Theresa Bourke · Deborah Henderson ·
Rebecca Spooner-Lane ·
Simone White   *Editors*

Reconstructing the Work of Teacher Educators

Finding Spaces in Policy Through Agentic Approaches—Insights from a Research Collective

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Dedication

At a time of great uncertainty and change, we would like to dedicate this book to all teacher educators across the globe. Teacher educators are an increasingly diverse occupational group and whilst the focus of this volume has been largely on university-based teacher educators, we acknowledge the work and dedication of our school-based teacher educator colleagues who support so much of the teaching profession whilst also teaching their own school students. We acknowledge also our First Nation teacher educators who are supporting both novice and experienced teacher educators alike in understanding rich cultural history and knowledges. Working together across the different groups will be more important than ever as we continue to navigate new policy reform waves.

All four of us would also like to dedicate this book to our families who continue to support us and give us the inspiration to strive to make a positive contribution to teacher education and the teaching profession. We also want to acknowledge the invaluable support we've received from two colleagues during the book project. Dr. Peter Churchward provided thoughtful assistance for the book from its inception. We really appreciate Peter's dedication to our project and to all matters related to teacher education. Julie Nickerson guided us during the book's final phase to production. Julie's insightful editing and meticulous attention to detail has been crucial to finalising the manuscript. Thank you, dear colleagues.

Theresa Bourke
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Foreword

This book began in lively debates and provocations of the field in the Teacher Education and Professional Learning (TEPL) Research Group in the Faculty of Education, Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane, Australia. As co-leaders of the research group, we were adamant that scholarship should not only represent research in the field of teacher education but also provoke and irritate accepted understandings and principles. Notable amongst these orthodoxies were the relationships between policy and teacher educators' practices in their courses, assessment and pedagogies.

At an initial writing retreat in the mountains south of Brisbane, we invited TEPL members to submit questions and conundrums to a panel with the intention of provoking debate and perspectives that spoke back to entrenched views. The conversations continued into monthly research group meetings and culminated in this TEPL-sponsored volume that is both informative and provocative. Whilst all current reforms are not covered in the book such as LANTITE, entry standards, or an emphasis on teaching phonics during the early years of schooling, the chapters range across vexed topics such as teaching performance assessment, the introduction of primary-level content specialisations and pre-service teacher digital capabilities. Underpinning all the chapters is recognition of the 'work' and commitment of teacher educators to their respective areas of expertise and their willingness to hold their ground against reductive and de-professionalising policy agendas. This TEPL book presents their efforts to 'find space' using agentic approaches to recontextualise policy in line with their own professional priorities and, in so doing, the book provides exemplars of new ways of thinking and agentic selves within the field of teacher education.

Thanks go to the members of the TEPL at QUT group who conceptualised the book; negotiated the proposal with Springer as the preferred publisher; and worked with contributors who extend across the world and bring a vast array of experiences and expertise to the discussion: Associate Professor Theresa Bourke, Associate Professor Deborah Henderson, Dr. Rebecca Spooner-Lane and Professor Simone

White. As co-leaders of the TEPL research group, we are proud of this initiative and are sure that the book will make a contribution to the field of teacher education and professional learning.

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Margaret Kettle
Jo Lunn Brownlee
Deborah Henderson

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Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Theresa Bourke is an Associate Professor at the Queensland University of Technology. She has held several leadership positions including Academic Programme Director, Course Coordinator and Academic Lead, Research. She teaches in several curriculum and discipline units, specifically in geography. Her research interests include professional standards, professionalism, accreditation processes, impact, primary specialisations, assessment in geographical education and teaching to, about and for diversity. She is currently the President Elect for the Australian Teacher Educators' Association (ATEA).

Deborah Henderson is an Associate Professor at the Queensland University of Technology where she lectures in history curriculum and in social education curriculum. Her interests include the development of historical thinking, intercultural understanding, developing global capability and values education in the curriculum together with transnational/international pre-service teacher education. Deborah's work as a teacher educator was recognised nationally by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council with an ALTC Teaching Citation for her contributions to student learning in 2009 and an ALTC Teaching Excellence Award in 2010. She is the Australasian Regional Editor for Discover Education (Springer).

Rebecca Spooner-Lane is a Senior Lecturer at the Queensland University of Technology. Rebecca is the Director of the Quality Teaching Performance Assessment (QTPA) for pre-service teacher education and three partner universities in Australia. In 2020 she was awarded the QUT Vice Chancellor's Excellence Award for her leadership of the QTPA. Rebecca prepares pre-service teachers for the QTPA and provides professional learning to teacher educators to assess the QTPA. She has a keen interest in the professional development and career progression of teachers from graduate to lead teacher. She has worked on a number of projects investigating mentoring, school

leadership and school improvement, and highly accomplished and lead teacher certi-fication. Rebecca is currently investigating the impact of the QTPA on the classroom readiness of graduate teachers.

Simone White is an Adjunct Professor at the Queensland University of Tech-nology and the Head of Education at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT). Simone's area of expertise is teacher education and rural education and her publications, research and teaching are all focussed on the key question of how to best prepare teachers and leaders for diverse communities (both local and global). Her current research areas focus on rural education, teacher education policy, teacher development, professional experience and building and maintaining univer-sity–school/community partnerships. Simone is a past President of the *Australian Teacher Education Association* (ATEA) and had a previous role as Vice President of the *Society for the Provision for Education in Rural Australia* (SPERA). Through her collective work, Simone aims to connect research, policy and practice in ways that bring teachers and school and university-based teacher educators together and break down traditional borders between academics, policymakers, communities and practitioners.

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Part I
Introduction

Chapter 1
Teacher Educators as Agents of Change: New Tools as Enablers

Theresa Bourke, Deborah Henderson, Rebecca Spooner-Lane, and Simone White

Abstract This chapter explores the notion of teacher educators as agents of change against an education policy reform backdrop of greater scrutiny, standardisation, and accountability than ever before. The following twelve chapters of this volume, all written by teacher educators across various parts of the world, are discussed and analysed using Margaret Archer's perspective of critical realist social theory. This theory provided a useful framework for drawing the parts and chapters in this volume together; looking for the ways in which teacher educators have made sense of their personal, cultural, and structural contexts; and analysing the types of enablements and constraints that each social context offered them. The individual chapters and collective volume offer the wider teacher educator community illustrative ways in which teacher educators have 'found space in policy through agentic approaches' and taken action, even when social structures sought to normalise or restrain their practices. The analysis revealed a variety of ways teacher educators used their knowledge of policy, partnerships, and scholarly disposition to navigate through a highly regulated space. Such agentive practices provide a hopeful stance for facing the next waves of teacher education reform ahead.

Keywords Teacher educators · Policy reform · Agency · Critical realist social theory · Enablements

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1.1 Introduction

With a global focus on the important role teachers play in a nation's social and economic well-being and productivity, teacher educators—those who prepare the teaching workforce—should be highly regarded and keenly sought out for their views on teacher education and the best ways to support young learners. Unfortunately, this does not appear to be the case, with teacher educators either largely marginalised, side-lined, silenced (Bourke, 2019; Zeichner, 2014; Zeichner & Bier, 2013), or heavily criticised by politicians. As noted in Chap. 7 in this volume, 'enemies of promise' and the 'blob' were terms used to describe education academics by the then UK Minister for Education, Gove (2013). The Australian Education Minister (Tudge, 2021), as cited in The Australian, June 22, 2021) expressed concern that 'prospective teachers are emerging from university education ill-prepared for the classroom'. While such strong critique has not necessarily occurred in all contexts, nevertheless the debates and reforms that have ensued about teacher education have tended to be conducted largely in the absence of teacher educators' perspectives and expertise.

Teacher educators now find themselves increasingly in an untenable position, charged with implementing the very reform policies they know to be often most problematic to the very young people they are reported to be supporting. This issue has become greater as policy borrowing continues to increase from country to country unabated with greater consequences for the most disadvantaged students, their families, and communities. How to disrupt this dire situation and reposition teacher educators as a powerful voice for the teaching profession is a key focus for this volume. How to support teacher educators to also become more agentive actors to ensure all students have maximum learning opportunities throughout their lives is another key purpose.

The following twelve chapters in this volume are all written by teacher educators who explore the challenges and opportunities brought about by various policy reforms set against the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) as outlined by Sahlberg (2011) and the Global Education Measurement Industry (GEMI) as coined by Biesta (2015). Both of these terms are discussed further in this chapter. Teacher educators in this volume document, discuss, and critique various reform policies and outline the ways in which they worked to ensure positive learning outcomes for their graduates and the students they will teach. Sharing and analysing these stories, theories, practices, and approaches is one explicit strategy we (authors of this chapter and editors of this book) are using as teacher educators ourselves, keen to help both novice and experienced teacher educators alike take a step towards a more agentive profession. Before exploring the themes, it is important to further outline the reform backdrop from which teacher educators are currently operating.

1.2 Teacher Education Reforms and the Cycle of Rapid Change

For many decades now, education has been viewed as key to growing a nation's productivity. Globalisation has in turn led to increased collaboration and competition between countries keen to compare themselves through various global metrics such as, for example, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD's) Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). According to Paine (2019):

> the increased movement of people and ideas, heightened connections, and the spread and intensification of the links together are reshaping not only how we do education, but how we think about it. (p. 686)

The rapid sharing of knowledge internationally has resulted in both teacher education policy borrowing and lending (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010; Waldow, 2012; Wermke & Höstfält, 2014) and was coined the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) by Sahlberg (2011). Moreover, the borrowing of policy initiatives from other countries (Wermke & Höstfält, 2014) further legitimises the argument for the required change.

Since the late twentieth century, a 'quality' teacher reform agenda has pervaded OECD countries including Australia, the USA, England, Ireland, and New Zealand, with the notion of increasing 'quality' teachers as a central policy for improving a nation's ability to compete in an international arena (Cochran-Smith et al., 2013). This focus has then resulted in the implementation of a number of new accountability reforms in initial teacher education (ITE) programs and the preparation of their teachers. With each educational reform review, the improvement of student outcomes is directly linked to the 'improvement of teachers via the improvement of teacher education' (Bates, 2004, p. 119).

Globally, organisations such as the World Bank and the OECD have further influenced the public's perception of the importance of the quality of education systems and their teachers (Cochran-Smith et al., 2013; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007). The reporting of student achievement against PISA has only increased pressure on governments and policy makers to further respond to declining test scores, and the intensification continues unabated. For example, in the UK, Ofsted school inspections provide governments and policy makers with data about the performativity of their teachers and schooling system. Similarly in Australia, standardised testing of students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 using the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) has had a significant impact on the accountability of teacher education programs in preparing teachers with the knowledge and skills to improve student learning and achievement (Adie & Wyatt-Smith, 2018; Cochran-Smith et al., 2013; Tatto & Pippin, 2017). Biesta (2015) has coined this intense focus on testing, standardisation, and accountability as the Global Education Measurement Industry (GEMI).

In the Australian context, as an example, the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) led a major review of ITE programs following what was described as perceived public concern about the quality of its graduating teachers.

The review noted a lack of consistency and rigour among ITE institutions' assessment of pre-service teachers' (PSTs) 'classroom readiness' upon graduation (Alexander, 2018). Policy initiatives resulting from recommendations from the TEMAG report titled *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* (TEMAG, 2014) focused on increasing regulatory and quality control mechanisms of ITE programs. The proposed reforms influenced every aspect of ITE—including selection for entry into programs, the structure of professional experience, primary teachers' specialised knowledge and practices, assessment of 'classroom readiness', and the requirement for programs to demonstrate impact on graduate capability and impact of graduates on the students they teach. Furthermore, the national implementation of a literacy and numeracy test as a mandatory condition of graduation was also implemented with the ITE reform agenda. Such reforms have placed greater pressure and workload on teacher educators charged with implementing these changes. Most recently, the Next Step: Report of the Quality of Initial Teacher Education Review (Australian Government, 2021) has reiterated the discourse around quality, calling for further reforms in the future.

With the accelerating education policy reforms globally, much has been written about the need for educators to be critical of neo-liberal agendas that prioritise accountability regimes, standardise high-stakes testing, and normalise assumptions that such practices are indicators of teacher efficacy and student learning outcomes in public education systems (Apple, 2013; Ball, 2008; Ravitch, 2016; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Thrupp, 2018). Such reforms have led to an 'impoverished understanding of educational accountability' (Reid, 2019, p. 39) with a deficit discourse which has the potential to de-professionalise educators by undermining their expertise and their agency (Bourke, 2019). It is against this backdrop that many of the authors of this volume are writing.

Few teacher educators need to be reminded of the ways in which the ideas and practices of neo-liberal policy prescription prompt disquiet and uncertainty on the one hand and the determination to make a difference on the other (Britzman, 2007). It is the latter that is of concern in this chapter and book. That is, emphasis is placed on *how* teacher educators are agentive in their work, and how, through collaboration with their peers and by forming partnerships, they can make principled choices to fine-tune their practice for the benefit of their learners, who in turn will be teachers in schools. Indeed, there is an increasing body of literature to indicate that educators are agentive and finding space to challenge the constraints of neo-liberal policy agendas. Before further exploring the ways in which teacher educators took an agentive stance, we unpack further the notion of agency and what it means in light of a teacher educator's standpoint.

1.3 Notions of Agency

Agency has been, and continues to be, a much-theorised construct. As the authors in this volume draw from different frameworks in their respective chapters, some early conceptions of agency and selected 'layers and lenses' (Loutzenhesier & Heer, 2017,

p. 330) employed in the literature to examine it are now briefly discussed. Conceptions of human agency can be traced back to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Enlightenment debates about what constitutes an individual's freedom and ability to make rational choices. At this time, long-established traditions were challenged by the work of the English philosopher and empiricist (Locke, 1978). Locke's emphasis on the capacity of human beings to shape the circumstances in which they live and derive knowledge from experience prompted social thinkers such as Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, among others, to envisage agency in an individualist and calculative conception of action. This notion of agency was then explicitly linked to education in the work of Kant (1992) who viewed the latter as a process through which individuals develop their rational capacities and make independent judgements. Kant posited this process as the basis for agentic and self-directed action.

In recent times, the concept of agency has been utilised as a means of understanding how educators might interrogate policy and enact practice (Lasky, 2005; Leander & Osborne, 2008).

From a traditional sociological perspective of human action, the agency is construed as a personal attribute residing within the individual as a capacity to act upon. This view of agency as a property for action or inaction that is assumed to dwell within the individual has been critiqued from various standpoints. Davies (1990) problematises the notion that individuals are able to exercise agency at their will, arguing that agency may be 'discursively constructed as a positioning made available to some but not others' (Davies, 1990, p. 341) in particular contexts. Zembylas (2003) extends this critique of agency as a variable in social action. He refers to political and cultural contextual constraints to remind us that agency 'cannot be isolated from the dynamics of power from which it is constructed' (Zembylas, 2003, p. 221). Concomitantly, structural factors and individual psychological perspectives are emphasised by researchers keen to investigate how an educator's capacity to be agentive is mediated by the policy and administrative demands of the workplace (Chisholm et al., 2019; Eteläpelto et al., 2013; Hilferty, 2008).

Others broaden this view of agency to emphasise the multiple temporal and relational factors at play in particular settings under certain conditions and circumstances (Biesta & Tedder, 2006). This focus on how individuals act *by means of* their environment emphasises that agency results from 'the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations' (Biesta & Tedder, 2007, p. 137). Referred to as an ecological perspective of agency (Priestley et al., 2015), this broader view of agency builds on the work of Emirbayer and Mische (1998) and their notion of agency as something an individual achieves rather than an internal attribute and/or something an individual has. When the agency is conceived as an achievement, it is possible to understand why an individual can be agentive in one context but not in another.

In brief, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) contend that agency should be understood in a three-dimensional way that encompasses influences from the past, orientations towards the future, and engagement with the present. Hence, the agency can be conceived as a:

temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and 'acted out' in the present (as a capacity to contextualise past habits and future projects with the contingencies of the moment). (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 963)

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) refer to these three dimensions of agency as the iterational, the projective, and the practical-evaluative dimensions, respectively. Priestly et al.'s (2015) ecological model draws from these understandings of agency as 'phenomenon/doing' (Tao & Gao, 2017, p. 347) to emphasise that educators can work together in agentive ways. Put simply, the agency is concerned with repertoires for manoeuvre, or the possibilities for different forms of action available to educators, at particular points in time. This brief discussion of the literature on understanding agency is further contextualised in practice by the teacher educators who share their research in the chapters that follow.

The stories are shared and grouped together across four key parts, which are now briefly discussed.

1.4 Interrogating Policy and Enacting Practice: Identifying Agentic Themes

Just as noted by Lasky (2005) and Leander and Osbourne (2008) in Sect. 1.3, the agency has been viewed as a means of understanding how education might interrogate policy and enact practice. Drawing from this view, this volume interrogates how teacher educators took an agentive stance through increased scrutiny and accountability regimes and used a variety of strategies to do so. These strategies have been analysed both in terms of the common themes emerging across chapters and also the common tools to do so using critical realist social theory (Archer, 1995, 2000, 2003). The themes we uncovered are used to structure the book, and the tools are offered as a way to help provide specific examples. First, we discuss the key themes.

1.4.1 Mechanisms of Agentive Work

The remainder of this volume has been structured into four themes or parts (Parts II–V), each heading highlighting and reflecting the different mechanisms of agentive work uncovered across the collective triad (each part has three chapters). In Part II, aptly titled *Doing More Than Ticking Accountability Boxes—New Ways to Respond to Reforms in ITE*, the three chapters share the ways in which teacher educators worked both within standardised ITE reforms but also found ways to creatively enact policy for the benefit of their students and the profession.

The first two chapters by Bourke and Mills (Chap. 2) and Swars Auslander and Myers (Chap. 3), writing from Australia and the USA, respectively, are focused on the

policy imperative of developing specialisation/specialists in primary and elementary classrooms, respectively. Bourke and Mills report on a case study of policy enactment of primary specialisations in science, first presented as a problematic area in the TEMAG reforms and then outlined more specifically in Program Standard 4.4 of the Australian accreditation processes for ITE in 2015. The authors, drawing on British sociologist Stephen Ball's policy enactment approach, outline their work as policy actors at a large metropolitan university in Australia.

Specifically, Chap. 2 outlines the decision-making processes of the Academic Program Director (APD) and the Unit Coordinator (UC) as they operationalised the science primary specialisation policy into practice. In this highly regulated space, the work of these two policy actors showed how their reflexive decision-making opened a space for agentic ways of working. Despite being constrained by various factors such as the boundaries of accreditation stipulations, a surprising amount of agency was realised as interpretations moved from one policy actor to the next. The authors did not shy away from the accountability imposed by accreditation but rather in line with Cochran-Smith et al.'s (2018) and Zeichner's (2020) notions around democratic rather than regulatory accountability saw their work as 'characterised by intelligent professional responsibility and agency' and called for 'flexible tertiary education structures that enable innovative approaches to reform that go beyond "ticking accountability boxes".

Swars Auslander and Myers (Chap. 3) write in an associated field of research, this time against escalating calls by prominent mathematics education organisations in the USA, for advanced certification and preparation of specialist teachers in elementary mathematics. The chapter presents a meta-analysis of the 'recursive line of inquiry' that these teacher educators have committed to over the last 11 years to implement an effective preparation program focused on learner-centredness. As the authors state, 'This learner-centredness differs from the ways in which many elementary mathematics classrooms function in the USA'. Here, the authors are finding space in policies such as *No Child Left Behind* and its successor *Every Child Succeeds* which they claim have 'too often led to mathematics teaching and learning that is largely driven by increasing student achievement scores on standardised assessments'. Not only are these teacher educators developing teacher agency by their learner-centred instruction, but also, using both quantitative and mixed methods approaches, they have reflexively analysed their own practices as active agents to illuminate the effective parts of the program what might need improving. What these first two chapters reveal is how committed teacher educators can operate as reflexive professionals working to prepare 'highly effective' teachers with 'specialised content knowledge' to be the leaders of the future.

Finally, in Part II, Clifton and Jordan (Chap. 4), writing also against the Australian TEMAG backdrop, provide an interesting study into professional experience innovation and new practice when faced with tighter accountability measures. The authors discuss their concern that standardisation through accreditation reforms would lead to a lack of responsiveness from universities to best serve the diverse school contexts they work with. However, concomitantly, they also found that accreditation provided 'the impetus, permission, and the power to rethink [their] approach' to professional

experience. The chapter discusses how teacher educators found the spaces between and within accreditation requirements to innovate and design a new model of practice they coined the Coaching Approach to Professional Experience (CAPE) Model, a model 'based around shared responsibility, co-construction, and co-delivery'. They illustrate how the requirements of regulation provided the emphasis to question long-held approaches to professional experience, elevated the priority of professional experience and partnerships, and provided scope for student agency.

Part III of the volume is titled *Creating New Relationships and Powerful Teacher Education Partnerships: The Potential of 'Alliances'*. As the title alludes, the key mechanism identified that connected the agentive stories lies in the powerful use of networks and partnerships as a tool for positive change. The three chapters explore the ways in which teacher educators adopt a range of collaborative approaches to form relationships and partnerships to negotiate policy agendas and build teacher capacity. Drawing from a range of empirical studies and policy analysis, the chapters in this part traverse aspects of early childhood education, primary and secondary education, as well as the teacher education continuum from induction and in-service to continuing professional development.

Insights into transdisciplinary and transnational collaborations, as well as relationships between policy agencies, professional development agencies, and ITE institutes, are provided. The chapters emphasise the potential of collaborative ways of working in relationships with colleagues in other disciplines, sectors, organisations, and countries to proactively address competing policy agendas in Australia, Malaysia, England, and Ireland.

In the first chapter of Part III (Chap. 5), Gibson, Gunn, Evans, Keogh, and Gallegos reflect on how a transdisciplinary professional experience placement was achieved through a collaborative partnership between a peak Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) organisation and the Faculties of Education and Health in one urban Australian university. Noteworthy in this chapter is how the authors built on and extended their previous collaborations to agentively work together 'across discipline areas of Education and Health … to develop models of preparing undergraduate teachers and health professionals'. Their aim was to provide early childhood PSTs and health (dietetics) students with authentic experiences during their placement so they could learn to manage 'the increasingly complex health trajectories for young children' in their care.

Drawing from their research, the authors note that 'shared professional learnings were echoed again and again in the data, including developing skills to connect with children'. Furthermore, Gibson et al. contend that '[o]pportunities to work interprofessionally can not only enhance a student's competency development but can also disrupt the discipline silos and create new opportunities for transdisciplinary practice in early childhood teaching'. Their research suggests that such reframing of the professional experience component of university study enabled students and professionals from the fields of education and health to 'make sense of competing accreditation, regulation, and policy agendas' that continue to pervade early childhood teacher education (ECTE) in Australia.

Henderson, Tangen, Alwi, Alwi, and Abu Hassan Shaari, the authors of Chap. 6, also built on and extended an established partnership to agentively develop authentic learning opportunities for their PSTs. The authors illustrate how teacher educators from Australia and Malaysia purposively curated four iterations of Australian Government-funded outbound mobility programs (OMPs) in Kuala Lumpur through their cross-border collaboration. Mindful of the discourse on Australia–Asia engagement that 'positions education as an economic rather than a social good', the authors eschewed the usual practice of outsourcing the delivery of the OMP to an external provider. Instead, by working in partnership via an active engagement in flexible communication channels and dialogic reflections and learning, these teacher educators designed each (annual) program to develop PSTs' intercultural competence and prepare them to become interculturally competent and culturally responsive teachers. Their intended aim was 'to design an intensive experiential learning program that would foster intercultural understanding in pre-service teachers from both countries beyond the instrumentalism of the marketplace and steer them on a path of learning with and from others'.

To achieve this, the authors worked not only "with the grain" in terms of meeting the objectives and outcomes of government funding requirements, but also "against the grain" in that [they] were determined to shape the OMP to meet [their] shared purposes'. Following Biesta et al. (2015), Henderson et al. emphasise their shared beliefs—that intercultural understanding was most effectively achieved through experiential learning—shaped their decision-making about the design and delivery of the program between Australia and Malaysia. Their research findings indicate 'that having a deep belief in the importance of the program' was necessary to ensure its longevity and that 'beliefs play a role in the iterative dimension' of the teacher educators in this study achieving agency and securing the desired students learning outcomes.

The extent to which the delivery of the teacher education continuum across initial, induction, and in-service/continuing professional development (rather than the delivery of each pillar as a sole entity) is supported through policy and practice forms the focus of Chap. 7. Mindful of the 'rising tide of accountability in teacher education due to the influence of the European higher education space' and moves to make education systems 'more responsive to the requirements of industry and commerce and raise pupil achievement', authors MacPhail, Seleznyov, O'Donnell, and Czerniawski examine the relationship between policy agencies, professional development agencies, and ITE institutes in Ireland and England, respectively. Their aim is to consider if such relationships may or may not be central to the effective delivery of the teacher education across these contexts. Noting the 'new set of roles, relationships, and responsibilities for all stakeholders' in Irish teacher education and the 'drive for more "school-led" teacher education with a change in direction to more on-the-job "training"' in England, the authors raise considerations of 'how best to work with colleagues across the teacher education continuum to ensure that it represents a shared understanding'. They posit that despite the competing agendas of those involved, much can be gained across the different facets of teacher education by 'working with, and learning from, reflective stakeholders'. Drawing from Archer

(1996, pp. xxiv–xxv), they challenge the reader to reflexively consider the teacher education continuum in ways beyond what one is 'conditioned to do' but rather, 'conceive of doing … differently' via inter-relationships.

In Part IV of the volume, the three chapters focus on the theme of *Nurturing Trust in Heavily Regulated Environments: Assessment, Policy, and Their Impact on Teacher Education Programs.* A key topic for this group is assessment practices and the ways in which teacher educators navigated the emerging assessment trends of accountability, transparency, and standards that have shaped the current era of teacher education and teacher quality. The first chapter in this part by Spooner-Lane, Buchanan, Jordan, Broadley, and Wall (Chap. 8) examines ITE providers' requirement to assess all PSTs using a Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) as a condition of graduation. The study illuminates how teacher educators and PSTs from four Australian universities grapple with the tensions of a mandated capstone assessment in the final semester of ITE programs including embedding the TPA across ITE programs, aligning the TPA to a set of professional teacher standards, and preparing PSTs to undertake the TPA during their final professional experience placement. One PST noted: 'So, there was so much pressure in that four weeks to be gathering enough evidence to cover not just three standards but all the sub-standards'. At the same time, the TPA afforded teacher educators and PSTs to engage in rich professional dialogues and a shared understanding of PSTs' teaching knowledge and practices at a graduate level: 'It gave us an opportunity to be together as a group, to think and talk through the TPA …'.

Willis and Cowie (Chap. 9) explore the agency of teacher educators in assessment education. Writing from both the Australian and New Zealand contexts, the authors use the term 'palimpsest' (a multi-layered text that is reinscribed over time) as a metaphor for understanding the 'layers of influence' on teacher educators' assessment and practices. They proposed that teacher educators who teach assessment 'need to understand the importance of their own assessment palimpsests with their residual cultural and societal messages that are accumulated over time, to recognise the spaces for continued agency'. Willis and Cowie draw upon Archer's four quadrants of agentic development (I, Me, We, and You) to illustrate how teacher educators engage with the 'multiple roles and identities as part of exercising agency within the context of assessment education'.

The third chapter in Part IV by Gallagher, Willis, and Spina (Chap. 10) establishes what teacher educators prioritise when developing the assessment capability of PSTs. An assessment regulatory backdrop was used to design a Delphi survey that enabled Australian teacher educators to rank statements about PSTs' assessment capabilities to arrive at a consensus of priorities. 'The Delphi method is an accessible methodology to promote the collective agency of teacher educators, as it enables diverse groups of teacher educators who are situated in tertiary education settings around Australia to rank, sort, and comment on their priorities and practices'. The process is outlined in detail in three phases as a model for other teacher educators to collectively gather expert perspectives on priority topics.

The final part (Part V) is titled *Developing an Agentive Professional Self? Supporting the Next Generation of Teachers.* In this final part, the three chapters

explore the notions of reflexivity as an agentive tool for both PSTs and for teacher educators to use.

In Chap. 11, Karnovsky and O'Brien illustratively write about the important work of supporting PSTs' emotional labour in the absence of clear regulatory guidelines that acknowledge this aspect of teachers' work. They note:

> Despite the centrality of emotions in teaching, learning emotional rules and norms of professional practice is *not* the subject of calculated direction and oversight by regulatory authorities and governments, as are most other aspects of their professional practice.

To remedy this situation, they describe themselves as acting as reflexive practice facilitators, using professional experience units to find the 'space for witnessing the ways pre-service teachers come to explore a constellation of feelings associated with learning to teach'. They both model and use reflexive practice themselves to combat what they describe as a 'profound dissatisfaction with the context of reform impacting on teacher education courses and schools generally in Australia'. The chapter draws on an empirical longitudinal study of PSTs as they sought to construct a professional emotional persona over the course of their graduate program at a large, metropolitan Australian university. The authors use a Foucauldian four-part schema to interpret the data. Throughout the chapter, drawings, pre-service reflections, and excerpts from discussions are provided to highlight the ways in which the authors supported the PSTs (and themselves) through the myriad of challenges PSTs face in learning to teach. A significant finding discussed in the chapter is that 'participants learn to accept that they must craft their emotional conduct through a range of mental and physical practices according to the norm of rational emotional control'.

Nykvist, Mukherjee, and Blundell (Chap. 12) also use reflexivity as a central tool to support PSTs. In this chapter, however, the tool is used on a completely different topic: learning with digital technologies. The authors write against a backdrop where they acknowledge the continually evolving nature of digital technologies and the concern that current knowledge and skills associated with rapidly changing and outdated technologies will not serve educators as they look towards new pedagogical approaches for connecting and engaging with students. It is with this concern in mind that the trio working together in a team-teaching approach use reflexivity to take agentic actions to improve ITE approaches to using digital pedagogies to enhance learning opportunities for all students. As they describe:

> While the specific focus of the subjects is to prepare PSTs to be teachers who embrace digital technologies as a tool to support learners and enhance learning, it is the informal reflexivity espoused within team teaching approaches that caters to new ways of engaging with the challenges associated with digital pedagogies.

Lunn Brownlee, Walker, L'Estrange, Ryan, Bourke, Rowan, and Johansson (Chap. 13) document their findings from an important Australian Research Council grant designed to address the issue of graduate teachers who do not feel well prepared to teach diverse groups of children in their classroom. They make the argument that to do so, teacher educators need to best prepare their students to understand diversity to teach for diversity. While the previous two chapters focus mostly on PSTs'

learning, in this final chapter, the gaze is on teacher educators' learning and teaching practices, with a focus on what the authors describe as 'epistemic agency'. As they explain:

> The central idea is that teacher judgement lies at the heart of teacher agency in pedagogical decision making … examining teacher educators' epistemic aims and teaching processes for achieving such aims. Such teacher judgements imply a type of agency which we refer to in this chapter as epistemic agency.

They further make the argument that such agency involves participation in the construction of knowledge in the community. They draw from the work of Elgin (2013) who argued that 'Epistemic agents should think of themselves as, and act as, legislating members of a realm of epistemic ends: they make the rules, devise the methods, and set the standards that bind them' (p. 135). To explore teacher educators' epistemic cognition in the context of teaching diversity, the authors describe how they conducted a social innovation laboratory, also known as a social lab. A key highlight of this chapter is that they apply the theory to teacher educators as an occupational group and describe their findings eliciting teacher educators' understanding of epistemic agency documenting the ways they taught for diversity. This is a powerful chapter concluding the volume that directly documents teacher educators' contributions to knowledge construction as epistemic agents.

While agency has been theorised in various ways as outlined earlier and the structure of the book offers a way to explore agentive practice, to further understand the ways in which teacher educators actually managed competing tensions and complexities in their work and escalating regulatory environments, we draw upon (Archer's, 1995, 2007) perspective of critical realist social theory to provide a framework for drawing the parts and chapters in this volume together.

1.5 Critical Realist Social Theory

Archer was concerned with *how* agents respond and act. Archer (2003) emphasised that individuals make sense of the contexts they inhabit through the sorts of internal conversations, or self-talk, they have about their social world. Importantly, the types of constraints and enablements that social contexts offer agents are mediated through these forms of self-talk. Such reflexivity, defined as 'the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and vice versa' (Archer, 2007, p. 4), influences the sorts of decisions and practices which individuals undertake in their everyday lives. In this way, Archer (2012) argues that individuals have agency and take action even when social structures seek to normalise or restrain their practices. Furthermore, Archer (1995, 2007) suggests that the key to understanding action lies in exploring the interchange and relationship between individuals and those social structures within which they operate.

Archer argues that social structures and contexts are always transformable but at the same time are constrained as they take shape from and are formed by individuals (agents). She refers to this as analytical dualism where structure and agency are separate rather than conflated; in other words, she argues for their complementarity rather than their counteraction (Ryan & Bourke, 2013). For Archer (2007), the interplay and interconnection between individuals (teacher educators) and social structures (accountability and policy, for example) are crucial to understand courses of action produced by subjects through reflexive deliberation. In this way, individuals are active agents who mediate their subjective concerns (values, priorities, knowledge, and capabilities) and their objective circumstances (for example, standardisation, accountability, etc.) to act in certain ways. While agential powers and actions are conditioned by social structures, these structures are not considered to be 'forces' (Archer, 1995, p. 209) but rather as reasons for acting.

These actions can be transformative (morphogenetic)—they transform social structures or cultural systems within which they operate—or they can be reproductive (morphostatic) as they maintain structural and cultural norms. If the agent accepts their extant circumstances and acts as if there is nothing they can do about them, they are, at best, 'passive beings to whom things happen' (Archer, 2000, p. 3). But, if they can conceive of a way of doing things differently, they become active agents. Not only does (Archer, 2012) contend that agents weigh up their personal concerns alongside structural and cultural norms, but she also argues that each of these influences is always emerging in relation to the others in either enabling and/or constraining ways.

1.5.1   Understanding Agentive Tools: Personal, Cultural, and Structural

Archer suggests three distinct emergent properties that contribute to making decisions about how to act. These are personal, cultural, and structural emergent properties. Personal emergent properties (PEPs) in the context of this book relate to personal knowledge, expertise, or values and identities related to the work of teacher educators. Cultural emergent properties (CEPs) are prevailing beliefs, ideologies, and expectations of education systems or stakeholders; for example, how teacher educators position themselves as a professional organisation. Structural emergent properties (SEPs) are systems, practices, resources, or policies such as accountability regimes or professional standards documents. In these emerging conditions, these properties influence each other in enabling and/or constraining ways. Archer's emergent properties are used as a novel approach to analyse the chapters in this book and provide details about what personal, cultural, and structural conditions enable or constrain the agency of teacher educators' work.

We used this framework to analyse the various actions of the teacher educators against their social context. Table 1.1 is a summary of the meta-analysis outlining

Table 1.1 Enablements and constraints on teacher educator agency

Emergent properties	Enablements	Constraints
Personal emergent properties	Knowledge Tracing identity over time	Compliance
Cultural emergent properties	Professional cultures/collaboration	Lack of professional culture/collaboration
Structural emergent properties	Staffing Regulation Funding Time Course Design (space)	Staffing Regulation Funding Time Inflexible systems for course design

the enablements and constraints that were evident across the chapters. These are discussed further in relation to Parts II–V in this volume.

As shown in Table 1.1, there were two personal emergent properties (PEPs) that were viewed as enabling (knowledge and tracing identity over time) and one constraint (compliance). While some teacher educators saw the very policies that they had to comply with and implement as constraints on their agency, enablements were spoken about much more frequently and focused on the teacher educators in this volume adopting a scholarly disposition/identity, using research-informed practices as an agentic tool.

1.5.1.1 Adopting a Scholarly Disposition/Identity: Knowledge as an Agentic Tool

The meta-analysis of the chapters in this volume coded according to Archer's emergent properties revealed that the most dominant personal emergent property (PEP) as an enabling tool for teacher educators was knowledge itself. In this section, we present examples from various chapters to demonstrate teacher educators using knowledge of research, knowledge of their disciplines and areas of expertise, and their understandings of theoretical tools to help them navigate through the challenging accountability and standardisation regimes and situations. As co-editors, we noted the ways in which teacher educators were 'scholarly', or as Bourke and Mills (Chap. 2) describe, using a 'researcherly disposition' to their advantage.

By researcher disposition or stance, Bourke and Mills, following Tack and Vanderlinde (2014), were referring to the 'habit of engaging with research as both a consumer and producer—to improve practice and contribute to the knowledge base on teacher education'. Not only did the Unit Coordinator in the policy enactment study in Chap. 2 research the academic literature on primary specialisations, but he also used his knowledge of the discipline of science to select what might be most useful to teach his PSTs: