College of Teachers). The graduates from accredited programmes are certified as teachers on application and payment of membership fees. Although there is no single national system, the international trend towards a mandatory internship to attain a permanent teaching qualification is evident. In some provinces, such as Alberta, teachers first receive interim certification upon graduation, and after 2 years of teaching experience, teachers are recommended for permanent certification if the 'teacher's practice consistently demonstrates the teaching quality standard(s)' (Government of Alberta Education, 2011). Also, in Ontario, the Ontario College of Teachers has recently proposed a government-funded mandatory induction programme, based on a set of standards (see Table 10.2), for all beginning teachers (Ontario College of Teachers, 2011a).

In the USA, with 50 states, there is more variation (see e.g. Teacher Certification Map, 2011). In some states, teachers are eligible for certification once they graduate from an accredited teacher education programme. Many states have reciprocal arrangements whereby they recognise the credentials from other states. California, for example, has reciprocal arrangements with 45 states (Teacher Certification Map).

A teaching qualification from an accredited institution often provides the basic licence to teach. However, many states, such as California and Connecticut, have induction programmes that focus on professional standards. The Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment programme (BTSA) in California was introduced to assist beginning teachers through the difficult first years of teaching and aimed to address the high attrition rates of beginning teachers (Mitchell, Scott, Hendrick, & Boyns, 1998). The BTSA provides support through an individual induction plan supported by a mentor that requires reflection on, the collection of evidence of achievement of and assessment against the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (Mitchell et al.). In Connecticut, concerns about teaching quality led to the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) programme which formed part of a three-phase process of teacher certification: initial, provisional and professional (USDE, 1998). The broad acceptance of the new InTASC standards (InTASC, 2011) by a majority of states is heralding in new induction programmes with nationally shared core standards that provide a framework for the professional learning of beginning teachers as well as criteria against which they can be assessed.

In the USA, as in other countries considered in this chapter, the initial certification only acknowledges achievement of threshold standards for entry into the teaching profession either on graduation from an accredited teacher education course (some Canadian provinces and some states in the USA) or after graduation and satisfactory demonstration of achievement of standards during a period of induction (Australia, the UK, some Canadian provinces and some states in the USA). In addition to this, there are advanced levels of teacher certification. In the USA, for example, teachers who apply for certification as accomplished teachers are required to participate in professional development and assessment guided by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). These standards are underpinned by five core propositions:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.
   (NBPTS, 2011)

The NBPTS recognise achievement beyond basic certification. Teachers can apply for similar, voluntary and higher levels of accreditation in parts of Australia, Canada and the UK. Interestingly, in Canada and the USA independent professional teacher associations (e.g. Ontario College of Teachers and the NBPTS) develop, administer and assure the quality of these higher levels of teacher certification. By contrast, in Australia and the UK government instrumentalities (e.g. AITSL and TDA)

have oversight of both threshold and advanced teacher certification processes. This may influence the way in which teachers perceive the value and usefulness of the standards and related professional development process, according to Ingvarson and Hattie (2008). They reported that teacher perceptions of the standards and certification in the USA were largely positive, with approval ratings on all measures at 80% or above, 'while surveys of teachers in England showed the opposite' (p. 12). Ingvarson and Hattie argued that these different perceptions may be related to the ownership of the former being by the teaching profession, but the latter being imposed by government.

Given the extensive investment in teacher certification based on professional standards, it is interesting to consider the experiences of beginning teachers with these processes with regard to how these processes support professional learning during induction and the beginning teachers' entrance to the teaching profession.

A Painless and Collaborative Experience: Naomi's Story

The story below comes from a teacher, Naomi, in her second year of school teaching. Naomi reported that working with the professional standards for her certification was a collaborative and painless exercise because the professional standards had become an integral part of her school's professional learning activities. The professional standards do not dominate the professional learning ethos of the school, which has existed for many years, but have been incorporated into the school's existing processes:

> The school learning teams meet every fortnight to talk about what we've being doing and what to do next. At first I thought it was madness not to have an English team, but being in a team with people from Art and Maths, with beginners and experienced teachers, it's opened my eyes to different ways of doing things… In my second year I was asked to lead my team. I didn't think I could do it and I was right. I bumbled around for a while but in the end I realised I'm not the expert and I just need to make a space for people to talk about their ideas and experiences. I don't think of myself as a leader any more. It's more of a facilitator. I feel the responsibility because the school has this ethos around professional learning. I didn't want to fail. It's such a good team I should have known they wouldn't let me… Things change so fast that you have to have some way to adapt and change the way you do things. This way we can try things and see how they go and have a chat about them as we go. It may not be perfect but it gives you confidence that what you do is working – or not. We all choose a similar activity to try with our class so that we have something in common to talk about at our meetings. We are all working on context and relevance at the moment but before that it was all about intellectual quality (see e.g. Classroom reflection manual, Queensland Department of Education and Training, 2002). We go to each other's classes when we can to observe with rubrics (sometimes based on the professional standards). It isn't always easy to fit it in, though. At the meetings, some of us have shared videos of our

lessons, which has been good because we all see the same thing… It makes me feel professional.

In Naomi's school, the professional standards have influenced the teachers' peer observations and, as a consequence, are likely to frame the professional conversations about teaching and learning. The professional standards are one of the frameworks guiding professional learning. Prior to the introduction of the professional standards, professional learning in the school was based on a set of practices and principles including action learning and a framework describing the characteristics of productive teaching. At Naomi's school the standards are not only informing the learning and induction of the beginning teachers but also the professional growth of all teachers in the teaching teams.

A portfolio, in some form, is often part of the teacher induction and certification process. The portfolio provides a body of evidence of achievement of standards. It is intended to promote professional learning. The portfolios of candidates are also moderated by central authorities to confirm consistency in the application of standards across different schools. The experiences of beginning teachers with the process of collecting a body of evidence to demonstrate achievement of standards vary considerably.

Thinking About Practice: Carlo's Story

Working with the standards to produce a portfolio, according to Carlo, who was in his second year of teaching, was a positive experience that prompted him to think about his teaching and to change his practices.

> When I was working on my portfolio I had to take a lot of time looking at my students' work. I started to see patterns in the development of my 4th graders' literacy. I don't think I would have studied their work so closely or seen the patterns if I hadn't been going for certification. You never know, I'm sure I would have looked at patterns in my students' achievements but if I hadn't been doing a thorough analysis for the portfolio, I have to admit, I probably wouldn't have put the time into to it that is needed. Now I look for this sort of thing all the time and I can see more quickly who needs help and how to help them.

An Accreditation Framework: Niamh's Story

Another beginning teacher, Niamh, emphasised the way in which the standards and induction process helped to prove that she was a good teacher, making her feel better about, and more confident in, her teaching competence.

> I think the biggest problem is that it's hard to know. I think I'm a good teacher, well pretty good, but it isn't always easy to convince myself and hard to prove it to others. One of the things that the standards have done is they have made me more deliberate about how I go about being a teacher, and what I try to

improve. Even if you only go as far as the propositions (broad standard statements) you have a framework to use, to think about, and to talk about what you are doing. Now that I'm going for my accreditation, can you imagine trying to work on that without a framework and shared view of where I'm trying to get to? … It makes the things that were going on at the unconscious level, conscious. It makes it explicit that I have to think about what I do and the effects it has on my kids; how they benefit. I'm not saying I never asked, 'What am I doing?' but it's made me more systematic. Working with the standards has made me ask, 'why am I doing this?' and 'how does this help?' about the way I work with other teachers and the impacts of what I do on my kids, assessments and classroom management. It sounds pretty basic when I say it, but doing it, that's altogether different.

For both Carlo and Niamh, the standards and portfolio provided a useful framework for professional learning. The standards provided a guide for them to think about and organise the way they went about improving themselves as teachers. The standards also made available a shared language with which to communicate their ideas about being a good teacher with each other.

A Futile Exercise: Jacob's Story

Jacob, who had to go through teacher registration in the first year of its implementation, described the experience very differently from Carlo and Niamh:

When I did mine nobody knew what was going on. My supervisor kept asking me what I had to do because I had gone to a course for beginning teachers. It was very frustrating not quite knowing whether we were doing the right thing. There is a lot hanging on getting it right. If you don't get approved, you can't teach. In the end, we put something together that made sense. We thought it addressed the criteria and it must have because I got through. I know it was supposed to be about professional learning and working with my supervisor to review my many immense talents. In the end it was more about getting through it and praying no one noticed that we didn't know what we were doing.

It seems that a well-intentioned accreditation process has not been well communicated, at least to Jacob and his school supervisor. The poor implementation of the process has generated confusion, uncertainty, stress and a sense of futility.

I Like to Watch: Sam's Story

In the introduction to this chapter, it is suggested that an outcome of the teacher professional standards on certification has been a less isolated profession with greater opportunities for teachers to observe each other and share experiences.

While this appears to have been the case for many, such as Niamh, others have been less fortunate. Sam describes how he can only get a glimpse of another teacher through an open door:

> At the front there was a coffee table strewn with science magazines with the skull of a dead animal, a sheep or goat, I think, was precariously balanced on top. The walls were covered with colour, posters were stuck one on top of the other so that you had to look carefully to see what each one was about. Things were hanging from the ceiling that I thought had to be a fire hazard, and she had some fireworks on her desk. The class rolled in and she casually chatted to them about whatever. I want to make my class feel like hers, maybe without the dead sheep. I'd love to be able to watch her teach.

Falling Through the Cracks: Evan's Story

As noted above, the certification and induction of beginning teachers follows different procedures and regulations in different jurisdictions. In some, there are set times by which a teacher must be certified after graduation or after gaining a first teaching position. This can create difficulties for beginning teachers who are not full-time, tenured employees and also those who may not want to seek certification at the same time that their employer wants to invest in their certification. These issues are evident in the experiences of the two beginning teachers, Evan and Kitty. Evan has been doing casual teaching in different schools for 4 years:

> I still haven't been certified. You don't have to be a genius to see why. It takes time and effort to get it done. So, why would you invest in a casual who will not be at the school next year or even next month? I know my school has only started to do it because I am in such a bind if I don't get it done this year. I don't care, I'm just grateful that the principal agreed and the assistant principal is helping me just as much as the permanents. I may be a charity case but I'm not going to complain.

Why Now: Kitty's Story

Kitty is in her first year of teaching:

> I don't have time for this. By the time I prepare to teach and meet with parents and meet with other teachers in the team, I've got to sleep sometime. They tell me that they are going to do my accreditation but I am already overwhelmed. I am sure I can do the stuff. I have to get the evidence together; it is there somewhere but packaging it and submitting it, who has time for that? … I don't see why I should have to pay for it. They'll [the certifying authority] have their

hand in my pocket for the rest of my life and I don't get anything from it. The other teachers at the school keep saying they are glad they didn't have to do it. Maybe if they had had to, the union would have had second thoughts about leaping on board and dumping this on the new guys on the block.

Accreditation comes at a cost both in kind and in money. Kitty, for example, sees it as costing her time when she is arguably at her busiest in her teaching career, during her first year. She also resents the financial burden of registration, in part, because she can see no benefit for her in participating. Significantly, she views it as unfair that this burden has been agreed to by members of the profession who are unwilling to put themselves through the same process.

What Is Good for the Goose…: Peter's Story

Some beginning teachers, who value the experience of their induction year, work in schools with sophisticated and established systems in place to support beginning teachers. Peter worked in a school where he is one of five beginning teachers in the school. They are all working together towards their accreditation with a network of support including a highly accomplished teacher (HAT) and an individual mentor. Peter was attending a conference for beginning teachers when he was interviewed about his experiences and those of friends:

> I've been working with a mentor almost since I started at the school and the accreditation is just part of what we do as we go along. The school is great. The HAT has responsibility for the support of the new teachers. She and the mentors work closely as a team to support all five of us. We all get together regularly. If one of us doesn't know how to do something or is struggling, someone else always has advice on what to do. The HAT observes some of our discussions with our mentors and gives advice to the mentors on what to do. It makes me feel as though we are all learning together. The other day (in one of the debriefing sessions following a teaching observation by the mentor) my mentor told me that if I had set up my class the way I did with the bottom Year 8 class it would have been a disaster. I thought, 'fair enough'. (The HAT was observing the debriefing.) I was really interested in what the HAT said. She said that it would be better to ask me how I would have set it up for a bottom Year 8 class. They put me on the spot and asked me. I felt so good because I thought about how I'd do things differently and maybe surprised them by being able to say just how I'd change what I'd do… The HAT keeps bringing what we talk about back to the standards. It wasn't really about whether I was achieving them but more about how I could learn to do things better. I think without the standards there would have been a lot of gaps in my thinking. Before we focused on the standards everything seemed to be about what I was doing in class, but it made me think about working with parents and how I talk with them. I'm certain I wouldn't have given any thought to how I work as part of the team if they didn't press me on it (because it's in the standards). I've

learnt a lot through the process, but at this (beginning teacher) conference it is obvious that everyone hasn't had the same experience. I have a friend in a remote school who can't get to the conference because it's impossible to get release (a substitute teacher replacement). He gets help from an online supervisor. His Internet connection is so slow he may as well be getting help by carrier pigeon… Quite a few just say that it's a giant waste of time. One guy was complaining that if it is such a great idea, how come the old teachers don't have to do it. I can see his point… There are some people who haven't even started and it's term 3. They are going to rush through everything to get it ready by the end of the year. What's the point? All I can say is that I'm glad it isn't me!

This story raises a number of issues faced by beginning teachers. Peter is grateful for the support he receives in his school. On the other hand, he is aware that there are beginning teachers who are less fortunate. The story's discussion of the experiences of beginning teachers who are attending, and absent from, the beginning teachers' conference raises questions about the impact of the different types of experiences on perceptions of the induction process.

The Gatekeeper: Patrick's Story

The information on induction and professional standards often privileges their role in professional learning, but they also have a role in determining whether a candidate has met the minimum standards to enter the teaching profession. A chief executive of a school district, Patrick, outlined his views of the part teacher professional standards can play in making the decision to dismiss a teacher:

When it comes to hiring and firing, the standards make all the difference. It isn't easy to decide to dismiss someone. The standards provide clear, explicit expectations about what every teacher ought to be able to do. They have been validated and teachers had a big say in agreeing to them. If they get plenty of support and they can't do it, in the wash up, that means they are unsatisfactory and shouldn't be teaching. It doesn't replace professional judgement but it does guide it. The buck stops with me because I have to approve these decisions and I want to know we have been fair and just.

The chief executive's comment touches on a significant challenge for the teaching profession. In a field in which quality is difficult to define and describe in ways that are consistent across all contexts, it is difficult to establish trustworthy processes that remove substandard teachers from the profession. Professional standards, of themselves, are unlikely to solve the problem. Yet they contribute a framework for employees, employers, communities and unions to consider in determining whether a teacher has met a minimum level of competence. In addition, the standards are decontextualised abstractions, whereas the contexts in which teachers operate are varied and complex. This makes consistent interpretation and application of the standards difficult.

Implications

This chapter opened with a brief analysis of the ways in which teacher professional standards are used during induction into the profession in a few countries. Although there appears to be a trend towards the use of professional teaching standards to support professional learning of beginning teachers, considerable variation remains among countries, states, kingdoms and principalities and provinces. The experiences of beginning teachers reported in this chapter also suggest that within a state or province where the same policy and regulations apply, there is great variation in the ways in which beginning teachers experience the implementation of standards-based induction. This variation generates highly diverse perceptions of the process as well as a range of strong and weak professional learning outcomes. In a study of the implementation of an Australian standards-based programme underpinning teacher registration, which was conducted for the teacher registering authority in Victoria (Victorian Institute of Teaching), Ingvarson et al. (2007) reached a similar conclusion:

> [The] standards provide a framework and direction for this (professional) learning, and the registration decision provides a powerful motivator to meet these standards. Paradoxically, perhaps, the impact of these formative activities on professional development depends on the rigour and seriousness with which the summative assessment is conducted… The extent to which the registration process had positive effects on PRTs' (Provisionally Registered Teachers') professional learning and practice depended most on the level of support and encouragement the process received from leaders in their school. This point cannot be emphasised too much. School leaders in high impact schools ensured that: induction programmes for new teachers were in place; care was taken in selecting appropriate mentors and PRTs; training for mentors and PRTs was supported; time was set aside for mentors and PRTs; and that procedures for the assembling of evidence and making recommendations were implemented faithfully. (p. 49)

This analysis of the impact of a standards-based registration process raises as many questions as it answers. In particular, it is difficult to determine what effects are due to standards and what effects are due to other investments in induction because professional teaching standards are usually implemented with a suite of support strategies. In this case, in addition to the assemblage of evidence associated with the standards, this support included appropriate mentors, mentor and beginning teacher training and time for mentors and beginning teachers to work together. We know from research (which is discussed in Chapter 6) that this kind of support, in the absence of professional standards, makes a significant contribution to beginning teacher professional development. There is a risk that professional standards could be viewed as the sole or critical element for teacher professional learning. However, a combination of mechanisms is important in contributing to teacher professional learning.

In parts of the USA, where professional standards have been in operation in some states since the 1980s, their use has influenced engagement in professional learning and the type of professional learning in which teachers participate. A study of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment programme (BTSA) reported that the beginning teachers valued the support they received and indicated that the programme had had a positive impact on their teaching capabilities, confidence and career satisfaction (Mitchell et al., 1998). The researchers also highlighted inherent challenges for the standards-based induction programmes, including tensions between:

- The assessment of the beginning teacher by colleagues and the need for beginning teachers to develop strong collegial relationships with mentors and teachers with whom they are working
- The desire to gather and display a comprehensive body of evidence while at the same time avoiding excessive paperwork
- Holding local authorities accountable to standards while at the same time promoting innovative approaches and practices in induction
- Establishing durable standardised practices but ensuring the system retains the flexibility to adapt to school improvement initiatives as they arise

Kelly (2008) asserted that the development and application of teaching standards has had a significant impact on the nature of teacher professional learning, breaking down isolation as well as promoting evidence-based professional growth and reflection on experiences:

> Portfolios of evidence of teaching performance and student learning are now routinely experienced in teacher education and professional development areas. Teachers observing each others' performances occur on a widespread basis now. Almost none of these activities occurred before NBC was launched. (p. xx)

While barriers to collegial professional learning may be breaking down within schools, an unfortunate disjunction remains between initial teacher education and induction. According to (Kelley, 2007), both pre-service teacher education and induction will be the poorer if these two phases of professional development are not entwined and if knowledge is not shared among all stakeholders to create a seamless progression for teachers into the profession. She describes this disconnect which inhibits professional learning through the division that exists between initial teacher preparation programmes and teacher induction as well as between teachers and teacher educators:

> Unfortunately, until the induction period is recognised and accepted as a continuation of teacher preparation, this policy tends to engender animosity… A team approach that involves teacher educators, administrators and classroom teachers can ameliorate that problem. Teacher educators can work with administrators and practitioners on recognition of best practice and on problems most commonly faced by incoming professionals. Understanding the need for a systematic induction system can be established. Advocates for reduced class loads, for increased planning time, for mentoring and for collaboration can be enlisted. The false walls between teacher educators and classroom teachers begin to disintegrate when a true team approach is employed. The future of the teaching profession is too important to allow that wisdom to accumulate in separate silos. (Kelley, 2007, p. 82)

Kelley also describes another kind of disconnect: The isolation that refers to the way in which the professional practice remains secluded within each teacher's classroom shared only by teacher and students:

> Isolationism continues to plague the teaching profession. Teachers deeply value collegial environments in which time is provided to observe other practitioners, to be observed by their peers and to participate in professional conversations about how their instruction can be improved. (p. 84)

There are major differences in the ways in which certification occurs, yet patterns can be discerned. The first section of this chapter highlighted a broad trend during

teacher induction from an emphasis on probation and weeding out poor teachers towards an emphasis on professional learning and support for beginning teachers. Nevertheless, the induction period for beginning teachers continues to serve both purposes. Professional standards for teachers operate as a minimum benchmark of competence that teachers are required to demonstrate to continue in the profession, as well as serving as a guide to their professional learning. The similarity of the standards across jurisdictions considered in this chapter suggests a degree of agreement about what a teacher should know and be able to do.

There is a trend towards the threshold level of entry to the profession being a compulsory initial or interim certification requiring induction based on a set of professional standards. This is then often followed by optional certification levels giving rise to highly accomplished or advanced teacher status. There is growing support from employers and professional associations as well as government regulation requiring this standards-based certification. Yet, research on the contribution of standards to improving teaching is less than comprehensive (Center for Teaching Quality, 2008), and there are few peer-reviewed studies of the application of initial level induction processes. There has been extensive research and consultation in developing and validating standards (see e.g. Ingvarson & Hattie, 2008; Moss & Schultz, 2001), but relatively little research on their impact on teaching quality or learning outcomes. While the majority of research reports in the field are favourable, as a body of evidence, it has been described as being of poor quality, attempting to confirm a predetermined position rather than genuinely investigate, lacking clarity regarding outcomes, being unclear about system impacts (Hakel, Koenig, & Elliott, 2008) and having significant limitations resulting from participant selection (e.g. Smith, Baker, Hattie, & Bond, 2008). No doubt similar criticism could be levelled at much education research. However, if teacher educators are to continue to support teacher professional standards on the basis of evidence rather than as a matter of faith, then more independent research is required to establish whether professional standards make a significant contribution to teacher quality and, if so, how they are best applied. There would appear to be ample opportunities for extensive comparative studies that ought to be able to shed light on the most productive policies and practices.

Conclusions

The process by which teachers enter the profession and gain their permanent licence to teach varies. There is a trend towards standards-based induction with an emphasis on supporting the professional learning of the beginning teachers. The experience of beginning teachers during induction appears to vary almost as much within jurisdictions as is does between them. Some beginning teachers report that the induction and professional standards create a very positive highly supportive professional learning environment. Others report a negative experience, unsupported, burdened by excessive unproductive paperwork and a perception that they are jumping through hoops. While it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions, we hypothesise that the former is more likely in circumstances where the following characteristics prevail:

a teachers' professional association has determined, owns and controls the certification process; school leaders and colleagues overtly support it; time is provided to engage in professional learning; and a mentor supports the beginning teacher throughout the induction. By contrast, the latter is more likely when government or government agencies impose and control a standards-based certification process, school leaders and colleagues are resentful and uncommitted, the cost is borne entirely by the candidate and mentoring during induction is poor or non-existent.

Key challenges for teacher educators include: finding ways to break down the typical separation between initial teacher education and induction to create a seamless professional learning experience for teachers as they transition into the profession; preparing our graduates as professional learners with the capacity to work with standards, evidence portfolios, colleagues and mentors throughout induction and their teaching career; designing systems that ensure positive rather than negative professional learning experiences during induction; and engaging in rigorous independent research to investigate the standards-based professional learning experiences of beginning teachers and its impact on teaching quality. As an aside, a final task for teacher educators could include tidying up the multitude of acronyms and confusing terminology used to describe standards-based induction.

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Chapter 11
Lessons Learnt from Stories of Beginning Teachers

Why is the first year of teaching so difficult for virtually every new teacher? There are many reasons one could cite, and several are less obvious but quite important. Almost everyone in today's society has attended 10 to 12 years of school; many have completed university, which results in a total of 15 or 16 years. During all that time in school, there is virtually no talk *about* the teaching and learning that occur there. There are many familiar complaints, such as 'he's a wonderful (or horrible) teacher', 'her classes are so hard' and 'I just can't figure this out', but we rarely go beyond these surface judgements to analyse further and seek to understand the complexities of teaching and learning. To most students, *teaching looks easy, and good teaching looks even easier*, and we carry these impressions with us throughout our adult lives.

Inevitably, some students are inspired by their teachers or at least enjoy school enough that their impressions of what teachers do are positive, and they elect to attend a teacher preparation programme. Yet they make that decision on the basis of images of teachers past, with no first-hand experience of what the work of a teacher actually involves. In virtually every teacher preparation programme, the practicum is always seen as the most important element, a highly valued set of preparatory experiences; finally, would-be teachers get to move to the other side of the desk and experience teaching under the guidance of an experienced teacher. Education classes are not always appreciated, as teacher educators attempt the impossible task of preparing future teachers to step directly into a full-time job as a teacher. Preparing future teachers for every situation they will encounter is impossible for many reasons, including the following: (1) every school and classroom is a unique combination of individuals, opportunities and constraints, (2) full-time responsibility for a class is far more complex than any observation would suggest and (3) every beginning teacher begins the work of teaching with deeply ingrained images of former teachers that constrain risk-taking, define zones of comfort and predetermine understandings of what is possible and impossible. In short, the beginning teacher comes face to face with the fact that teaching looks easy but is not. At the same time, the general public believes that teaching is easy. While experienced teachers know it is not, they generally have moved on, perhaps even forgetting just how hard those early years of teaching were.

As the stories included in this book illustrate, one of the greatest challenges facing the beginning teacher involves mastering the art of building appropriate *relationships* with many different students and class groups, each with unique and complex dynamics. At the same time, they must build relationships with fellow teachers, school administrators and parents and also work out the finer details of the culture of the school in which they are teaching. Although relationship building may have been discussed in some education classes, it can be difficult to move very far beyond age-old statements such as 'Don't smile until Easter' (southern hemisphere) or 'Don't smile until Christmas' (northern hemisphere). The beginning teacher naturally wants to be liked by students, and wanting to be liked inevitably creates the risk of becoming too close to some students too quickly. This chapter begins by revisiting highlights from the stories presented in the preceding chapters of this book. Many of these stories concern this challenge to establish productive relationships.

First Months

Chapter 2 provides stories focusing on beginning teachers' development of relationships, with students in the case of Jenny, with staff in the case of Alison and with parents in the case of Lei. Each of the three stories gives details of some of the significant challenges that new teachers may face, and of course there are many more ways in which affairs can take awkward and uncomfortable turns. Jenny faced the challenge of building relationships with students; she naturally wants her students to like her, but she must be the one in charge of maintaining order and good behaviour.

*S*upport from other staff in the school can make all the difference for the new teacher. Alison's story is not as unusual as we might wish, and lack of support from experienced staff is a poorly understood phenomenon. We might speculate that some experienced teachers fail to support new teachers because they remember vividly the lack of support that they experienced in their own first years of teaching. The phenomenon that Alison experienced may also be linked to the eternal fragility of teaching, for every teacher knows how quickly a relationship with a class or an individual student can suddenly take a wrong turn that can be difficult or impossible to repair. Those who have never been a teacher might be shocked to learn that even the most experienced teacher can feel threatened by the arrival of a new teacher who may have learned new strategies that their students will find very appealing. While most new teachers will experience at least modest levels of support and encouragement from their colleagues in the school, building social and professional relationships with staff tends to be a complex process in which unfortunate moves are made all too easily.

Lei faced the challenge of unexpected criticism from parents. Often the new teacher is welcomed by parents for the energy and enthusiasm brought to the early years of teaching. Unfortunately, Lei found himself confronted by parents who were worried by his youthful age and his inevitable lack of experience. Here again, we

find a challenge that it would be difficult to prepare for in advance of full-time teaching experience. All three stories in this chapter stimulate a productive discussion of praxis shock.

Kids Today

Chapter 3 provides stories about the nature of today's students. As parents and grandparents know only too well, each generation is different from those that preceded it. Teachers face similar challenges in their classrooms, and generalisations such as Generation Y and Generation Z can be useful starting points, but little more. The stories of Linda, Santo, Nola and Marina remind us that the issue of motivation will always be with us as we teach. As we watched our own teachers, we may or may not have taken away a sense that they were listening to us and our fellow students to work out what made each of us tick. We often have the sense that teachers are speaking to the group, not to each student as an individual, and this can make it seem appropriate to the new teacher to do the same. Over time, as the beginning teacher gains experience, many will take one road or the other, either realising the significance of listening for individual differences and its powerful impact on teaching success or ignoring the potential of listening, thereby continuing to struggle with the changing characteristics of students and the broad problem of motivation for learning.

School Culture

The complex nature and influence of school culture is the focus of Chapter 4. One of the most striking features of the culture of the school is its invisibility. To the one-time visitor, the similarities of schools to each other right around the world could easily suggest that schools are more similar than different, and in important ways they are. Sarason (1971) wrote explicitly about the nature of school culture, suggesting that school culture must be considered carefully in any attempt to improve the quality of student learning. Despite his unique and powerful insights into school culture, Sarason's efforts to point the way to change have borne little fruit. Equally invisible to the one-time visitor are the many ways in which every school is unique and different, and these are the details of school culture that challenge and frustrate the beginning teacher.

After one's first year in a school, one knows and begins to take for granted the school's routines; the ways things are done no longer seem to attract our attention. Melanie was reluctant to show initiative, while Joanne took initiative that neglected a school custom that no one had ever mentioned to her. Mike introduced a significantly different approach to learning that was constrained by uniform assessment practices across his department, and Paul struggled to be like the other teachers

without having access to all that his colleagues had come to accept and take for granted about their personal approaches to teaching. Language and culture are intimately intertwined. Just as learning a foreign language is made complex and frustrating when not immersed in the culture where the language is spoken, so learning about school culture can be frustrating inside an education course in a university classroom. This is a topic that is hard to appreciate before stepping into one's own classroom, and we hope that the stories in Chapter 4 at least reveal the tip of the iceberg of school culture.

Teacher Identity

In Chapter 5, we focus on the development of professional identity as a teacher. There is a rich literature on this topic, and there is no easy recipe for developing a teacher's professional identity. Greg's story is engaging both for its humorous moments and its serious issues. Greg's entry into a remote country town to teach French was a truly cross-cultural experience, with few if any similarities to the experiences one would have in a major city. Greg's experiences in a sporting activity helped his students see him as a real person with a real life, even if he spoke a language they had never heard and knew very little about in their rural way of life. Becoming a member of a new community is often an issue for the beginning teacher.

With the exception of career-change teachers, the beginning teacher has often only had part-time or summer jobs while studying to become a teacher. Thus the development of a teacher's professional identity involves adjusting not only to the characteristics of students but also to the unique culture of one's school and the particular culture of a new community. All this may be quite unexpected because while we are students, we have so little sense of the professional identity of our own teachers, whom we may never see anywhere but in the classroom. (This leads directly to the small child's assumption that the teacher lives at the school and has no life outside it.) In everyday contexts, 'teacher' connotes someone who spends time at the front of the classroom—and nowhere else. Most members of society have no teaching experience and thus are oblivious to the reality that teachers do many other professional activities before and after their periods of time with students and also have personal lives outside of school.

Another crucial aspect of teachers' professional identity involves becoming aware of how the way a teacher teaches affects how students learn; teachers do tend to teach as they were taught, but many types of educational research are providing evidence that calls for teachers to attempt teaching approaches that are unfamiliar to students and parents, as in the story of Mike in Chapter 4. MacDonald (1975, p. 11) put it most succinctly: 'Genuine innovation begets incompetence. It deskills teacher and pupil alike, suppressing acquired competences and the development of new ones'. The beginning teacher has little idea of just how complex is the process of achieving long-term, productive change in how one teaches, yet the process of

achieving pedagogical change may be one of the greatest sources of professional satisfaction and a cornerstone of one's professional identity as a teacher. Both teachers and students soon become accustomed to patterns of interaction that establish what is considered to be normal behaviour in a classroom. Parents also can exert a conservative force on teacher identity, as we saw in Lei's story in Chapter 2 and Mike's story in Chapter 4.

Mentoring and Induction

Issues associated with the mentoring and induction of beginning teachers have received considerable attention in the last 20 years. Some of these are highlighted by the research cited in Chapter 6. The background for that literature is set by stories from Mark and his mentor Lyle, Georgie and her mentor Gwen, Marg and her supervisor Tony and Joanne and her mentor Carlene. Lyle's experience reminds us that some mentors find their work with beginning teachers to be productive for both participants, yet this is not the view of all teachers. It is not at all unusual for a new teacher like Georgie to be reluctant to ask for help, as most of us have a strong determination to prove that we can succeed on our own. Gwen responded positively when approached, and Georgie's story had a happy ending. Marg's story reminds us of the complex feelings generated by a supervisor, as Marg turned to putting on a good performance when being observed by Tony. The story of Joanne and Carlene reminds us all of the importance of trust and complete confidence about what new teacher and mentor share in their privacy of their professional relationship.

Many jurisdictions are now acting on the available research by developing formal mentoring and induction programmes. All such programmes will have to cope with the pressures described in previous chapters, including developing interpersonal relationships, motivating students, mastering the school culture and beginning to build a professional identity.

Professional Challenges

Chapter 7 provides three detailed stories about the professional challenges facing the beginning teacher in the first 2 years of teaching. Barbara describes her difficulties in formulating assessment practices as those policies within the school were being changed, and she also expresses concern about the tendency of the profession to depend on acronyms, which often allow us to forget what the acronyms actually stand for. Ned's story reminds us that the new teacher who is offered an induction programme in the first year of teaching has very high expectations for the quality of that programme. Teacher education programmes rarely receive high praise for the classes they offer, in part because those classes tend to be far less engaging and focused than the practicum experiences. With time being such a precious

commodity for the beginning teacher, choices must be made and priorities must be set. Anne unfortunately faced a class of students who seemed largely unmotivated, having been turned off learning by some of their previous school experiences. As a result, her highest priority became the quality of their learning, and other issues within the school appropriately received less of her attention.

Teaching as a Substitute Teacher

Chapter 8 explores the unique challenges facing the teacher who moves from class to class, often on a daily basis, by working as a substitute teacher (sometimes referred to as a supply teacher or a casual teacher). Filling in for the permanent teacher who is ill or called away to a meeting is particularly complex because one is expected to perform as a teacher with no opportunity to build relationships with class groups or individual students. At the same time, those students often see the arrival of a substitute teacher as a rare and welcome opportunity to launch every type of misbehaviour known to students around the world. The collection of Beverly's email correspondence with her colleagues and friends reveals how working as a supply teacher left her feeling like a permanent outsider. Paradoxically, it also reveals the advantages that Beverly enjoyed as a substitute teacher.

Digital World

The arrival of electronic equipment in classrooms has significant implications for teachers, as illustrated by the range of stories in Chapter 9. Rani finds that smartphones can be useful in the classroom, but they can also be sources of significant distraction. Ivan wants to make good use of an interactive white board but finds it difficult to find the time to use it well, and he senses that teachers have a variety of opinions about such technology. Terry finds himself in a huge room with two other teachers and large numbers of both laptops and iPads—a condition that few classrooms have achieved. Tania feels the pressure of unequal resources in various children's homes and wonders if the mathematics programme is limiting the range of student activities. Finally, Gai reports a strategy for getting students' eyes away from laptops to attend to their teacher and indicates that some teachers are less than confident about how the computers can be used to good advantage. Here we have an indication of the range of issues associated with the extension of the digital world into traditional classrooms.

While the products of the digital world are easily inserted into classrooms, making good use of them is far from straightforward either for teachers or for their students. While computer equipment may provide students with ready access to an encyclopaedic range of information, if computers are used merely to gain information, it is clear that information on a screen is hardly different in kind from information on a page in a textbook. With growing attention to the importance of

students constructing knowledge that builds on their prior views, the role of first-hand experience becomes significant. Nevertheless, digital technology is changing classrooms and teachers need to take that into account when planning their lessons. Basing teaching on past ways of doing school is becoming increasingly inappropriate.

Professional Standards

Chapter 10 brings us to the topic of professional standards that teachers are expected to meet and illustrates how various jurisdictions are attempting to use these standards to foster professional learning and to support induction as well as the formal process of registration or certification. Again, the stories from beginning teachers illustrate both successes and challenges. Carlo found the preparation of a portfolio to be a powerful learning experience, while Niamh found that standards helped her to develop a sense of teaching competence. For Jacob, who experienced the first year of a new registration process, chaos and confusion were common themes. Sam described his need for opportunities to watch another teacher whose approach seemed to fit his own values. Working as a casual teacher for several years, Evan found it very difficult to meet the requirements for certification; Kitty found the process of accreditation to be an overwhelming addition to her first year of teaching. Peter found support for his own efforts to meet professional standards, yet he was aware of other beginning teachers who were unable to find such support. Like so many facets of the new teacher's experience, professional standards can be either a help or a hindrance.

In Search of the Big Picture: Messages for Teacher Educators

In the remainder of this final chapter, we develop a perspective on teacher education that is inspired by and, in our view, consistent with the range of stories presented. In developing this perspective, we are attempting to make sense of a complex tension. Every teacher educator strives to prepare new teachers for their earliest years of teaching, yet the fundamental structures of teacher education programmes have remained remarkably stable over decades despite extensive evidence that beginning teachers continue to report that they were not fully prepared for the earliest years of their teaching careers.

The stories told by beginning teachers are stories of learning from experience. Early teaching experiences clearly tend to include the unexpected. Many, but not all, beginning teachers have spent 16 or more years continuously attending school, with each year punctuated by a summer change of pace. Learning in school can be characterised in many ways, but it tends to include very little learning from first-hand experiences. Pre-service teacher education programmes are almost always situated

in universities where learning tends to continue in familiar patterns. Only in the practicum placements are would-be teachers exposed to learning from experience, which is itself shaped in powerful ways by a more experienced teacher or university supervisor, who not only provides advice but also assesses overall performance. Thus these opportunities to learn from experience are quite unlike the learning from experience gained in the earliest years of teaching. Learning by listening to oneself and to one's students tends to be quite limited until one assumes that long-awaited role as the fully responsible teacher in the classroom.

Teacher educators have long struggled to make their efforts more practical and relevant for those learning to teach, and this struggle continues. One important effort to move that struggle forward is presented in *Linking Practice and Theory: The Pedagogy of Realistic Teacher Education* (Korthagen, 2001), and another is presented in *Powerful Teacher Education: Lessons from Exemplary Programs* (Darling-Hammond, 2006). In his summary chapter, Korthagen describes a perspective on the present state of teacher education that feels very familiar to us and to the beginning teachers who shared their stories with us:

> The realistic approach has its roots in a wish to bridge the gap between theory and practice, a problem that has dominated teacher education for a long time. We saw that the theory-practice gap is a result of the view that the goal of teacher education is to teach expert knowledge (resulting from psychological, sociological, and educational research) to student teachers, who can then use this expertise in their practice (the technical-rationality approach). This view leads teacher educators to make a priori choices about the theory that should be transmitted to student teachers. Research shows that this approach has a very limited effect on practice. The main causes of the failure to transfer theory to practice are the socializing influences of the school context, student teachers' own preconceptions about learning and teaching, the feed-forward problem (theory always comes too early or too late), and the nature of theory relevant to practice. (p. 255)

Several decades ago, Zeichner and Tabachnik (1981) suggested that teacher education programmes have limited impact on the existing views of those learning to teach, yet the issue went no further. Korthagen (2001) and colleagues took up the challenge of limited impact and developed what they termed a *realistic* approach that includes starting from practical problems in real contexts, promoting systematic reflection (using the ALACT model of Action, Looking back, Awareness, Creating alternatives and Trial), recognising the importance of personal interactions between teacher educators and prospective teachers, working with three levels of professional learning (gestalt, schema and theory) and integrating theory and practice (p. 273).

Darling-Hammond (2006) offers perspectives similar to and consistent with those of Korthagen (2001). Her work includes extensive illustrations from seven exemplary university programmes in the USA, and she emphasises three fundamental problems associated with learning to teach:

> There are some special, perennial challenges in learning to teach. Three in particular stand out. First, learning to teach requires new teachers to understand teaching in ways quite different from their own experience as students. Lortie (1975) called this problem 'the apprenticeship of observation', referring to the learning that takes place by virtue of being a student for twelve or more years in traditional classroom settings. Second, learning to teach requires that new teachers not only learn to 'think like a teacher' but also to '*act* like a teacher'—

what Mary Kennedy (1999) terms 'the problem of enactment'…. Finally, learning to teach requires new teachers to understand and respond to the dense and multifaceted nature of the classroom, juggling multiple academic and social goals that set up trade-offs from moment to moment and day to day (Jackson, 1968). They must learn to deal with this 'problem of complexity', which derives from the nonroutine and constantly changing nature of teaching and learning in groups. (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 35)

These three fundamental problems of learning to teach—the *apprenticeship of observation, enactment* and *complexity*—are readily apparent in the stories told in the preceding chapters of this book. The beginning teachers struggle to shift from a student's perspective to that of a teacher as they also try to learn to act according to their own values in situations that are always complex in many different ways.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to find a programme that prepares new teachers that does not refer frequently to the word *reflection.* Prior to the mid-1980s, those learning to teach were frequently asked to record (and, hopefully, analyse) their teaching experiences in journals. When Schön's (1983) book, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action,* was published, teacher educators took note; by the 1990s, new teachers everywhere were being asked to reflect, and that practice continues to this day. In our opinion, this change in wording failed to address the problems outlined by Korthagen and Darling-Hammond, even though it had considerable potential to do so. By using the term *reflection*, Schön tried to give unique new meanings to a term with very powerful everyday meanings; but as a result, it was relatively easy to add the term *reflection* to the vocabulary of teacher education without taking on board the new meanings that were intended. Schön's (1983, 1987) books have been widely discussed and rightly criticised from a number of perspectives, but we believe it is useful to provide a brief account in his own words to illustrate the relevance of his arguments to the stories from beginning teachers and to the long-standing challenges that pre-service teacher education has not yet resolved. These excerpts are from an article in which Schön (1995) argued that a 'new scholarship' requires a new epistemology within universities deeply rooted in the epistemology of 'technical rationality'. Naming the challenge in this way goes a long way in helping us understand why teacher education programmes remain so stable and why the intended meanings of *reflection* were lost as the terminology became ubiquitous:

The relationship between 'higher' and 'lower' schools, academic and practice knowledge needs to be turned on its head. We should think about practice as a setting not only for the application of knowledge but for its generation. We should ask not only how practitioners can better apply the results of academic research but what kinds of knowing are already embedded in competent practice:

Perhaps there is an epistemology of practice that takes fuller account of the competence practitioners sometimes display in situations of uncertainty, complexity, uniqueness, and conflict. Perhaps there is a way of looking at problem-setting and intuitive artistry that presents these activities as describable and as susceptible to a kind of rigor that falls outside the boundaries of technical rationality.

When we go about the spontaneous, intuitive performance of the actions of everyday life, we show ourselves to be knowledgeable in a special way. Often we cannot say what we know. When we try to describe it, we find ourselves at a loss, or we produce descriptions

that are obviously inappropriate. Our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowledge is in our action. And similarly, the workaday life of the professional practitioner reveals, in its recognitions, judgments, and skills, a pattern of tacit knowing-in-action. (p. 29)

Schön continues to elaborate his perspective by describing what he means by the term *reflection-in-action*.

We all have, in greater or lesser degree, the capability of reflecting on what we know as revealed by what we do. And we also have the ability to reflect-in-action to generate new knowing, as when a jazz band improvises within a framework of meter, melody, and harmony ….

The process of reflection-in-action begins when a spontaneous performance—such as riding a bicycle, playing a piece of music, interviewing a patient, or teaching a lesson—is interrupted by surprise. Surprise triggers reflection directed both to the surprising outcome and to the knowing-in-action that led to it. It is as though the performer asked himself, 'What is this?' and at the same time, 'What understandings and strategies of mine have led me to produce this?' The performer restructures his understanding of the situation—his framing of the problem he has been trying to solve, his picture of what is going on, or the strategy of action he has been employing. On the basis of this restructuring, he invents a new strategy of action and tries out the new action he has invented, running an on-the-spot experiment whose results he interprets, in turn, as a 'solution', an outcome on the whole satisfactory, or else as a new surprise that calls for a new round of reflection and experiment. … It is what a good teacher does as she tries to make sense of a pupil's puzzling question, seeking to discover, in the midst of a classroom discussion, just how that pupil understands the problem at hand. (Schön, 1995, p. 30)

However incomplete, these perspectives on the challenges of learning to practise connect readily to the stories of beginning teachers across a range of their experiences. In their earliest teaching experiences, they had no choice but to reflect-in-action if they were to survive as teachers who find their career more satisfying than not. The preparation for teaching that most beginning teachers receive does not name or provide practice in the learning skills required for learning from experience. One result is that beginning teachers' stories continue to be both positive and negative. When an individual's stories are more negative than positive, the chances increase that the individual will either leave the professional or fall victim to the early burnout that leads to uninspiring teaching.

The stories are helpful in suggesting ways that teacher educators and school leaders can respond to ensure that in balance, teachers' stories are more positive than negative. They suggest that we need to develop ways of teaching our student teachers how to develop resilience and that our programmes need to challenge their beliefs (and possibly the beliefs of some of their teacher educators as well). Learning how to reflect on both beliefs and actions paves the way for thinking differently about the future and avoiding repetition of past mistakes. The importance of establishing sound relationships in teaching also points to an essential part of the teacher education curriculum: the teaching of awareness of the existence of micro-politics in schools and strategies for becoming adept in managing these.

Above all, both teacher education programmes and schools have an obligation to support beginning teachers in their quest to provide quality outcomes for students' learning. Removing the many obstacles and hindrances that stand in the way of a

focus on quality learning is a task for school leaders and mentors. Developing partnerships between schools and teacher education institutions so that there is not a chasm between the two helps to reduce the praxis shock that was so evident in the stories we were told.

The challenges for beginning teachers are complex and yet stable. As teacher educators, we should be seeking to disrupt these challenges and yet to support our students to meet them face on when they start teaching. If our programmes can help to deliver graduates who are *resilient* and *resourceful, reflective* and *responsive* to their students, we will have every right to feel pride in them. An emphasis on these four Rs will produce teachers who will contribute to their students' learning and to their school cultures.

We thank the many individuals who made this book possible by sharing the stories of their early career experiences, and we hope their voices will help to encourage our teacher education colleagues to tackle the complex process of improving pre-service teacher education.

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