CHAPTER 1

Introducing teaching as a profession

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

1. describe teaching as a twenty-first century profession
2. begin to understand and analyse your own professional identity
3. discuss key aspects of pedagogical knowledge
4. describe reflective practice and its importance in ongoing professional development.
Dimity can’t wait. Term 1 is about to start and she will be commencing her first teaching position as part of a middle years team in a large school. She is so pleased that she has been offered a position. It isn’t a fulltime permanent position, but Dimity has been offered a contract position for two years on a family leave replacement. This is ‘my dream job’ she posted on her Facebook page to her fellow university class members. She has filled out all her commencement documentation and notes that she should report to her school mentor, Andrew Doi, who is the head of the middle years campus. Dimity has looked him up on the school home page and finds that he has been central to the design and construction of the purpose-built middle years centre, even designing the building to what were largely his architectural specifications and beliefs about the type of learning spaces that are conducive to teaching and learning in the middle years. He has also redeveloped the entire middle years’ curriculum.

After all the anticipation the school year begins. Dimity begins the year by attending the orientation day for new teachers, then the whole school professional learning day held before the students commence. Much to Dimity’s surprise the first few weeks fly past and to her relief matters such as managing classroom behaviour and keeping up with her planning feel much like when she completed her final five week placement in a more traditional secondary school setting, where she taught English and History.

Over the weekend she picks up the local paper and finds a picture of one of the school’s students, Tom, a student in her Year 7 English class. Dimity had no idea that he excels in mathematics and was awarded a medal in the Australian Mathematics Competition, the world’s biggest international mathematics contest. As Dimity reads the article, she notices that Tom has mentioned that he might even consider teaching as a future career option. Dimity stops and begins to consider what it was that attracted her to...
teaching. Was it an influential teacher that inspired her? Or was it that she is the first in her family to go to university to get a degree and teaching was the obvious career choice?

1. What influenced you to be a teacher?
2. Think about how you remember your school teachers. How would you like your students to think of you?
3. What career progression and leadership options are available for teachers today?

Introduction

The commitment to teaching that beginning teachers like Dimity bring to their studies and their careers affirms that teachers today — as those who have gone before them — have a love of learning and a genuinely felt passion for teaching. An enthusiasm for learning and a deep commitment to humanity and making a difference in the lives of the next generation are among the qualities of people drawn to a career in teaching. The authors of this book welcome you to the profession and what is ahead.

As you browse through this book, some chapters or headings may immediately jump out at you based on your current understanding of what it means to learn to teach. Initially you may think that all you need to know is something about student learning, planning and managing classroom behaviour. However, from the moment you first enter a school as a teacher and take a look at twenty-first century education from the other side of the desk, so to speak, the complexity and extent of the range of knowledge required to be a highly skilled teacher will become apparent.

This chapter (outlined in the figure below) will introduce you to teaching as a profession and, we hope, provide you with a starting point from which to explore the many themes presented in this textbook.

This book is designed to support you and help you develop throughout your initial teacher education and your early teaching years. You will also be exploring the big questions about the purposes of education and your professional identity, values and beliefs and how you can shape your career as a leader in education.

When you arrive at your first class at a school, take a few minutes to consider why so many people retain powerful memories of their teachers. Many years later a particular teacher may still be recalled with respect and admiration. For some students, a teacher is remembered as someone who helped them completely turn their lives around. In the words of an experienced teacher and teacher educator, ‘Whatever the situation, the influence teachers have on their students is long lasting and can be profound. Good teaching makes a difference in the lives of children and young people’ (Pugach 2009, p. 1). Through school and classroom experiences, students discover possibilities for their futures, gain the knowledge and skills to pursue their hopes and dreams, and develop beliefs, attitudes and behaviours towards society.

Consider the passage opposite written by a pre-service teacher. The narrative describes the initial experiences of a pre-service teacher and is a snapshot of how an accomplished and outstanding teacher works in today’s classrooms, which are rich in student diversity.
Before commencing on his initial professional placement in his teacher education program, Liam is asked by his cohort leader to prepare a detailed context statement on the school where he is going to be placed for one day a week for the first semester of his course. The starting point for his research is the school’s website. The Index of Community Soci-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) score of 1018 reported on the mySchool website shows the distribution of the scores is relatively even. (ICSEA was created by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to enable comparisons of the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) test achievement by students in schools in Australia.) The school has a strong emphasis on sustainability and the environment, and is culturally and socio-economically diverse. The suburb is in the inner city and contains many new arrivals, as well as professionals who are eager to live close to the city.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOTTOM QUARTER</th>
<th>MIDDLE QUARTERS</th>
<th>TOP QUARTER</th>
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<tr>
<td>30%</td>
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At the end of his first day of professional experience, Liam is required to complete an online post for members of his cohort. He writes ‘in the school environment, and within the classroom and playground there does not appear to be a divide between the students’. However, as he waits with his school mentor at the end of the day, he notices something striking. Parents who are waiting to collect their children after school are gathering in very different ways to what he has observed in the playground and in class. He concludes his 300 word post with the following: ‘out of the school there is a more apparent racial divide’.

In his professional subject taught in the following week by his university lecturer each member of the cohort group is required to present to each of their group members an analysis of their initial observation and experiences of their school placement. Liam and his group are encouraged by their lecturer to delve further and to look up the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data for their respective schools. Liam reports to his group that while the ABS data shows an ethnically diverse area that reflects the make-up of the school, there
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The teaching profession

How did Liam’s teacher become accomplished? When teachers and schools do their jobs well, students from all life circumstances, in every community, attain their potential. The day-to-day choices and judgements teachers make directly affect the quality of learning that takes place and also the lives of their students. In other words, good teaching matters — it matters a great deal. Once you make the commitment to teach, you agree to take responsibility for the quality of the experiences each of your students will have in your classroom during formative times of their lives and to honour the richness that is in every classroom.

Describe teaching as a twenty-first century profession.

Teaching in the twenty-first century

Research in education endorses the idea that there is no single variable that improves student achievement more than the introduction of a great teacher. Teacher quality and teaching quality go hand in hand. ‘Teacher quality — what teachers do’ (Riley 2009, p. 7) comprises the identity of the teacher, their knowledge and their ability to develop strong skills in pedagogy, content and theory in order to plan for the learning of all students. ‘Teaching quality — what students learn’ (Riley 2009, p. 7) focuses on the teaching and learning that teachers put in place on a daily basis to improve student achievement. Teaching quality is dependent on:
• the personalisation of learning within a supportive school classroom and community
• the capacity to implement curriculum relevant to the twenty-first century
• the continuous monitoring and evaluation of student learning.

This book is designed to help you become a high-quality teacher who practises high-quality teaching in accordance with professional standards. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership provides national leadership for the Australian, state and territory governments for the teaching professional and school leadership. The website will provide you with a wealth of ideas and information about the profession of teaching that will guide you through both your initial preparation and throughout your career in teaching or leadership of teaching.

The aim of this book is also to support you to develop a critical perspective on learning and teaching and on the professional theories you will encounter during your studies and your work. A critical perspective is a way of viewing information, ideas and practices that refuses to take them for granted. In this way, you can develop your own deep understanding of professional knowledge, practices, your identity and engagement as teacher.

The ‘apprenticeship of observation’

What do you remember of your schooling? Do you think it has shaped your views on learning and teaching? Dan Lortie, an eminent American sociologist of education,
coined the term the ‘apprenticeship of observation’ (Lortie 1975, p. 61). The phrase refers to the fact that people who choose to study education begin their course having already experienced more than 12 years of continuous contact with teachers. Lortie argues that the apprenticeship of observation may lead to the assumption that ‘anyone can teach’ (p. 62). This assumption originates, in part, in the proposition that every student can make a reasonably accurate portrayal of a classroom teacher’s actions.

There is little doubt that people wanting to become teachers begin their studies with much more experience of education than a student choosing to enter some other profession. They have, however, as a student experienced only one aspect of teaching — and without an understanding of the knowledge or skill behind their teachers’ practices. It is important, therefore, that now — and indeed throughout your career — you take a critical perspective on your prior knowledge of schooling.

The notion of the apprenticeship of observation is widely used to explain the apparent lack of influence exerted by teacher education programs on teachers’ practice and may help explain the historical reluctance to invest in pedagogical research. It is crucial, however, that, as a profession, teaching possesses and articulates a high degree of specialised theoretical knowledge — and methods and techniques for applying this knowledge in day-to-day work.

Teaching as a profession, teachers as professionals

The view of teaching as a profession and of the type of knowledge and skills that teachers must possess continues to evolve. Figure 1.1, drawn from the findings of an Australian analysis of teacher education (Reid & O’Donohue 2004), illustrates how approaches to teaching and teacher education differ.

Figure 1.1: The continuum of teacher professional knowledge
Source: Based on information from Reid and O’Donohue (2004, pp. 561–63).

Figure 1.2 shows the building blocks of professional identity and the expertise required of teachers in the twenty-first century. You will encounter these themes throughout your studies. Think ahead a year or two and, like Dimity from our opening case, consider the excitement and challenges you will face in your first year of teaching. You may be aspiring to be a school curriculum or year level coordinator or a leader in community education such as a childcare centre or a not-for-profit organisation. Your course of study will help you recognise and question the loosely formed, or ‘tacit’, knowledge developed through your own experiences of education. It will help you improve your knowledge and skills throughout your career in teaching, which may end up being in a leadership role.
At this point, you are likely to be a pre-service teacher, a graduate teacher or perhaps someone just considering teaching as a career. The term pre-service teacher refers to students enrolled in a course of study intended to satisfy requirements for employment as a teacher. Graduate teacher (or beginning teacher) refers to a teacher in the first and subsequent early years of their professional life. An accomplished teacher is an educator who typically has more than five years of teaching experience and can demonstrate expert performance through tangible evidence, such as a teaching portfolio or a leadership position. This professional progression is summarised in figure 1.3.

**Figure 1.2:** Professional identity and expertise in the twenty-first century

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**Figure 1.3:** The continuum of teaching practice: pre-service to accomplished teacher
Teaching, as you might have already understood, is a dynamic profession. In the twenty-first century change is a constant and every teacher lives and learns through social and professional change. One major professional change that has occurred is the formation of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). On 14 October 2011, Australian education ministers endorsed the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Currently teacher registration varies from state to state, and occurs within the first couple of years after graduation when the teacher can demonstrate the required level of professional practice.

AITSL now has responsibility for:

- rigorous national professional standards
- fostering and driving high-quality professional development for teachers and school leaders
- working collaboratively across jurisdictions and engaging with key professional bodies.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) career stages are currently defined as graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead. The AITSL website has a large section that demonstrates these career stages through illustrations of practice. The My Standards app is also a resource that can be downloaded to both introduce you to the standards and to assist you to gather evidence and personalise your illustrations of practice during your preparation and teaching career.

The Australian Professional Standards

The Australian Professional Standards (APS) for Teachers comprise seven standards that outline what teachers should know and be able to do (see table 1.1, overleaf). The AITSL website contains detailed information on the APS and also acknowledges the crucial role of teachers in Australian society and their contribution to a high-quality education system.

By the time you graduate, it may well be that several cohorts of teachers before you have been registered through national standards. The time frame for this to occur will depend on what happens in the negotiations between the states and the federal government. Keep up to date on what is happening by visiting the AITSL website regularly. Like all such attempts and long-standing examples of teacher standards, such as those developed by the Ontario College of Teachers in Canada in 1997, developing teacher registration standards aims to capture the key elements of quality teaching. The APS show what teachers are expected to know and be able to do at four career stages: graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead. When you look at the Standards you will notice that they are grouped into three domains of teaching: professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement. However, teachers with expert professional knowledge recognise that these elements of teaching practice draw on aspects of all three domains and will overlap and interconnect.

Within each Standard, focus areas provide further illustration of teaching knowledge, practice and professional engagement. These are then separated into descriptors at the four professional career stages. When you enter an accredited teaching program you will by the end of your course be expected to meet a number of requirements that include standards for the graduate career stage and proficiency in literacy and numeracy.
Table 1.1: The Australian Professional Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMAINS OF TEACHING</th>
<th>STANDARDS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional knowledge</td>
<td>1. Know students and how they learn.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Know the content and how to teach it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community</td>
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Source: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).

As a graduating teacher you will be required to attain full teacher registration, moving from what is usually known as provisional registration. It is important to note that work around the use and application of the Standards is still to be undertaken and, until this work is completed, teachers will continue to follow the registration and employment guidelines particular to their jurisdiction and sector.

The teacher registration bodies are:
- New South Wales Institute of Teachers
- Victorian Institute of Teaching
- Queensland College of Teachers
- Western Australian College of Teaching
- Teachers Registration Board of South Australia
- Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania
- Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory
- ACT Teacher Quality Institute.

The Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG 2015) report to the Australian government has outlined the key role that graduate standards have in assuring classroom preparedness.

Continuity and change

Teaching is a profession that has a long history with traditions dating from Socrates (c. 469–399 BCE), Plato (c. 424–348 BCE) and Aristotle (c. 384–322 BCE).

Australia’s educational history is overwhelmingly influenced by Western traditions. Australia, like many other nations, has established schools, structures and education systems that maintain and contribute to our social fabric and culture. Many changes in education have been linked to major historical events or shifts, such as the two world wars and globalisation. Some of the events that have been most influential in Australian education and the educational context are listed in figure 1.4.

Figure 1.5 provides a snapshot of some of the changes that have occurred in approaches to teaching and learning over time. A comprehensive discussion of the history of education, and what we can learn from it, is provided in chapter 2.
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Introducing teaching as a profession

Table 1.1: The Australian Professional Standards Domains of Teaching Standards

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum is being implemented in all states of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Proposed reform of Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation — one law proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>National apology to Indigenous Australians and the Stolen Generations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Reform of education legislation — education extended to students with disabilities from 1985 onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986–93</td>
<td>Initial attempt to implement a national curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Disadvantaged Schools Program — a Commonwealth program to reduce the effects of poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946–60s</td>
<td>Post-war baby boom and waves of immigration — rapid growth of school enrolments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939–45</td>
<td>World War II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917–30s</td>
<td>Expansion of secondary education, but by 1946 still only 88% of 13–14-year-olds were in full-time education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914–18</td>
<td>World War I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860s–1870s</td>
<td>Compulsory education legislated, e.g. Public Schools Bill, Tasmania</td>
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<tr>
<td>1788–1901</td>
<td>Settlement of Australia — Colonial period</td>
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</table>

Figure 1.4: Historical influences on Australian education

Figure 1.5: How approaches to teaching and learning have changed

Source: Corrie (2002, p. 27, figure 2.1).

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Teaching matters: a new era for teaching and learning

Schooling is shaped by the past, the present and the future. So how do we embrace the future, understand our past and teach effectively now? As Deborah Britzman (2003) has stated, learning to teach is a constant struggle between the ‘biography of the structure called schooling and the biography of the learner’ (p. 20). Her analysis draws attention to the extraordinarily complex nature of learning and teaching and how every learner is different. Putting the student at the centre of the learning and teaching relationship is a critical component of successful teaching, and forms the basis of the chapters in part 2 of this book. Another important building block is to plan, prepare and practise teaching based on a strong knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy, effective learning environments, technology, assessment and feedback. These topics are discussed in detail in the chapters in part 3 of this book. The final pieces of the puzzle are reflection, professionalism and transformative teaching practice, discussed in part 4 of the book.

Throughout the book and across all of its topics, six basic ideas about the learning and teaching process are evident.

1. You, like each student you will teach, are a learner.
2. While common practices among teachers exist, practices will vary from teacher to teacher.
3. Storying accounts of learning and teaching are a valid and accessible way for pre-service and graduate teachers to reflect upon various events and perspectives that inform their beliefs and decision making.
4. Conceptions of teaching taught to pre-service teachers represent contemporary theories of knowledge, but none is absolute. In time they will be replaced, revised or reformed.

What are the implications for me?

The four-year $16.2 billion program Building the Education Revolution (BER), has changed the look of learning spaces and school buildings across the country. Under the leadership of Professor Jill Blackmore, researchers from Deakin University have worked with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in Victoria and the OECD to investigate how schools are using these new spaces. The literature review, Research into the connection between built learning spaces (Blackmore, Bateman, Loughlin, O’Mara & Aranda 2011), online videos and conversations with principals based on first-hand knowledge of their schools inform us of these important and innovative changes.

So, questions to keep in mind as you enter schools as a pre-service teacher include: How have the built environment and learning spaces changed in Australian schools? To what extent have images of learning and teaching changed over time? In what ways are active learning and well-being for all students promoted and achieved? What integration of ICT into learning and teaching is used by teachers and students? And finally, is an education revolution visible?
5. Personal and professional beliefs arising from research, theory, experience and reflection are the drivers of ongoing change.

6. A career in teaching will involve ongoing workplace and allied professional learning.

It is evident then that becoming a teacher is a commitment to lifelong learning. Consider some more words from Anthea and her colleague Mark, who is teaching in another school. These comments were made in the early weeks of their first year of teaching.

The much anticipated first weeks of teaching have finally arrived and, now in week three, I think I need another holiday. I am loving teaching most of the time, but feel like I have been hit by a train — an express train.

My first class was a Year 11 English class and they were angels; they sat there quietly just wanting to learn. I had been so nervous about teaching in the weeks leading up to the first day and this allowed me to relax a bit. However, this euphoric feeling of happiness was cut short when I met my Year 8 humanities class; if my Year 11s were angels, this class was definitely sent from Lucifer. They tested all my classroom management skills, moving students, rearranging furniture, I even had to kick the entire class out of the room to line up again, but finally, by week three, they join the Year 11s with divine status.

_Anthea, graduate teacher_

I recall that towards the end of my second placement last year, I felt comfortable enough to shift the focus from my own aptitude to a focus on student learning. This came after a settling-in period and a feeling of comfort in my classrooms. But I am sure that this is a product of time, and am not worried that it has not happened yet this year. But I am sure that I cannot be a good teacher until I spend my time thinking more about what the students are taking in, as opposed to my need to feel competent at the front of the class.

_Mark, graduate teacher_

**Learning in the twenty-first century**

The constructivist theory of learning is one of the most debated and most influential theories of education. In essence, **constructivism** suggests that everything a person learns is mediated by their prior experiences and understandings. This means that people build their own knowledge and understanding — they do not simply absorb what they are ‘taught’. Constructivist explanations of learning echo the contributions of well-known theorists such as Piaget (1896–1980), Dewey (1859–1952), Vygotsky (1896–1934), Montessori (1870–1952) and Bruner (1915–). These are theorists you will hear more about in your teaching studies and in the later chapters of this book.

As someone who will be a lifelong learner, it is important to commence your course of study engaging with constructivism and the associated theories that guide our views about learners and learning in the twenty-first century. You need to understand that how you perceive ideas and information is substantially influenced by your past experiences and learning. Personal beliefs, once acknowledged, must be continually held up for scrutiny as learning to teach commences. You also need to know that the learning of each of your students is similarly influenced. This goes to the heart of the **constructivism**: An approach to teaching that recognises that everything a person learns is mediated by their prior experiences and understandings; thus individuals construct, rather than absorb, new knowledge.
concept of ‘teaching quality’, described earlier in the chapter. Each learner has different needs. Deborah Britzman’s earlier stated words highlight the struggle between the ‘biography of the structure called schooling’ and the ‘biography of the learner’ (2003, p. 20) and further hint at some of the issues you will meet. For example, in the 2009 admission to Australian universities, students from the lowest socioeconomic quartile obtained just 15 per cent of places, and only 11 per cent were accepted at the most prestigious universities. This suggests that student achievement is affected by socioeconomic status. As an editorial in The Age noted, ‘that is a damning disparity for a “fair go” society’ (The Age, editorial, 21 January 2009). Therefore, core to teachers’ work is ensuring teaching and schools include rather than exclude unique learner perspectives. Indeed, the ‘never ending struggle for social justice’ (Lather & Smithies 1997, p. 50) is an issue for all Australians.

Australia is a very diverse country. It has a range of socioeconomic conditions, diverse geographical and climate characteristics across various parts of the country, and it is one of the most multicultural countries. Indigenous knowledge and patterns of immigration have profoundly defined Australia as a nation. Our identity as a nation has shifted and is constantly shifting. The influence of globalisation and technological changes in particular are at the forefront of many changes. Teachers are being continually confronted by the differences between the globally ‘relevant’ and ‘irrelevant’ societies in their classrooms (Castells 1999). These are broad factors that need to be acknowledged in teaching all learners. In addition, each learner’s unique, individual characteristics affect learning outcomes.

With all this in mind, as Baird and Love (2003) state, approaches to teaching and learning that recognise constructivism often include:

- ‘real-life’ activities
- access to expert performance and the modelling of processes
- multiple roles and perspectives
- reflection
- collaborative construction of knowledge
- articulation of personal values and beliefs
- coaching and scaffolding.

As a teacher you are required to balance your students’ learning needs with your own learning, typically developed in the workplace. In essence you will witness and juggle the contemporary debates about learning as you experience learning to teach and beginning to teach. John Holt, an American educator who coined the term ‘unschooling’, returns us to the heart of teachers’ work:

Since we can’t know what knowledge will be most used in the future, it is senseless to try and teach it in advance. Instead we should try to turn out people who love learning so much and learn so well that they will be able to learn whatever needs to be learned (Holt 1964, p. 173).
It is in this spirit that you have taken on the task of learning to teach and teaching to learn.

### What can I take into the classroom?

According to Joyce, Weil and Calhoun (2004), successful teachers are not simply charismatic and persuasive ... [but] engage their students in robust cognitive and social tasks and teach the students how to use them productively. Effective learners draw information, ideas and wisdom from their teachers and use learning resources effectively. Thus, a major role in teaching is to create powerful learners (p. 7).

What is your definition of a successful teacher? Do you disagree with anything in the first section of the chapter? Why? What have you learned from the discussion of teaching as a profession in this chapter so far? How do you think it will affect your approach to teaching?

Look up the AITSL Illustrations of Practice. Get to know this section of the website, http://www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au/Illustrations.

Select Standard 1 ‘Know students and how they learn’, and choose an illustration of practice relevant to you. Watch the video and change the discussion questions to the future tense, so that they are appropriate to the stage of your pre-service course.

Post your responses to other members of your tutorial group and discuss the responses.

### Developing your teacher identity

The discussion in the first part of this chapter emphasised the need for each teacher to bring a critical perspective to teaching’s professional knowledge base in order to construct a personally relevant understanding of teaching. This is part of the process of a teacher developing their ‘teacher identity’. Trevor Hay suggests that a teacher’s self-concept of their ‘teacher identity’ is formed by four processes:

1. **narrating identity**: stories about teaching and identity
2. **imagining identity**: contemporary theoretical approaches to teacher identity and identity through metaphor
3. **acting out identity**: examples of teacher values and beliefs in action

We will discuss each process in turn, but it is important to recognise that the processes are simultaneous and ongoing.

### Storying teaching

A teacher’s identity is strongly shaped by the ‘story of teaching’ — both the teacher’s own stories of their experiences and the stories of colleagues, peers and mentors. These stories will act as guides in the initial stages of your personal and professional identity making. Your colleagues will share short, personal narratives with you, describing critical instances encountered within their own lives and professional careers. For example, the thoughts of graduate teachers Anthea and Mark, recounted earlier in this chapter, are...
examples of stories of teaching. You may have recognised familiar thoughts or experiences by reading their accounts. Your reflection on the experiences and stories of others will form part of your identity. At the same time, your stories will contribute to the changing stories and discourses of teaching. Dixon et al. (2004) note:

Teacher discourse is ... a matter of structured thinking, analogous to the kind an author uses in transforming a sequence of events into a story. This form of thinking, and the language derived from beliefs, attitudes, values and theories constitute a story of teaching. Biography, autobiography and even fiction are part of a theoretically valid, ‘story-ed’ approach to the examination of teachers’ lives and teachers’ work (p. 15).

Media provide another way that we can readily access and analyse constructions of teaching. The Australian television series *Summer Heights High* provides a story about secondary schooling and the identity of individual students and teachers. *First Day*, the now seminal documentary produced by the Australian Children’s Television Foundation, likewise provides significant insights into how teachers teach in differing contexts and support parents’ and caregivers’ expectations as children make the transition to formal school entry.

It is important to also recognise that narratives and discourses can have a constraining effect. For example, while language on the one hand allows us to share stories, it also often serves to regulate who can speak with authority, who must listen, whose social constructions are important and whose are erroneous and less important.

**Theorising teaching and identity**

*Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.*

Socrates (c. 469–399 BCE)

*Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.*

WB Yeats (1865–1939)

Descriptions of professional practice and conceptions of teaching and learning often use metaphors. Metaphors help capture and describe abstract concepts, making them more practical. Do you as a pre-service teacher have an initial metaphor for teaching? For some time, educators and educational researchers have appreciated that metaphors for teaching and learning are not simply about the world, but also help construct our overarching expectations and understandings of education.

Many pre-service teachers, when invited to generate an initial metaphor for teaching, cite metaphors of growth and change: the teacher as ‘gardener’ or teaching as ‘planting seeds’, ‘growing a future’ or ‘nurturing young flowers’. By analysing the conceptions of teaching and observing the history of education embedded in these metaphors, teachers are representing traditions of education that echo the child-centred perspectives of John Dewey (1859–1952) in the United States, as well as the progressive education
movement. Progressivism aims to work towards creating a better society and is attributed to the European tradition of education led by Rousseau (1712–1778), followed by Pestalozzi (1746–1827), Herbart (1776–1841) and Montessori (1870–1952).

According to Socrates, the teacher was a ‘midwife’. Freire (1972) referred to the metaphor of ‘banking’ to sum up how education is overly governed by teachers who ‘fill’ the students by making ‘deposits’ of information that he or she considers to constitute true knowledge. Others apply the metaphor ‘teacher as artist’. The metaphors you choose will shape your actions as a teacher (Tobin 1990). It is vital at the early stage of your initial orientation to the profession that you are highly sensitised to the language you may use to define your work and your perception of the students you teach. As a teacher you need to identify and clarify the teacher talk that serves to both regulate and dominate the teacher you are becoming. For example, teacher talk such as ‘In term 3 my students really blossomed’, ‘On Friday afternoon my classroom is like a zoo’ or ‘She is one of the top students’ contains several metaphors — ‘blossom’ suggests growth and development; ‘zoo’, of course, likens students to animals and a less than respectful relationship; and ‘top students’ suggests a vertical orientation and a hierarchy of learning and learners — and perhaps even teacher bias towards high academic achievement.

Judith Lloyd-Yeo (2001–02) points to common metaphors used in education such as 

**A lesson is a journey; knowledge is a landscape**, and, for example, the high frequency usage of the word ‘cover’. Teacher statements that apply the word ‘cover’ include such assertions as, ‘I covered Newton’s Laws last week’, ‘There is so much to cover in the curriculum’, and ‘He is covering up what he does not know’. Lloyd-Yeo’s review of recent research concludes that the metaphors teachers use profoundly affect their work, behaviour and perceptions.

### Enacting beliefs and values

The third part of the process of developing a teacher identity involves putting values and beliefs into practice. It involves making decisions about what to teach and how to teach based on professional knowledge. This is explored in much greater depth in the next major section of this chapter. It also involves deciding how to respond to students and issues in the classroom. Further, teacher identity is also reflected in interactions with colleagues and stakeholders such as parents. Mason (2002) uses the term ‘the discipline of noticing’ — being mindful of the elements that are drawn into our practice.

### Transforming personal identity

Teachers’ work lives are in perpetual motion between:

- teachers and learners (the who)
- subject matter (the what)
- instructional methods (the how).

There is more to teacher identity than this ‘didactic triangle’ (Klette 2007, p. 147), however. As the model in figure 1.6 (overleaf) suggests, identity, belief and action continually interact with each other, both directly and via engagement with the processes of awareness, reflection and response.

The shape of identity and belief formation, professional thinking and decision making (i.e. deciding what actions to take) will be unique for each of us. Further, our identity will change over time in response to reflecting upon our professional knowledge and practice, the learning outcomes our students achieve, and the ideas we are exposed
to from colleagues, researchers and other stakeholders in education. In this way, teachers come to transform their own beliefs, knowledge and practice.

![Image of a triangle with labels: Awareness, Identity, Reflection, Noticing, Beliefs, Action, Response]

**Figure 1.6: Shaping personal and professional identity**  
*Source: Based on Dixon et al. (2004, p. 20).*

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**What are the implications for me?**

Consider the following common metaphors for teaching. What interpretations of teaching and learning do they represent? What aspects of teaching and learning are obscured?

- The teacher opens doors
- The teacher as coach
- The teacher as tour guide
- The teacher as artist
- The teacher as a lighthouse
- The teacher as gardener
- The teacher on a journey with the students
- The teacher as the chess grand master
- The teacher as company director
- The teacher fills the empty vessels
- The teacher as jazz musician
- The teacher as video game designer
- The teacher as a clinician and analyst

Consider, for example, that if a teacher is a gardener then students are plants; if a teacher is a clinician, students are patients or clients; if a teacher is a video game designer, students are part of the gamers’ network; if a teacher is a jazz musician, the teacher is adept at improvisation. If the teacher is the grand chess master, as masters they have approximately 50,000 patterns in their repertoire, but the ‘difference is that, in chess, only one player moves at a time and the pieces only move when the player moves them. Teachers are not that lucky; their chess pieces think and move on their own’ (Bennett & Rolheiser 2001, p. 6).

Go to the Teacher Feature section of the AITSL website. Here you will find many examples of teachers from all career stages discussing their passion for teaching. Watch at least three videos from the Most Popular Teacher Feature link.
Pedagogy is a term that you will hear and meet many times in learning to teach. Some simply define pedagogy as the ‘art and science’ of teaching (Bennett & Rolheiser 2001). For others, pedagogy is regarded as ‘teaching method’ or the ‘how’ of teaching, as opposed to the theory of teaching. As Canadian educator and researcher Max van Manen (1991, p. 31) states:

pedagogy is not just a word. Pedagogy is not found in observational categories, but like love or friendship in the experience of the presence … pedagogy is cemented deep in the nature of the relationship between adults and children.

Pedagogy is fully explored in a later chapter of this book. At this stage, it is important to appreciate how theory and practice interact and to consider the complexity inherent in the development of pedagogical knowledge.

Theory on pedagogical practices is informed by a range of educational philosophies and values and by the different assumptions that are held about learning, student development, appropriate styles of teaching and curricula. Current influences on understandings of pedagogy range from cognitive psychology (see, for example, Eggen & Kauchak 2001) to sociology (see, for example, Bernstein 1996), to feminism (see, for example, Luke & Gore 1992; McWilliam 1999) and workplace learning (see, for example, Fuller & Unwin 2002).

Pedagogy is more than just acquiring a set of teaching skills for use in the classroom. Pedagogy may be considered ‘effective’ depending on the level of student acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions (Vaughn, Bos & Schumm 2006). It is apparent, then, that effective pedagogy is closely related to high-quality teaching, described earlier in this chapter.

Pedagogical knowledge

Lusted raises the question ‘Why is pedagogy important?’, followed by the response, ‘It is important since, as a concept, it draws attention to the process through which knowledge is produced’ (cited in Britzman 2003, p. 53). Ball (2000) raises two
pertinent questions relevant to the contemporary context of understanding the term pedagogy.

1. On one hand to what extent does teaching and learning to teach depend on the development of theoretical knowledge and knowledge of subject matter?
2. On the other hand to what extent does it rely on the development of pedagogical method? (p. 241.)

Policy makers and practitioners continue to debate the respective merits of general pedagogical knowledge (i.e. knowledge of how to teach) and pedagogical content knowledge (i.e. knowledge of specific content to be taught and how to teach that specific content).

As Ball (2000) notes:

the overarching problem ... is that the prevalent conceptualization and organisation of teacher’s learning tends to fragment practice and leave to individual teachers the challenge of integrating subject matter and pedagogy in the contexts of their work. We assume that the integration required to teach is simple and happens in the course of experience. In fact this does not happen easily and often does not happen at all (p. 242).

Lee Shulman’s seminal work (1986, 1987) continues to guide the research, policies, programs and practices of local, national and international work on pedagogy. For Shulman (1987), knowledge is viewed as multifaceted, covering myriad interrelated dimensions. His categories of professional knowledge include:

- content knowledge
- general pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organisation that appear to transcend subject matter
- curriculum knowledge, with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as ‘tools of trade’ for teachers
- pedagogical content knowledge, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of understanding
- knowledge of learners and their characteristics
- knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, to the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures
- knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical backgrounds (p. 8).

Researchers such as Thomson and Hall have also been exploring Shulman’s term ‘signature pedagogies’ (Thomson and Hall 2015) to better understand what happens when cross-curriculum studies are being taught by teachers and other creative practitioners such as artists. The research team has found that there are distinctive ‘habits of mind’, ways of thinking, doing and being — for example, for a mathematician, an artist or a geographer — that are important parts of teaching discipline knowledge. So it is no surprise that we need to continually focus and question teacher knowledge.
Pedagogy informed by knowledge of learners and learning and curriculum change

There is consensus that teachers need to be active participants in continuously improving their pedagogy in order to improve student outcomes. Equally, research and policy endorses that the curriculum reform requires pedagogical change. Students develop deep understanding of important concepts when their learning is built on previous concepts and experiences, and ideas are connected to one another.

Linda Darling-Hammond (1998) proposes that an understanding of child and adolescent development supports growth in various domains — cognitive, social, physical and emotional — and can enable teachers to shape productive experiences for students. Some research studies have documented a moderately strong correlation between what learning theories teachers know and what students learn (see, for example, National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future 1996; Dalton 1998; Darling-Hammond 1998). What teachers must learn about and teach to their students is affected by this changing knowledge; its permeable character and teacher flexibility are viewed as constituting effective teaching practices (Hill 2003, p. 6).

Pedagogical renewal in Australia

Over the past decade, there has been a renewal of interest in pedagogy and pedagogical research in Australia and internationally. This, in part, has been in response to proposals for large-scale curriculum reform. The history of Australia’s curriculum shows a lack of national agreement on what should constitute curriculum for all young Australians, and hence many inconsistencies are evident across the various states and territories. In the early 1990s, the federal government attempted to establish a national curriculum. Following extensive consultation with state policy makers and teachers, the Curriculum Corporation (now Education Services Australia) published 16 documents: The Statements and separate Profile documents for eight key learning areas (mathematics, English, the arts, technology, science, studies of society and environment [SOSE], languages other than English [LOTE], and health). These documents influenced the development of state curricula over the following years, but fell well short of replacing the traditionally conservative and bureaucratically driven state-based curricula (Green 2003).

In 2008 the National Curriculum Board was established in another attempt to align curriculum across the states and territories. Before looking at this most recent attempt to establish a national curriculum, it is worthwhile briefly exploring some of the states’ approaches to develop an understanding of the definitions of pedagogy that have had currency in Australia. An overview of how pedagogical knowledge is accorded in three Australian states — Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria — follows over the next few pages.

The trend in recent years has been to articulate broad principles of classroom organisation and practice that appear on a surface reading to transcend subject matter. These system-wide positions are representative of Lee Shulman’s questions proposed over two decades ago.

What are the domains and categories of content knowledge in the minds of teachers? How, for example, are content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge related? In which forms are the domains and categories of knowledge represented in the minds of teachers? What are promising ways of enhancing acquisition and development of such knowledge? (Shulman 1986, p. 5.)
Implicit in recent Australian approaches is that pedagogy is developed in the workplace and is the practice or craft representing teachers’ understanding and accumulated wisdom acquired over many years. The need for continuing learning about pedagogy has not lessened. As teachers who will be graduating after the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, expect to hear more, not less, about the importance of pedagogy and change in teachers’ work. Below is a snapshot of the history of these reforms and the approach to pedagogy, which to varying degrees continue to influence the policy frameworks and practices in Australian education. Some states are making changes to their pedagogical frameworks, others are not, so as we have stressed earlier it is important to keep abreast of these changes.

**New Basics**

The Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (Lingard et al. 2001), and its associated New Basics project (Education Queensland 2000) and Productive Pedagogies framework (Hayes, Mills & Lingard 2000), aimed to focus on the underlying dimensions of pedagogy that have meaning in authentic classrooms and can be sustained organisationally by schools. New Basics asserted ‘improved pedagogy is at the heart of this agenda’ (Education Queensland 2000, p. 5). Teachers were urged to mentor one another as pedagogues, to open their classrooms to their colleagues, to swap strategies and to talk about pedagogy (Luke 1999).

Education Queensland’s ‘Five principles of effective learning and teaching’ (State of Queensland [Department of Education] 1994) state the following (p. 4).

1. Effective learning and teaching is founded on an understanding of the learner.
2. Effective learning and teaching requires active construction of meaning.
3. Effective learning and teaching enhances and is enhanced by a supportive and challenging environment.
4. Effective learning and teaching is enhanced through worthwhile learning partnerships.
5. Effective learning and teaching shapes and responds to social and cultural contexts.

These principles were expected to underpin learning and teaching practices across all school sectors in Queensland. These principles claim to stand against a single view of pedagogy and isolate the independent effects of any one specific teaching technique or learning skill. These principles entrust teachers with responsibility for a repertoire of ‘pedagogical strategies’ to implement in their classroom.

Rich tasks are a component of the New Basics framework (State of Queensland [Department of Education and Training] 2004) and were designed so that students can display understandings, knowledges and skills through performance on transdisciplinary activities that have an obvious connection to the ‘real world’. The emphasis on the ‘real world’ draws from the literature in ‘authentic pedagogy’. A close examination of some published examples of rich tasks identifies the connections with the thinking of John Dewey (1859–1952), Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), Paulo Freire (1921–1997) and Ted Sizer (1932–2009), all of whom published widely in relation to authentic learning. Rich tasks were supported by the Productive Pedagogies framework (State of Queensland [Department of Education and Training] 2002). Productive pedagogies are deemed to exhibit:

- *intellectual quality* (e.g. higher-order thinking, deep knowledge, deep understanding, substantive conversation)
connectedness (e.g. knowledge integration, background knowledge, connectedness to the world, problem based curriculum)

supportive classroom environments (e.g. social support, academic engagement, explicit performance criteria, self regulation)

recognition of difference (e.g. cultural knowledges, inclusivity, narrative, group identity, active citizenship).

The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Reporting framework (QCAR) followed the New Basics. The QCAR framework informs the learning programs for all state school students in Years 1 to 9. Developed by the Queensland Studies Authority, the framework comprises five interrelated components (Department of Education, Training and Employment [Queensland] http://education.qld.gov.au):

1. Essential learnings — what should be taught and what is important for students to know, understand and be able to do
2. Standards — the common frame of reference and a shared language to describe student achievement
3. Assessment bank — the online collection of assessment packages and resources
4. Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs) — the performance-based assessment tasks in English, mathematics and science for students in Years 4, 6 and 9
5. Guidelines for reporting.

Quality Teaching

The commitment of the NSW Department of Education and Training to develop fully the talents and capacities of all students in the public school system prompted the development of the Quality Teaching model of pedagogy. Developed by James Ladwig and Jenny Gore in consultation with and on behalf of the NSW Department of Education and Training, this model acknowledges that it is the ‘quality of pedagogy that most directly and most powerfully affects the quality of learning’ (Department of Education and Training [NSW] 2003, p. 4). Although the model encourages conversations on pedagogy from all relevant stakeholder groups, the model also advocates for individualised and personalised pedagogical approaches from the teacher. Similar to New Basics, the ‘generic qualities of pedagogy’ identified in the document are in pursuit of the individual differences teachers take into account in their teaching, and across all the different styles of and approaches to teaching.

The Quality Teaching model proposes that the following three dimensions of pedagogy and classroom practice have a positive effect on students’ learning and improving student outcomes:

1. promoting high levels of intellectual quality
2. promoting a quality learning environment
3. developing in students a sense of the significance of their work.

Quality Teaching builds on what many teachers already know, understand, value and do in terms of high-quality teaching practice. It begins from the premise that all teachers can teach well and all students can learn. A ‘self-styling’ approach to pedagogy by every teacher is intended to allow teachers to regain control of their teaching by defining their teaching goals and monitoring their progress in achieving them. A key component in ‘self-styling’ is ‘reflective thinking’ about ways for teachers to modify and refine their learning and pedagogy. This is designed so that every teacher can think more carefully about what
their students will learn. To engage in ‘self-styling’, Quality Teaching encourages teachers to pose the following four questions (Gore, Ladwig & King 2004, p. 4):

1. What do you want your students to learn?
2. Why does that learning matter?
3. What do you want your students to produce?
4. How well do you expect them to do it?

The Principles of Learning and Teaching in Victoria

The Principles of Learning and Teaching P–12 initiative provides a structure to help teachers focus their professional learning (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2008). In brief, the principles are:

1. the learning environment is supportive and productive
2. the learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self motivation
3. students’ needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning program
4. students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application
5. assessment practices are an integral part of teaching and learning

The principles build on earlier work that shows that different teaching approaches often result in substantial differences in both the ways students approach their learning and the quality of that learning. They essentially provide a basis for schools and teachers to ‘review their own practice’ (Department of Education and Training [Victoria] 2004, p. 2) rather than advocating a ‘right’ or ‘best’ way to teach. The principles recognise the importance of collaborative reflection on pedagogy and creating classrooms that can be characterised as ‘learning communities’.

The principles reflect a view of pedagogy that centres on the following tenets (Department of Education and Training [Victoria] 2004, pp. 2–3):

• interacting with students (i.e. asking and responding to questions, using students’ ideas and responding to students’ diverse backgrounds and interests)
• creating a social and intellectual climate
• framing the content around a series of tasks to be completed or as key ideas and skills that are revisited and built upon
• creating and operating as professional learning teams, which will enable rich and productive conversations.

The Principles of Learning and Teaching P–12 are intended to:

• develop a shared language of pedagogy based around the principles
• develop insights into the classroom strategies and activities appropriate to each principle
• discuss instances of the particular principle in their current practice
• develop a process or plan to extend the principle in their school, as a potential initiative or set of initiatives (Department of Education and Training [Victoria] 2004).

As the momentum of the Australian Curriculum develops, teachers in all states will be part of national initiatives designed to improve teacher quality through models of school partnerships and centres of teaching excellence.
The Australian Curriculum

The federal government in 2008 announced the introduction of an ‘education revolution’. Since that time the national landscape has changed significantly, with a focus on key principles that would underpin a nation-wide approach to education. The development of a shared curriculum was guided by the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, which committed to ‘support all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens’ and to provide students with ‘the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities to thrive and compete in a globalised world and information rich workplaces of the current century’ (ACARA 2009).

One of the outcomes of the declaration and the federal focus on the education revolution has been the development of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2014), which has now commenced implementation across all states and territories. Education authorities in each state and territory determine the manner in which the Australian Curriculum is integrated into their syllabus documents and also the implementation timelines for their schools. To date, four key learning areas (English, mathematics, history and science) have had the content descriptions and achievement standards incorporated in each jurisdiction from the Foundation year to Year 10. The following learning areas are in the second phase of subjects to be implemented: geography; the arts; and languages. Followed by the third phase including technologies; economics and business; civics and citizenship; and health and physical education. In the Australian Curriculum, as well as core subjects, teachers will be expected to teach and assess ‘general capabilities’ and ‘cross-curriculum’ perspectives. Decisions on curriculum can often be announced unexpectedly, so remaining up to date on the current state of play in your context is critical. To access the most recent updates to the Australian Curriculum see the Australian Curriculum website (ACARA 2014).

In 2014, a review of the Australian Curriculum was commissioned by the Abbott government. This followed a change of government at the federal level and increasing concerns about recommendations made in the Gonski Report on the review of funding for schooling not being actioned by the new government (DEEWR 2011). The review was headed by Dr Kevin Donnelly and Professor Ken Wiltshire and a final report was released at the end of 2014, including a recommendation that the curriculum is too crowded (Department
The teaching profession

Part 1

The process of moving to the Australian Curriculum, with inclusion of all stakeholders in education, has had many complexities. Currently, the guidance of the curriculum at the national level will continue.

**What are the implications for me?**

Create a scrapbook in digital or hard copy format of recent newspaper articles that refer to the history of the Australian Curriculum since 2008. Aim for at least five articles.

Create a scrapbook in digital or hard copy format of recent newspaper articles that refer to the latest events on the Australian Curriculum. Focus on recent years and include at least five articles.

Analyse your selected articles for the impact that the implementation of the Australian Curriculum has had and will have on teaching and learning in your state.

What will teachers be expected to teach and assess under the ‘General Capabilities’ and ‘Cross-curriculum’ perspectives? Describe the pedagogical work you will be expected to know and do to meet these aims.

Building on the above, explain what it is expected that you will teach and assess under the ‘General Capabilities’ and ‘Cross-curriculum’ perspectives in your specialisation. If you are preparing to be a secondary teacher, choose one school subject. If you are preparing to be an early childhood or primary teacher, choose either science or the arts as your focus.

**Reflective practice**

Teacher educators have a responsibility to ensure that graduate teachers enter the profession with confidence and enthusiasm. Pre-service education is your initial socialisation and induction to the profession and can play a vital part in your ongoing learning. A graduate teacher, ready to enter the profession of teaching, is able to describe and demonstrate:

- key principles of pedagogical knowledge
- high-order communication skills — an analytical and critical disposition are central to developing skills of reflective professional practice
- the ability to incorporate innovative approaches into their professional knowledge base, including new technologies, new media and other innovative approaches such as arts-based methods
- ethical practice
- curricular and pedagogical designs that meet the needs of all students.

Developing deeper understandings of pedagogy requires a reflective teacher stance. Reflective practice is both a common process in everyday life and a prominent part of teacher education programs and teaching practice. It involves constantly reviewing one’s beliefs and practices, the theories and ideas underpinning them, and the outcomes observed, in order to learn from them and improve upon them.

The concept of the reflective practitioner was described by Donald Schön as ‘the expert who was wide awake to, and aware of, their practice, not just immersed in it’ (cited in Mason 2002, p. 15). Think back to the opening case and the way that Dimity was reflecting about her students, their learning and why she decided to take up
teaching as a career. There are a number of ways that you can reflect on your practice. You may develop a reflective journal, visual diary or blog, mp3 audio file or post to a discussion board. Each approach aims to improve your work as a teacher and to support you to put forward dilemmas and resolutions to issues.

Reflection can use both formal and informal methods. Informal approaches such as staffroom or corridor conversations are a necessary part of building professional communication and relationships. However, to be useful and support you in monitoring your professional learning over time, the spoken word and records of the spaces and places where you teach should be documented and analysed. The theory, issues and practices of reflection are further discussed in chapter 13.

**Entering the profession**

Very quickly as a pre-service and graduate teacher you assume responsibility for independent teaching. Typically, over a course of study, phased periods of school experience occur. The extent and length of practicum experiences depend on the design of your program. Upon securing your first teaching position you will commence independent teaching. The autonomous entry you experience is a defining feature of the teaching profession but also brings many challenges. It is well known the first year of teaching can be highly stressful, particularly if graduate teachers have come from a shorter graduate course and have not had the advantage of a substantial internship within their program. Such teachers have never been alone in a class without a mentor teacher, and they have generally only had to teach two sessions a day. Suddenly the graduate teacher is expected to take complete control and teach a full load. A great deal of significant — but largely unsupported — learning happens in the induction year.

It is well established in the research literature and certainly part of the rhetorical teacher talk and socialisation that ‘doing a DipEd, BEd or BTeach’ omits much of the real world of classroom teaching and everyday school life. The rejection of academic training (to greater or lesser extents) experienced by many pre-service and graduate teachers at some stage after experience in schools was recognised by Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) in the United States over thirty years ago. Their work acknowledges the tension between university-based learning and school-based learning, suggesting that the effects of university-based teacher education are ‘washed out’ by the process of socialisation of pre-service or graduate teachers into the teaching profession.

**Assessment of pre-service and graduating teachers**

As noted earlier in this chapter, Australia has a set of recently introduced national teaching standards. These standards refer to the domains of teaching: professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement. Although the approach to assessment of national teaching standards is under development, as a graduating teacher you will be required to participate in a formal system of teacher accreditation. In your course, over time, you will be prepared to develop an understanding of these processes. Take another close look at the AITSL Graduate Standards Overview. Current expectations are that the graduating teacher will be expected to show interconnected understandings of theory, practice and reflection. The assessment used will therefore reflect these dimensions. In Australia and internationally the use of evidence-informed practice and the role of teacher inquiry and/or research to inform future teaching and
The teaching profession has changed over time. The next section of the chapter discusses how these practices have been evolving, beginning with the teaching portfolio.

The teaching portfolio has for some time been regarded as a passport to the teaching profession. In some states of Australia the evidence portfolio is already a part of teacher registration requirements. As Rieman (2000) states, ‘a portfolio is more than your best teaching efforts; rather, a portfolio is a demonstration of your growth and improvement’ (p. 3). The literature on portfolios includes definitions that range from ‘summary of accomplishments’ to ‘a comprehensive self-reflective record of a teacher’s strengths and weaknesses’ and ‘a way to assess teacher quality’ (Wolf 1996). The Standards Council of Victoria (1997) stated that a portfolio is ‘a quality record of a teacher’s practice selected for a particular purpose’ (p. 3). Wolf (2000) identifies three broad categories for professional teaching portfolios: (1) learning, (2) assessment and (3) employment. He describes a teaching portfolio as ‘a depository of artefacts or assorted documents … that require a written reflection by the developer on the significance of or contributions of these artefacts’ (p. 36). A different definition by Wolf and Dietz (1998, p. 13) describes a teaching portfolio as ‘a structured collection of teacher and student work created across diverse contexts of time, framed by reflection and enriched through collaboration, that has as its ultimate aim the advancement of teacher and student learning’.

On the other hand, Retallick and Groundwater-Smith (1996, p. 13) define a portfolio in more generic terms as ‘a compilation of evidence which demonstrates the acquisition, development and exercise of knowledge and skills in relation to your work practice’. More recently, e-portfolios — with digitised documents and hyperlinks — that provide connections to evidence and standards of teaching have become widely advocated in teacher education. As mentioned earlier, a portfolio is not merely a collection of everything you do or have done — teaching portfolios are important in capturing the essential elements of your practice and providing the place where you can readily develop reflective teaching practice. Building a portfolio is an essential part of developing and maintaining professional status. Throughout your professional life the portfolio may be used in:

- preparation for internship and job interviews
- documentation of your philosophy of teaching supported by curriculum and assessment practices
- teacher registration
- attaining accomplished teacher status through detailed reflective documentation.

Typically, evidence of teaching will be required in specified domains and reflect the everyday work of teaching. Authentic assessment, sometimes also referred to as performance assessment, aims to improve understanding and critical thinking. Usually it is based in real work applications, clearly shows what is required of the learner and is intended to be assessment for learning. Therefore assessment for graduating teachers will aim to capture the complex and multifaceted nature of teaching and assessment and will align with both goals of the curriculum (teaching and learning) and professional standards (teacher occupational knowledge). This sounds complex, and it is. Meeting such outcomes generally occurs towards the end of your course and occurs in what are sometimes referred to as capstone subjects. Authentic or performance learning of graduating teachers usually has a number of parts and will confirm that the graduate is ready to teach by a judgement that is made on the evidence of practice described as:

- learning and its context
- planning teaching and assessment
- teaching students and supporting learning
• assessing student learning
• reflecting on teaching and learning.

Graduating teachers who have completed these forms of assessment have commented that the process has led them to be well prepared for applying for advertised teaching positions and eases their preparation for teacher registration. They reflect that they have been supported to:
• focus thinking on different areas of teaching
• think about practice, why do they do what they do, how they would articulate this to their students/colleagues/parents and principal
• show what they have understood as a teacher
• reveal their strengths and weaknesses and develop a plan for future changes
• define professional learning goals based on what worked and did not work
• develop an increased awareness of assessment of student learning linking to curriculum standards
• be a reflexive teacher, to see the big picture of teaching and the importance of continuous learning.

Julie White and Trevor Hay (2005) summed up the distinctions in the way that portfolios as a form of authentic assessment get used in the teaching profession as being either ‘Are you good enough?’ (i.e. standards and accountability models) or ‘Who are you?’ (i.e. approaches that reach into the process of developing the personal professional knowledge of teachers). It is important to recognise that you will be required to provide ongoing evidence of your professional learning. Teacher professional learning is a constant in teachers’ lives. It is both rewarding and enjoyable. Good professional learning will engage you in any number of practices, including school-based workshops, teacher conferences, online communities and personalised forms of inquiry where you may investigate your classroom practice or work collaboratively with other teachers through face-to-face and virtual means. The graduate teacher assessment task and then the evidence portfolio is now regarded as a major component of becoming and being a professional and lifelong educator.

Contributing to the professional knowledge base

To understand, construct and analyse our professional knowledge and our theories of teaching and learning, teachers are required to read and understand contemporary research and over time to develop the skill of conducting or participating in systematic and rigorous educational and teacher research (Clarke & Erickson 2003). In this way, teachers contribute to the professional knowledge base. There are any numbers of approaches to practitioner research. As Jean McNiff (1993, p. 18) suggests:
• each individual may legitimately theorise about their own practice and aim to build theories
• theorising as a process is appropriate to educational development — people change their practices and their practices change them
• the interface between person and practice is a process of theory building, which involves a critical reflection on the process of ‘reflection in action’, and which legitimates the notion of a changing individual interacting with the world.

Reflection upon formal professional knowledge, developed through research and theory, is the best way to initially develop and refine a professional belief system. A teacher who shapes their theory in this way will have a professionally defensible approach to their teaching. There are any number of differing approaches to teacher research and inquiry. However, it remains that teacher reflexivity — that is, the capacity
to refer to one’s actions — is crucial in accounting for the multiplicity of elements that constitute the teaching self and the act of teaching.

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### What are the implications for me?

File your school experience reports. Select a focus area based on the school-based assessor’s comments for your immediate and ongoing professional learning.

Write a short autobiographical piece that will form the starting point for your professional portfolio or graduating teacher assessment document. Keep in mind the purpose and audience for your work (e.g. internship, employment application, graduate teaching standards, reflective practice).

Develop a checklist for the development of evidence-informed practice over time. Here are some suggested headings:

- Title page that indicates the purpose of the assessment (internship, graduating teacher)
- Brief autobiography
- Belief statement: an informed, evolving position on a personal professional theory
- Planning: establishing a balanced instructional focus. How do the plans support student learning?
- Pedagogy and student diversity: How do the plans make the curriculum accessible to all students?
- Curriculum and assessment: designing assessments, monitoring and analysis
- Reflection: use of research, theory and reflections on teaching and learning to guide practice
- The teaching professional: investigating practice
- Appendices.

Remember that graduating teacher assessments are not just printed documents. Increasingly, multimedia stored on a secure YouTube link may also be an important part of your evidence. Audio or video recordings of lessons may also provide useful material for your reflective practice.

Open and maintain a professional learning log. List the title, date and summary of the event attended and include a section for Reflections that links to your current practice and describes what changes you intend to make.

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### Insights in education

**Teacher education**

Over the past decade educational researchers have sought to examine in depth through close-up analysis the experience of learning to teach. Kim Senior in her PhD study entitled *Indelible stains: Researching pedagogy within spaces and tensions of an ethnographic study of learning to teach* undertook to research her own teacher education practices. Over a whole school year she worked with another university colleague to both do and research her teaching. The participants in the research were Kim as the teacher educator, her pre-service teachers and a group of Year 9 students. After the research had finished, Kim maintained contact
with her previous pre-service teachers to learn more of the experience of the first year of teaching. Senior (2008) writes:

It is the beginning of another school year. Co-researchers to my study, Keith, Nancy and Amy have joined Simon, Shane and Nelum taking various positions across Melbourne. They remain in sporadic contact as they tell me about the interviews, the disappointments, the occasional successes and mostly about the excitement of meeting their own students. Annalise, Ashley and Stevie (participants in my research) have all gone into Year 11 with their dreams and hopes for the future becoming more and more a pressing reality. In the press there are the usual stories and myths about teacher competency and the preparedness of graduate teachers for ‘the realities of the classroom’...

Preparing pre-service teachers beyond the regressive myths, beyond debilitating and disciplined notions of teacher quality requires the restoration of living pedagogy; for quality pedagogy and the relationships implicit in those encounters, is what every single one of our students, and our young people have a right to. Pedagogy that ‘works’ is ‘unrepeatable and cannot be copied, sold or exchanged’ (Ellsworth 1997, p. 17) yet the task of teacher education, of teacher educators and those involved in the process, is to enact to live, to be with/in this constant struggle of reproducing uniqueness (pp. 226–7).

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Summary

No single variable improves student achievement more than the introduction of a great teacher.

Teaching is supported by a wide and deep body of professional knowledge that continues to evolve. As you prepare to join the teaching profession you will be exposed to both theory and practice. It is important to bring a critical perspective to ideas, theories and practices to ensure you construct a personally relevant understanding of teaching.

Teachers tend to form and develop a ‘teacher identity’ over time through four processes: storying teaching, theorising teaching and identity, enacting beliefs and values, and transforming professional identity. The shape of identity and belief formation, professional thinking and decision making (i.e. deciding what actions to take) is particular to each person. Teacher identity changes over time in response to reflection upon professional knowledge and practice, the learning outcomes students achieve, and ideas from colleagues, researchers and other stakeholders in education. In this way, teachers come to transform their own beliefs, knowledge and practice.

Pedagogy is a term that describes the art, science or strategies of teaching based on professional knowledge and reflective practice. General pedagogical knowledge is knowledge of the theories of effective teaching. Pedagogical content knowledge is knowledge of specific subject matter to be taught and how to teach that specific content. Pedagogy is closely related to curriculum, which describes the educational content that is to be taught. The Australian school system has been characterised by somewhat
divergent curricula in different states, but recently a national Australian Curriculum has been developed in core subject areas to bring greater consistency to Australians’ schooling.

Becoming an accomplished teacher requires the adoption of reflective practice, which involves constantly reviewing one’s beliefs and practices, the theories and ideas underpinning them, and the outcomes observed, in order to learn from them and improve upon them. Reflection is also an important component of continuing to build teaching’s professional knowledge base. A teaching portfolio is an important tool for reflective practice, as well as providing tangible evidence of achievement and development as a teacher.

From theory to practice

1. Develop a visual essay on teaching as a profession. The essay may take a historical perspective or be a contemporary account of a defined period. Be sure to capture teachers and students at work (but ensure you seek permission to photograph and/or identify students and teachers you observe and interact with).

2. Reflect upon your own beliefs about becoming a teacher. Have these beliefs changed over time?

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a national curriculum? What are some of the challenges in implementing changes to curriculum across different jurisdictions?

4. In a small group with your peers, develop a PowerPoint presentation that communicates the principles of pedagogical knowledge. Ideally support your presentation with examples from practice (see the AITSL website for some great examples of classroom practice).

5. Join some professional networks to receive regular updates on issues in education. Some ideas might be to follow appropriate Twitter accounts, to sign up for updates to the Australian Curriculum or to get a student membership for a professional organisation such as the Australian College of Educators (ACE).

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