1

Introduction: Education and Teaching

WHY THIS BOOK?
This is a philosophical essay on the knowledge and know-how of teachers. There are a number of reasons for undertaking such an exercise now, particularly if one wishes, as I do, to reach beyond the immediate philosophy of the education community to address some of the most pressing current worries about the quality of education that are alive in the minds of policymakers, the public and parents, as well as teachers. Since I published *Quality and Education* in (1996a), the focus of public concern about education has undergone something of a shift from a preoccupation with the effectiveness of schools and the possibilities for their improvement (Mortimore *et al.* 1988; Tizard *et al.* 1988) to a growing concern with the quality of teachers and teaching (e.g. Hattie 2009). Although the research on improvement and effectiveness drove much education policy in the last 20 years or so, the results have generally been judged not to have fully lived up to their original promise. ‘School effects’ although significant, are small and the importance of background factors like school intake characteristics (Butler and Webber 2007) and relative social inequalities (Wilkinson 2005; Wilkinson and Pickett 2010), not to mention the stability of ‘value-added’ data (Gorard 2010), continue to exercise a powerful effect on the outcomes of education at the national level.

For the sake of brevity, I will use the term ‘knowledge’ in future to cover know-how as well as propositional and acquaintance knowledge.
2 Teachers’ Know-How

However, it is interesting to note that, despite the apparent importance of background social factors in determining school effectiveness (Gorard 2006), there is evidence that within-school effects are of greater significance than between-school ones (OECD 2013, p. 46). In other words, whatever the background effects, the role of teachers and the ways in which they teach are very important for the progress of pupils and students (see also Tizard et al. 1988), and there are wide differences in individual teacher effectiveness within individual schools. Although the political nature and the culture of a society are critical in contributing to educational achievement, we cannot ignore the possibility that improvements will, to a large degree, be dependent on improving the quality of teachers and teaching. This remains true even when one acknowledges the very important interaction effects that exist between a society and the kind of education system that it is prepared to support. Failure to understand this has led to a rash of policy borrowing in the developed countries which, because it is not based on careful analysis of the background to success in the countries from which the policy is borrowed, has led to limited improvement (cf. Harbourne in Baker et al. 2013).

The focus of policymaking has thus tended to shift towards scrutiny of teacher effectiveness and, inevitably within the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ (shorthand for the UK, US, Australian, Canadian and NZ polities), has led to the reinforcement of performance management systems relying on a mix of command and control and market mechanisms, approaches which, despite their favour with liberally minded politicians and policymakers, have had at best limited success. Not least amongst the problems has been that of the provision of overwhelming incentives to gaming behaviour in an attempt to mitigate the negative consequences of high-stakes accountability systems. I do not believe that there is a general ‘agent–principal’ problem in the public services, but it is very easy to create one with the wrong sort of accountability mechanisms. To use the language of le Grand (2003), if educators like all public servants lie somewhere on the spectrum between altruistic ‘knights’ and egoistic ‘knaves’, the wrong accountability system will not turn knaves into knights but make knaves of knights, hardly a desirable outcome for anyone who is not a fanatical believer in Public Choice Theory (cf. Stretton and Orchard 1994). ‘Knights’ in le Grand’s classification are relatively altruistic employees; ‘knaves’ lie at the egoistic end of the spectrum. There are, of course, intermediate positions between these two.2

2 See also Lynch and Walsh (2003) for a similar classification.
Much the same problem threatens with the new focus on teachers, not because teachers and teaching are unimportant (they undoubtedly are important), but because insufficient attention has been given to the nature of teaching as an occupation, what the nature of teacher expertise consists in, how teachers should be recruited and prepared for their roles, how their careers should develop and what the governance and broader civic role of teachers should be. There has been in particular a disturbing tendency to adopt a regressive model of teaching as a kind of craft, best acquired through a traditional form of apprenticeship, which prepares the teacher to work within a particular school or group of schools, rather than within the education system as a whole. This development is associated with a tendency to fragment schools into small, quasi-private bodies working within a market. This in turn is itself partly the outcome of the misapplication of research into the effectiveness of schools, which misunderstands the relationship between the school and the society in which it exists (see Grant 2009). This craft model will be subjected to critical scrutiny while the kernel of truth that it contains will be, hopefully, extracted.

There is a significant role for philosophy and philosophy of education in particular in enabling us to get clearer answers to these questions. Philosophy enables us to tackle such vital questions as what makes an education a good education and the role of teachers in providing a good education, however the latter is conceived. However, even more than this, it has a critical responsibility to engage with questions concerning the nature of teaching, the kinds of knowledge, know-how and personal characteristics that make good teachers and teaching, and the broader role of teachers within a society. It thus has a crucial role to play in framing the kinds of empirical questions that we should be asking about teachers and teaching, questions that are often taken to be obvious when they are not actually so, unless one takes certain presuppositions about the aims of education and teaching for granted.

Philosophical work on teaching and teachers has been carried out since antiquity and includes such notable contributions as Plato’s *Meno* and Rousseau’s *Émile ou de l’Éducation*, works that continue to exert enormous indirect influence on thinking about the nature of teaching. More recently, the topic has received a lot of attention in the analytical tradition since the 1960s. This chapter builds on work done in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (Hirst and Peters 1970; Kleinig 1982) on the nature of teacher ability and the relationship between teaching and learning. It also pays attention to the work of Passmore.
4 Teachers’ Know-How

(1989), which focussed particularly, but not exclusively, on the various kinds of matter that a teacher should teach and the different modes of teaching. This work will focus on the know-how involved in teaching in the broadest sense of ‘know-how’, which will include the knowledge as well as the various practical abilities that teachers require, including, of course, the way in which the knowledge is integrated and realised in their practical abilities. ‘Know-how’ will also include consideration of what, if any, theoretical knowledge teachers should possess in order to make their practice effective. This is a highly contested area to which I shall devote considerable attention. It bears strongly on the question of whether or not teaching is to be considered as a ‘profession’ as that term is usually understood. Inevitably, the enquiry will be directed at the role of the teacher in formally constituted educational systems where the school plays a central institutional role, but it will approach the role of the schoolteacher through consideration of universal issues concerning teaching and learning, while situating these within the contemporary institutional practice of public school-centred education.3,4

EDUCATION

It is possible to distinguish between a categorial concept of education and particular conceptions that reflect different perspectives on, or interpretations of, that categorial concept. The distinction, which owes much to Gallie’s (1956) account of essentially contested concepts, focusses on the one hand on what is universal about education as a human practice, namely the bringing up of a society’s young to be adults, and on the other hand on local versions of that human practice, which may be subject not just to the requirements of particular beliefs about learning and teaching, but also to the predominant values and social divisions within that society (Winch 1996a). This distinction was endorsed in the later work of R.S. Peters (1982) and has also received some more recent cautious support from adherents to Peters’ categorial view of education (e.g. Barrow 2014).

3 The important work of Higgins (2011) on the relationship between teaching as a profession and the possibility of the flourishing of those who practise it will not be ignored, but detailed discussion of Higgins’ work would take us beyond the focus of this book.
4 The focus of this book will be schoolteaching. It is recognised that teaching has many institutional forms and that conceptions of the teacher may vary accordingly. Space does not allow me to deal with other contexts of teaching than that of the school.
Introduction: Education and Teaching

This study endorses the distinction, while also acknowledging that the boundary between the universal and the local in education is often difficult to keep in mind, even if one is constantly and conscientiously straining to do so. For the purposes of the argument, the categorial concept of education will refer to preparation for adulthood based on:

1. some processes of learning and teaching; and
2. the recognition that the preparation must be for something worthwhile for whom the person in question is deemed to be a suitable subject.

The first requirement is, perhaps, obvious but needs some comment. It is, of course, possible that one can learn without being taught. Could it not be the case that all learning could take place without teaching? This looks like a bare logical possibility, but I argue that on closer inspection it is not. We need to bear in mind that all aspects of human upbringing are to be considered, and that includes the period of great dependency of very young human beings. Young humans are to be introduced not only into a world of practices and institutions that are conceptually constituted but also into a normative order in which values and norms are part of the fabric of that conceptually constituted world. This means, as Baker and Hacker (1985) pointed out, that part of this induction takes place through normative activities, such as training, correction, encouragement, explanation, interpretation, instruction, exemplification and imitation (p. 47 ff.).

This cannot take place without the recognition of authority or entitlement, on the basis of not just knowledge and know-how but also position, of adults who have to take responsibility for ensuring that such processes, in whatever form, actually take place. The youngest of human beings cannot do this for themselves. Even a thinker about education like Rousseau, who believed that any such normative order had to be adopted without constraint and who regarded the role of the traditional pedagogue as subversive of the psyche of the young (see Dent 1988 for a very good account), had to posit a tutor who arranged matters so that his pupil was actually able to learn that which was considered worthwhile by his tutor for him to learn. Although such an individual would not be a teacher in the sense in which that term is commonly understood within our society, it would be nitpicking to say that he did not adopt a pedagogical role. We can conclude provisionally that the categorial concept of education, particularly in respect of condition (1), does seem to entail, at least loosely, that
teachers have an essential role to play even if it is not the role that schoolteachers have generally been thought to play.

The second condition, although very important for the consideration of education more generally, has less importance in considering the place of teachers within the categorial concept of education. However, it is not completely without importance, as there are undoubtedly cases where the education of the children of some classes of people is not to be deemed suitable or in other ways desirable for children of others and vice versa. Thus, the pre-eminent role of the individual tutor of the children of an aristocrat may not be deemed appropriate to those of a day labourer, who may be thought to merit an education that would be regarded with horror by the aristocrat if applied to his own children. This issue will assume some importance when we come to consider different conceptions of the teacher in Chapters 6 to 8.

At this point, however, it is appropriate to address the question of whether education is necessarily a good. This issue was dealt with in some detail in Quality and Education (Winch 1996a), and there is only space to reprise the argument here. Briefly, the aspectual nature of the way in which education is regarded means that what may be seen as a good for some may well be seen as a bad for others. This could be because it will be seen as bad for them individually but also because it could be seen as bad for society that certain groups of children are educated in one way rather than another. It will not do, for example, according to an aristocrat, to educate the child of a slave in the same way as one would educate the child of an aristocrat. In our kind of society, there may well be agitated debate and campaigning about such issues. The important point for our purposes is that education is not to be seen merely as a private good (benefitting the individual and his or her immediate dependents) but also as a public good affecting the well-being of society as a whole. It is thus important that the social effects of different kinds of education are taken into account when assessing what kind of education is important for whom.

5 This is how I propose to talk about public goods. Economists tend to say that, in contrast to private goods, they are non-rivalrous (enjoyment by one individual does not preclude enjoyment by another) and non-excludable (enjoyment is available to all potential beneficiaries irrespective of whether or not they pay for the good) as a technical definition of the concept of a public good (cf. Varian 2006). I do not dispute the usefulness of these criteria but prefer to keep to the broader definition of a public good as one which has societal as well as private benefits. The point goes, of course, for public bads as well.
The second point above, about the aspectuality of education, suggests that we necessarily view education not just from the point of view of the educatee, but also from the point of view of those who will be affected by the education of that person. And, if this claim is correct, we must incorporate into our categorial concept the idea that education does not just impact on the interests of the educatee, but also impacts on those who will be affected by the individual being educated, whether for better or for worse. It seems, then, that the categorial concept will need to recognise a public dimension (in some broad sense of 'public') to education conceived of as a possible benefit.

A CATEGORIAL CONCEPT OF TEACHING

Having tentatively established that teaching and, by implication, teachers play a role in anything that we would call 'education', is there a categorial concept of teaching that could, to some extent, be filled out? Once again, at this early stage, the answers will have to be tentative, but they will point out part of the future direction of this enquiry.

The first point is a well-known one of logical grammar, namely that teaching involves a triadic relationship between teacher, pupil and matter taught. In any teaching relationship,

A (the teacher) teaches B (the pupil) about C (the subject matter).

We need to be a bit careful here, as Passmore (1989) pointed out that the triadic nature of the teaching relationship is often concealed within implicit locutions, which suggest that teaching is, in fact, a dyadic relationship.

After all,

A teaches B (pupil)

or

A teaches C (subject matter)

are by no means ungrammatical or illogical constructions. This brings us to an important methodological point. We are engaged in a grammatical exploration of the concept of teaching in order to gain clarification about what the expertise or know-how of a teacher
consists. This involves considering the usage in the widest possible sense of a range of related concepts, such as teaching, learning, instruction, training, and assessing. We cannot rest satisfied with the surface grammar of particular sentences in particular episodes of use but need to be concerned with a grammatical investigation that involves a perspicuous overview of the conceptual field. This entails, in the example of teaching, that we need to look at how the concept is used, not only in various different contexts but as a whole, taking into account that a grammatical investigation has to be a broad one. We do not assume, for example, that because someone describes an episode of teaching as

A teaches B

that there is nothing that they are teaching them. We wish to look closer at what is actually going on and will establish on investigation that A is teaching B something or other. In such ways, the universal nature of the triadic relationship embodied within the concept of teaching will be maintained, through close attention to the detail of what is happening when such assertions are made within the context in which they are made. We can always ask ‘What is A teaching B?’ and expect an answer in terms of subject matter, know-how or whatever else it might be. Much the same point can be made about

A teaches C,

where C is the subject matter concerned.

The key methodological point about such a grammatical investigation into the concept of teaching is that it aims to go beyond the surface features of usage, not to engage in a logical analysis divorced from usage, but to gain a perspicuous overview of how the concept is used (Hacker 2011), by looking not only at the variety of usage but also at the contextual features of usage that give a particular utterance or conversation the significance that it has. We can conclude from this that it is quite proper to think of teaching as a triadic relationship between teacher(s), pupil(s) and subject matter.

The second point concerns another matter that preoccupied philosophers of education in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. This was
the conceptual relationship between teaching and learning. John Dewey contended that although the impulse to learn had to come from the learner, the teacher had to accommodate that impulse by facilitating the learning of the pupil and, if he failed to do so, could be said to be failing in the task of teaching (Dewey 1938, p. 40). This claim helped to raise the question as to what the conditions were under which teachers could be said to be teaching even if, despite their intentions to do so, not all or even any of their pupils were in fact learning.

It is perfectly true that while teaching is directed towards pupil learning, learning cannot take place without the engagement of the pupil. But Dewey goes too far in suggesting that the primary impulse for learning always comes from the pupil. Many a time, as teachers throughout the ages will testify, they will have been faced with reluctant or even hostile learners, as well as willing and energetic ones who fit the Deweyan mould perfectly. It is misleading to say that if pupils are failing to learn, then the teacher is failing to teach, since it will not always be the case that pupils are trying to learn. They may even be actively or passively resisting attempts to make them do so. This, of course, does not absolve the teacher of responsibility to teach (in the task sense); if anything, it makes the task of teachers more onerous since they are often called upon to teach unwilling or recalcitrant pupils. Inevitably, this makes the specification of success conditions more problematic. Suffice to say for now that I will argue that there is a categorial relationship between teaching and learning, such that teaching involves learning, even though there are different conceptions of teaching available in different times and places and these conceptions are not always consistent with each other. However, if no learning ever took place as a result of teaching, or even if it rarely and incidentally did, we would no longer possess the same concept of teaching as we do now.

Both the issue of the triadic nature of the teaching relationship and the conceptual connection between teaching and learning are

---

6 ‘Learning’ is ambiguous between ‘trying to acquire knowledge, know-how etc.’ and ‘acquiring knowledge, know-how etc.’ There is a similar ambiguity for ‘teaching’. The philosophical discussion of the relationship between teaching and learning has focussed on the latter sense of ‘learning’ and the sense of ‘teaching’ that involves the task of trying to get pupils to learn in this latter sense. Of course, this is a more demanding condition for teaching than merely trying to get pupils to try to acquire knowledge or know-how, and rightly so. Likewise, if teachers are teaching in the achievement sense then necessarily pupils are learning in the achievement sense as well, but the converse does not hold, since successful learning does not necessarily require successful teaching.
important for this study. However, when particular conceptions of teachers and teaching are examined, it is much clearer that there are real differences of substance between the different and contestable conceptions. Discussion of these different conceptions will occupy Chapters 6–8.

AN OUTLINE OF THE REST OF THE BOOK

Chapter 2, ‘Schooling and the Occupational Knowledge of Teaching’, will thus pursue this issue of the relationship between teaching and learning in greater detail and will, in the course of this discussion, try to say something more precise about the teacher as an agent in the context of the occupation of teaching. While this will inevitably involve consideration of historical discussions of the presumed role of the teacher and the assumptions (often themselves contestable) that lie behind the descriptions of this role, it will come on to a consideration of teaching as a social practice within such institutions as schools. Thus, teachers have been variously described as midwives, facilitators and organisers, instructors, mentors, trainers and exemplars. While at least some of these accounts fasten on an important aspect of what it is to be a teacher, it is unlikely that any single one of them will be capable of capturing the whole truth of the matter. Getting clear about the nature of teacher agency will not be easy.

The question is further complicated by the fact that the actions that teachers perform are complex and that reductive accounts of teacher ability (e.g. in terms of skills) will fail to capture what is involved in the work of teachers. The so-called ‘polymorphousness’ of teacher agency will be raised, to be pursued in subsequent chapters. This entails that we take a closer look at the concept of practical knowledge and draw on some recent epistemological work. At this point, we will move from general categorial considerations to a closer examination of education as a formal practice within a social division of labour and within the framework of the institutionalisation of educational practices. It will also be necessary to say something about the success conditions for teaching and thus about the relationship, if any, between a teacher teaching and a learner learning. One challenge will be, however, to try to specify if the pupils are not always as Dewey describes them and as teachers would like them to be; what exactly is the agency of the pupil or student that responds to the intentions of the teacher, since if anything is clear, it is that pupils must play some role in their learning, even in conditions where they
are reluctant or unwilling learners. Short of being a purely passive recipient of brainwashing, there must be some assent and some effort on the part of an unwilling pupil if anything is to be learned. One of the challenges for understanding teaching as an occupation is the characterisation of their role in such conditions.

Chapter 3, ‘Dimensions of Expertise and Their Relevance to Teaching’, will examine the claim that teaching is an occupation in which it is possible to gain expertise. The related claim that it is a profession is also difficult to interpret, and to do so one needs points of comparison with other occupations in order to establish whether or not this claim makes sense and, indeed, whether or not it is helpful in understanding the role of teachers in contemporary societies. In order to do this, we will look at the epistemology of professional and vocational action, and try to map out what it involves and where teaching falls within this mapping exercise. It will be shown that there are some particular difficulties in tying down the nature of teacher expertise and consequently in characterising teaching as a typical profession. Does teaching fit the standard conception of the professions? *Inter alia* it will be necessary to examine what, if any, sense we can make of the profession–occupation distinction.

Chapter 4, ‘Towards a Typology of Occupations’, will look at different kinds of occupations – craftworker, executive technician and professional technician – and seek to establish what is involved in each and where teaching as an occupation might fit within these conceptions. It will be shown that a case can be made out for teaching belonging to any single one of these categories, and consequently even within a particular time and place there may exist vigorously contested interpretations of what a proper characterisation of a teacher might be. At this point, we have gone beyond what can usefully be said in a universal sense about teachers and teaching and have arrived at the point at which it is necessary to explore different, and in some cases contested, conceptions of what it is, or what it should be, to be a teacher.

This issue of classification is complicated by the fact that there are both compatibilities and incompatibilities between the different conceptions and that these need to be explored. For example, it is not clear that the craftworker and the professional technician conceptions are in all respects incompatible with each other. Neither is

---

7 I use the term ‘pupil’ rather than ‘student’ to reflect the fact that the primary focus of this book is on schoolteaching. This is not just a matter of nomenclature since it can be argued that teachers have special responsibilities *vis-à-vis* pupils that lecturers do not have *vis-à-vis* students.
the role of educational theory irrelevant to the executive and professional technical conceptions, although it is relevant in very different ways in each case. Although the craft conception emphasises local knowledge, tacit practical knowledge, direct acquaintance with the materials of work, experience gained through some form of apprenticeship and the ability to make situational judgements, there are good grounds for supposing that these are also valuable attributes for the professional technical conception, even though they are not, by themselves, sufficient. On the other hand, the ‘executive technician’ conception, which involves teachers following mandated procedures which, at least notionally, have a research base justifying them, may well be incompatible with the first two conceptions. It should be emphasised that these three types are in fact theoretical constructs and constitute ideal types, which will be more or less realised in particular forms of education. Although critical of the ‘pure’ craft conception of teaching, the chapter will, however, emphasise the importance of craft in good quality teaching and will seek to understand its scope and extent. The chapter will go on to consider the role of teacher as a professional technician, namely a teacher with the ability to form judgements and to act based on understanding of a body of systematic (theoretical) knowledge (a ‘technician’ in the sociological literature on professionalism), as a technologist, or someone capable of contributing to the development of the application of the underlying theory, and as a researcher, someone contributing to the core areas of the underlying theory.

Chapter 5, ‘The Elements of Teacher Knowledge and Know-How’, examines the elements of teacher expertise, here taken to mean also the knowledge, know-how and personal characteristics that are required of an effective teacher. The dimensions covered include the subject knowledge that a teacher requires, usually the subject studied at secondary or tertiary level that the teacher intends to teach to pupils, but also the applicable knowledge of, for example, applied linguistics that it may be necessary for a primary specialist in literacy to acquire. It will then go on to consider applied subject knowledge, or those subjects that involve the acquisition of know-how on the part of pupils rather than strictly academic knowledge. It is, of course, misleading to suggest that there are sharp distinctions to be made here, since even in practical subjects, pupils will need to acquire some factual knowledge in order to be able to operate and the teachers will require some such knowledge in order to effectively teach pupils. The issue of how much more such knowledge than a pupil’s knowledge a teacher requires will also be addressed in this chapter. The chapter
will next consider what Shulman (1986) has called ‘pedagogic content knowledge’, or the knowledge how to render subject knowledge into relevant curricular structures and effective pedagogic strategies. It is argued that the complexities of this topic have not been sufficiently addressed in the extant literature.

Knowledge of how to teach effectively and how to enable pupils to learn effectively is also thought to be part of a competent teacher’s repertoire. Such knowledge, rightly or wrongly, is thought to be derivable from systematic empirical enquiry. However, claims to such knowledge are notoriously unreliable, and not just the specifics of knowledge claims but the very possibility of acquiring such knowledge is often contested. This chapter will, among other matters, examine whether such claims can be justified. At this point, some of the more intuitive elements of a teacher’s know-how will be introduced. The idea of developing a conception of oneself as a teacher and of thinking about one’s strengths and weaknesses as a member of the profession will be distinguished from theories about how teachers teach and pupils learn. Finally, the sense in which an important part of teacher knowledge is based on the ability to size up complex situations and to make effective in situ judgements and the sense in which these can be said to be moral judgements will also be considered.

In Chapter 6, ‘Teaching as a Craft Occupation’, the popular and influential idea of teaching as a form of craftwork along the lines of pottery, smithing or carpentry is considered in detail. There are powerful (and, in my view, unassailable) reasons for thinking that there is a significant craft element in teaching. However, it does not follow from the fact that it is a craft that it does not rely on systematic or theoretical knowledge in making some professional judgements. In order to examine the cogency of this idea, it is necessary to look at what is involved in a traditional craft, in contrast to what we would now call a ‘technical occupation’, which explicitly depends on systematic knowledge as a support for and legitimation of professional judgement. It is then possible to get a better idea of the extent to which teaching can plausibly be said to fall into this category. One clear point where examination is needed is in considering the extent to which the teacher’s subject knowledge can be effectively deployed in the context of purely craft know-how. We will consider an illustrative example to bring out what is at stake in this debate. Anyone who wishes to take the idea of a craft seriously needs also to acknowledge that the practice of a craft involves more than skill. We will therefore need to carefully consider the other kinds of know-how
which we might reasonably expect from teachers and the extent to which they can meaningfully be developed as part of a craft. Such know-how, sometimes described as ‘adverbial verbs’ (Ryle 1979) or ‘transversal abilities’, will need to be considered in relation to the skills that are also an essential part of the repertoire of the teacher as craftworker.

In this connection, it is also necessary to consider the role of situational judgement and the moral responsibilities of the teacher in the classroom, not just in terms of a general occupational instruction to benevolence but also in the fine-grained detail of everyday classroom interaction. It will also be necessary to consider what is meant by the claim that a craftworker is in possession of a particular kind of knowledge, namely ‘tacit knowledge’, which is essential to their overall know-how. While not denying that there is such a thing, a generally deflationary and demystifying account of it will be given, which will make use of what Luntley (2012) has termed ‘activity concepts’.

Finally, in dealing with the craft conception, it is necessary to deal with the often-made and superficially persuasive claim that it is simply commonsense that teaching is a craft. This will entail both an examination of the ‘commonsense’ claim and the view that there is a popularly validated conception of teaching that commonsense can yield for us. This will involve using the Gramscian distinction between good sense and common-sense and examining the ways in which commonsense views about teaching masquerade as good sense when in fact they are very often distillations and simplifications of highly theoretical and contestable views.

Chapter 7, ‘The Teacher as Executive Technician’, deals with the currently popular ‘Taylorised’ conception of teaching. Contrary to the craft view is the perception that there is a body of systematic knowledge about learning and pedagogy that can be pressed into service in the practice of teaching. However, since it is not practical (or perhaps even desirable) that teachers be acquainted with this body of knowledge, there needs to be some form of translation that allows the deliverances of theory to be reconstituted into empirically mandated normative procedures for realising the desirable outcome of teaching, namely pupil learning. On this conception, there is a division of labour between, on the one hand, the policymaker and the researcher who interrogate the research and devise optimal procedures for realising the ends of teaching based on that research, and on the other hand the teacher, whose job it is to put those procedures into effect without necessarily having much appreciation
of their underlying justification. The judgement of the teacher, on this conception, consists of the ability to put such procedures into effect in an appropriate way so as to realise the aims of a lesson or scheme of work. In Oakeshott’s (1962) terminology, technical knowledge is to be applied without any admixture of practical knowledge. Situational judgement is minimised, making compatibility between the craft and executive technician conceptions of teaching problematic. Lest this be thought an unlikely model of teaching, illustrative examples from both developed and developing countries will be given, including the English literacy and numeracy strategies and the concept of a ‘parateacher’ increasingly popular in some quarters in India and other countries.

Chapter 8, ‘The Teacher as a Professional Technician’, tackles the issue of what it is to be a ‘professional’ teacher. It is routinely claimed that teachers are, or should be, ‘professionals’. There is less clarity concerning what this should mean in practice. One difficulty is that teaching is often characterised in ways that make it difficult to effect a direct comparison with other occupations described as professions, which lay claim to a systematic knowledge base on which professional judgments are formed. On the face of it, teaching should fall comfortably into this category, but the claim that there is such a systematic knowledge base is vigorously disputed, both within and outside the occupation. Certainly, it is very often claimed that teachers should not be reduced to the role of ‘technicians’, which rather begs the question as to exactly how they should be characterised.

This chapter will examine this issue, paying particular attention to the claim that teaching has a knowledge base that is capable of informing professional judgements. It will distinguish between conceptual, normative and empirical theory and also take account of the ethical commitment and personal development of teachers as part of their occupational make-up. The conclusion will be definite. Teaching is capable of being a profession along the lines of other traditional professions, in virtue of its possession of a knowledge base. However, care must be taken to give an accurate account of just what this knowledge base consists. It turns out to be highly complex and to have considerable implications for the initial and continuing education of teachers, a theme that will be taken up again in Chapter 10. No one should underestimate the challenges involved in giving a coherent account of the systematic knowledge that underpins teaching, and there are powerful arguments against such a position, to be found, for example, in the work of Wilfred Carr and Anthony O’Hear, not to mention more implicitly in the work of Robin
Barrow, David Carr and even Donald Schön. These arguments will be addressed in the course of the chapter.

Chapter 9, ‘Teaching as an Occupation’, considers the nature of teaching as an occupation in a broad sense. The literature on teaching has been perhaps excessively focussed on work in the classroom. This is undoubtedly the core of teachers’ work and is seen to be so by them. However, school-based education is a complex area with an elaborate division of labour within it. There is a real question as to whether or not teaching should be ‘Taylorised’ with the essential division of labour giving way to a fragmentation of function, leaving teachers in the classroom but largely without a role in the broader business of teaching and education. Therefore, this chapter will address the issue of teaching as a career and the extent to which a career path can be developed that encompasses engagement with the broader functions of teaching.

There are two important issues to be considered when trying to get clear about a career in teaching. The first is concerned with the knowledge, know-how and practical characteristics required to assume roles beyond that of classroom teacher. The second is that of what might broadly be called the ‘civic’ role of teaching, by which I mean those aspects of teaching that involve both intra- and inter-occupational discourse and negotiation, including the governance and the management of educational institutions. These two functions are both very important but need to be kept conceptually (and probably, to some extent, functionally) distinct. It is a commonplace but nevertheless important observation that expertise in teaching children in a classroom does not translate readily into expertise and virtue in dealing with adults, including one’s colleagues in teaching. Yet the profession of teaching needs to be led, and it needs people who can lead it. I will not take the view that teachers should be the exclusive group who do this but will maintain that they form a very important ‘college’ of expertise and experience within the wider society on matters of teaching and education, who should always have an important role in curriculum development, inspection, assessment, governance and even policy making. An outline of what teacher careers might look like were such considerations to be taken seriously will be given. Finally, consideration will be given to the stability and continuity of the teaching corps, and it will be argued that a high degree of both is necessary for the health of a public education system.

8 I hope to have shown by this point that teaching should indeed be recognised as a profession in an important sense of that term.
In Chapter 10, ‘Teacher Education’, consideration of the education of teachers brings us back to the core issues of teacher knowledge, know-how and expertise, which were the substance of Chapters 4–7. At the time of writing, the education (or, as some would prefer, the training) of teachers is a matter of lively political debate in many countries including the UK. There is little consensus on what it should consist of, and this lack of consensus reflects the lack of agreement about what kind of occupation teaching is. This chapter will make use of the results of the discussion in Chapters 5–7 and the conception of the teacher as a professional that was developed in Chapter 7 to outline what an appropriate form of teacher education for such a professional would look like were it to be thoroughly addressed, taking into account also what we can safely consider to be the principal characteristics of a good teacher.

Comparison will be made between the ways in which teacher education is conducted in various countries, including England, Finland, Germany and India. Three issues of particular importance emerge. The first concerns the relationship between teacher preparation in the workplace, practicum and classroom. Closely entangled with this is the question as to whether or not the intending teacher is best placed as an intern (supernumerary) or as a junior employee (an apprentice). The second concerns the relationship between the initial stages of teacher education, the consolidation phase of the early years of a teaching career and continuing education throughout a career, related to the taking on of further responsibilities as outlined in Chapter 8. The general form of the argument will be that there should be not only a careful articulation of the different loci of teacher education at each phase (internal articulation) but also a careful articulation of the initial, consolidation and career elements of teacher education (external articulation), taking into account the importance of stability and continuity in teaching argued for in Chapter 8.

The third issue concerns the balance between practical and academic preparation within the overall programme, particularly of initial teacher education. The argument here is that there should be an analytical separation between the apprenticeship versus internship question (which certainly does raise questions of quality) and the nature of the academic contribution to the programme. It will be maintained that there are considerable potential advantages to intending teachers becoming employees, provided certain other conditions are met, but there may well be considerable logistical and financial problems with ‘massifying’ an apprenticeship system of this kind. On the other hand, whether a society opts for apprenticeship or
internship (where the intending teacher is supernumerary to the staff establishment of the school and is not an employee), the question remains as to the balance of theory and practice within the phase of Initial Teacher Education (ITE).

The argument of the chapter is, then, drawing on the argument presented particularly in Chapters 8 and 9, that teacher education should be of reasonable length and should consist of closely integrated periods of academic study of pedagogic content knowledge, and educational theory, both philosophical and empirical, culminating in more lightly supervised probationary practice. Continuing Teacher Education (CTE) should continue the academic rigour that ought to be found in ITE, but the balance between time spent on academic work and on school-focussed work should be tilted to the latter provided that the practice-based element is at all times informed by and interwoven with a high level of academic content. It will be argued that amongst the advantages of conducting teacher education in this way will be the reduction of attrition and the development of experienced teachers capable of assuming significant leadership positions within the profession and also of playing a significant role in the education of new generations of teachers.

It is quite legitimate and indeed natural to ask whether such an extended discussion sheds any light on the question of what makes a good teacher. The general argument in Chapter 11, ‘A Good Teacher’, drawing on the discussion in previous sections, will be that it does. It is evident that there should be a healthy relationship between the teaching that teachers do and the learning that pupils succeed in accomplishing, even if the exact nature of this relationship is at times difficult to pin down with complete precision. But most questions in life cannot be answered with complete precision, and we should content ourselves with achieving the greatest precision possible with the subject matter with which we are dealing, itself no mean achievement.

We cannot address the issue without considering the aims of education systems, bearing in mind that these will, inevitably, reflect the conception of education embodied in them and the perception of what it is morally acceptable for a teacher to do in pursuit of the goal of pupil learning. Another issue that deserves great attention is the often-misunderstood relationship between the practice of teaching and the use of assessment. The centrality of teachers assessing pupils as part of their practice will be argued for, and it will further be argued that the assessing that teachers have to do as part of their work should be kept distinct from the assessment of teachers themselves,
their schools and the education systems within which they work. Strong philosophical and empirical considerations are brought to bear in support of this contention, and the implications of the argument for the education and professional development of teachers are drawn out. This discussion will itself shed some light on the question as to whether, if a teacher is teaching, a pupil should be learning. The inclination and ability to assess whether or not a pupil is learning are, as Flew (1986) argued, indicators of the seriousness with which teachers approach their work.

The final chapter, ‘Some outstanding Issues’, will deal with a number of outstanding issues that affect the nature and perception of teaching in the early-twenty-first century: discipline, reward and punishment as a system for managing the teaching force; retention and attrition of teachers; the allure for policymakers of the idea of ‘charismatic’ teaching and educational leadership; and the problems of teaching in a consumer society. These issues will not be dealt with completely *de novo*, but will draw considerably on the arguments of previous chapters. Thus, the treatment of discipline will draw on the arguments of Chapters 2 and 8 but will also consider the role of contemporary society and culture in assisting or impeding teachers from their role of ensuring that their pupils learn. No easy answers will be suggested, but the nature of the problems with indications of the direction of solutions will be offered. It will also be pointed out that certain currently favourite policy ideas, such as strict teacher accountability and the casting of teachers as providers of services, will actually be contributing to rather than reducing such problems.

This completes a synopsis of the book. It is not intended as a completely comprehensive account of teachers’ knowledge. In particular, it does not dwell in detail on the ethics of teaching, not because this is not an important topic but because to do so properly would have extended considerably, if not doubled, its length.