

Creating Connections in Teaching and Learning

edited by

Lindy Abawi

University of Southern Queensland

Joan M. Conway

University of Southern Queensland

and

Robyn Henderson

University of Southern Queensland



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DEDICATION

In memory of

Emeritus Professor Hedley Beare (1932–2010),
his inspiration, provocative predictions for the future, and
ability to reconnect educational practice and theory
in the minds and hearts of teachers

and

all of our past teachers who helped us to develop
a passion for learning, teaching, and research

*A teacher affects eternity;
he [or she] can never tell where his [or her] influence stops.*
Henry Brooks Adams (1938–1918)

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PREFACE

Lindy Abawi, Joan M. Conway, and Robyn Henderson

This book, *Creating connections in teaching and learning*, focuses on a core aspect of the work of educators, regardless of the context within which they teach. Connections are central to learning and that is one of the reasons why this book is important. If educators were asked how connections were relevant and important to their teaching and to their students' learning, we would probably be given a plethora of answers. Some might focus on the connections between new learning and prior knowledge; others might talk about the importance of social relationships between teachers and learners; others might highlight the links between theory and practice. Chances are that the list would be long and varied.

These ideas and many more have been taken up by the contributing authors. The authors represent a diverse group—beginning researchers including early career personnel and postgraduate students, novice writers, experienced researchers, and expert writers. Despite their diverse backgrounds, all the authors had some connections with a university and were working on research projects that were related to the scholarship of teaching and learning. Like most educators, the contributing authors take their work as teachers seriously, and the opportunity to create more formal connections between teaching and research was a useful way of formalizing the reflecting and thinking that “goes with the job” of being an educator.

The book explores a wide range of connections. We know that connections can encompass making links, crossing divides, forming relationships, building frameworks, and generating new knowledge. And it is this multiplicity that makes the topic of this book so interesting. In various ways, the authors explore the cognitive, cultural, social, emotional, and physical

aspects of understanding, meaning-making, motivating, acting, researching, and evaluating, as they examine teaching and learning from the perspective of their own experiences. Their explorations highlight the linkages, partnerships, and networks that connect learners, educators, organizations, and communities.

Collectively, the chapters offer a wide range of educational problems, ponderings, and possibilities for transformative practices. Individually, the chapters offer insights into specific issues that relate to particular contexts, including school education, higher education, and the more recent digital or virtual worlds that are playing such an important role in education today. Many of the chapters are personal, highlighting authors' experiences, their attempts to resolve problems, or their reflections on practice. Many chapters attempt to get at the "guts" of a problem, to consider how things might be done differently, and to find a way forward in order to enhance teaching and learning.

The development of the book has been a collaborative one, with collaborations among ourselves as editors, and with and between the contributing authors. Regardless of the authors' backgrounds, however, the chapters take what is often the daily work of educators and present it in a new light. Connections are made between research and teaching, between theory and practice, and between old and new theories. Overall, the book takes a futures orientation, suggesting some possibilities for new ways of working and thinking.

The book is aimed at an academic and professional audience that is interested in the multiple ways that education can help to create connections. Because of its focus on research, on the scholarship of teaching and learning, and on connections in varied educational contexts and sectors, the book will have wide appeal. Postgraduate students will find the presentation of different research paradigms useful in formulating and clarifying their own approaches. It will also be of interest to those who want to know how connections might be forged between and among learners, educators, organizations, and communities.

The authors do not set out to provide answers for every problem in every context. What they do, however, is to open up the possibilities for transformation. They highlight their lived experiences, connect personal experiences to professional reflections, and lay out their thinking so that readers can make connections of their own. We hope that readers will engage with the ideas in this book and that they will enjoy making those connections.

*Lindy Abawi, Joan M. Conway, and Robyn Henderson
University of Southern Queensland,
Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia*

FOREWORD

Bryan T. Connors

The authors of the chapters that comprise this book have focused upon both change and connections. The educational orthodoxy, both the *as is* and that which is in the ascendancy, is re-examined and possibilities are suggested for the future. This is indeed a brave endeavor. The range of the educational scenes that the authors have confronted is extensive. The focus of viable connections within the elements that make up education is questioned, in terms of both the individual educator and institutional needs.

The authors look unflinchingly at what they see. In seeking to illuminate the here and now, they recognize that which obscures, and from the resulting tension they push the boundaries in other directions. The power of the familiar and the conventional is recognized rather than denigrated; it is this recognition that offers transformational change. Inherent within the authors' perspectives is the recognition that their change will, in turn, become the conventional wisdom.

The chapters represent journeys that the authors have undertaken. They have sought to provide educators with credible new perspectives; they have fought and resisted the temptation to re-gird themselves to the pull of traditional ideas. The authors' insights allow us to view activities within the education milieu from a different frame of mind. When I read a number of the chapters, I found the new perspective to be undeniable, as it is both credible and verifiable.

The concept of a journey suggests a process rather than a specific event; the current thinking of a perspective is disrupted, and possibilities for

change become feasible. This journey is one of paradigm change and the creation of a collective community which supports a particular view of newly established practice. The “new thinking”, in turn, needs its own assertive community.

These chapters will ask the reader to reflect, consider and hopefully change. Educators are encouraged to consider connections that are creative and of a nurturing nature. Who could ask for more?

*Bryan T. Connors, PhD
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada*

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CHAPTER 1

EXPOSING THREADS: CREATING CONNECTIONS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Robyn Henderson, Lindy Abawi, and Joan M. Conway

University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba,
Queensland, Australia

INTRODUCTION

We know that education in today's world is a complex and valued enterprise. In whatever way we look at education, we cannot but see connections to other aspects of life. Indeed, the mission of education has been described as ensuring that "all students benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate fully in public, community, and economic life" (The New London Group, 1996, p. 60). This inextricable linking of education, society, and citizenship underpins the operations of educational institutions, the learning that students do, and the work of those who teach. Education does not, and cannot, operate in vacuum. Without connections to the other aspects of the cultural and social world, it would have no purpose and would probably cease to exist. And if we turn our focus away from the role

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lindy Abawi is a lecturer in Curriculum and Pedagogy at the Toowoomba Campus of the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. She has taught secondary school art and English, primary school music, and English as a second language. She is a core team member of the Leadership Research group (LRI) at the University of Southern Queensland. She is a facilitator for the Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools (IDEAS) project, and has worked in this role at school, state, and interstate levels. Her doctoral research is linked to understanding how a context specific pedagogical language may help facilitate and sustain school improvement.

Margaret Baguley is a senior lecturer in Arts Education at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. She has extensive teaching experience across a range of education sectors. Her research interests are in the areas of arts education, creative collaboration, leadership, and arts engagement. Her current research projects are investigating how to maximize learning pathways for low socioeconomic and non-traditional students (USQ Equity Incentives Fund), in addition to evaluating how the arts can engage children more effectively in their learning (Primary Arts Network Ipswich, Arts Queensland, and Australia Council for the Arts).

Lyn Brodie is an associate professor in the Faculty of Engineering and Surveying at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia, and a University Teaching Fellow. She has won several teaching awards, including the 2007 Carrick Award for Australian University Teaching (Team Leader). Her work involves the design and delivery of Problem Based Learning (PBL) courses, staff training, and the continuing development of the PBL

strand in the faculty. She has a strong research interest in engineering education, problem-based learning, and transitions to university, and is director of the Faculty Centre for Engineering Education Research.

J. Anne Casley is currently involved in part-time diagnostic teaching in the areas of literacy and numeracy. She is also a part-time doctoral student at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. Her dissertation involves a case study of one school and its approach to values education and citizenship education. In the past, she taught secondary school art for a considerable period of time. She also has experience teaching in the primary grades. In recent years she has enjoyed reviewing articles for a number of different publications.

Joan M. Conway is a lecturer at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. She is a core team member of the Leadership Research group (LRI), a high-profile research and development group within the Faculty of Education. She has been involved over a number of years in the research, development, and delivery of the highly successful Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools (IDEAS) project. She has a strong interest in the concept of collective intelligence when learning communities develop enhanced levels of collaboration and build capacity for sustainable improvement, with a particular focus on teachers as leaders and new images of teacher professionalism.

P. A. Danaher is professor (Education Research) in the Faculty of Education at the Toowoomba Campus of the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. His research interests include educational mobilities; educational research ethics, methods, and politics; academics', educators', and researchers' work and identities; lifelong learning; rural education; social education; university learning and teaching; and vocational education. He is the co-author of *Mobile learning communities: Creating new educational futures* (New York: Routledge, 2009) and *Teaching Traveller children: Maximising learning outcomes* (Trent, UK: Trentham Books, 2007). He is also sole and co-editor of eight research books.

Marie Davis is from the U.S.A., but has spent her career teaching, counseling, and learning in international schools around the world. She is currently settled in the Alps of Switzerland, working with the many English speakers in the area as an educational psychologist. She enjoys giving workshops to teachers and parents about personality types and how they affect teaching and learning styles and relationships with others, be they colleagues, children, partners, or friends. When she is not otherwise occupied, she spends her time outdoors in the fresh mountain air.

Ian Fraser has been Head of English at Nanango State High School, a rural school in southeast Queensland, Australia, for the past 23 years. Prior to that, he taught in schools in the west and southeast of the state and in Cornwall (UK). He has a deep passion for developing student voice in schools and won a Queensland government scholarship to investigate student voice in schools across the UK in 2007. In 2010, he completed a Master of Education degree at the University of Southern Queensland (Toowoomba), focusing on student voice.

Helmut Geiblinger is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. His doctoral research examined the biomechanical perspectives of competition landings in gymnastics and was a result of his earlier interest and involvement as a competitor, coach, judge, and scientific investigator at five different world gymnastics championships. His research and teaching areas are primarily focused on education and sports science. His most recent research has used narrative inquiry to explore his own understandings as an educational researcher, examining both strategies and practical considerations for controlled gymnastics landings.

Peter Gibbings possesses a Bachelor of Surveying Degree, a Graduate Diploma in Technology Management, a Master of Geomatics, and a Doctor of Education from the Queensland University of Technology, Australia. He also has over 25 years experience in the surveying profession. He is now an associate dean at the University of Southern Queensland. In 2008, he won the individual Queensland Spatial Excellence Award for Education and Professional Development, and in the same year went on to win the individual Asia Pacific Spatial Excellence Award for Education and Professional Development.

C. E. Haggerty is the associate dean in the Faculty of Health at Whitireia Community Polytechnic, New Zealand. She led the delivery of postgraduate mental health nursing education prior to taking up her associate dean role. Her research interests include e-learning issues for academic staff, student access, and use in e-learning, new graduate nurses' first year of practice experiences, and preceptorship for practice. She was the lead author of *Growing our own: An evaluation of nurse entry to practice programmes in New Zealand 2006–2009* (Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Health, 2010).

R. E. (Bobby) Harreveld is associate professor in the School of Education and the Foundation Director of the Learning and Teaching Education Research Centre (LTERC) at CQUniversity, Australia. She also holds a

position as an adjunct with the Centre of Education Research at the University of Western Sydney. She is currently investigating questions around the knowledge constructions of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and teacher education in cross-cultural, open, and distance learning environments. This work is located among the education systems of universities, vocational colleges, schools, workplaces, and community learning settings.

Junichi Hatai has taught Japanese in Australia since 1989, after teaching English in Tokyo for 10 years. He has a Master of Education and a Master of Applied Linguistics (Honours), and advocates that teaching languages using students' well-known topics in the target language enhances language learning. In his role as educator, he has established Sister School Exchange Programs, Japanese Assistant Teacher programs, and Sister City English programs for Japanese primary school teachers. He has also worked as an interpreter and translator for government agencies and companies including law firms.

Karen Hawkins works part-time at Southern Cross University, Australia. Before retirement from full-time work in early 2011, she was the course coordinator for the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) program. As well as her first teaching degree, she holds a Graduate Diploma in Special Needs Education, a Masters of Education, and a Doctor of Philosophy. Her research interests gravitate toward early childhood education, social justice, literacy, wholeness, and well-being. She has a deep respect for and interest in collaborative research methods as socially just modes of inquiry that uphold and value participant knowledge, history, and expertise.

Robyn Henderson is an associate professor in Literacies Education in the Faculty of Education at the Toowoomba Campus of the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. She teaches literacy education courses for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Her research interests include multiliteracies, digital and academic literacies, literacy pedagogy, and the implications of mobility for school-based literacy learning. She has co-edited three research books, and is currently sole-editing another which focuses on literacy learning. All of her work is underpinned by a concern for social justice issues.

Laurie Kocher is currently an instructor in the Early Childhood Education Programme at Douglas College near Vancouver, BC, Canada. She taught kindergarten in the public school system for many years. Her adult teaching experience includes working with graduate and undergraduate students at college and university levels, both in early years and school age contexts. Her doctoral research, undertaken at the University of Southern

Queensland, Australia, focused on the pedagogical documentation practices of the preschools of Reggio Emilia. She has also explored how this work has been transformative for teachers in other contexts.

Christine McDonald is a lecturer in statistics and mathematics in the Faculty of Sciences at the Toowoomba Campus of the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. Her research interests are in the fields of statistics education, distance education, and online learning. The title of her doctoral research is *Evaluating the use of online synchronous communication to enhance learning in statistics*. Before moving into the tertiary field of education, she taught secondary school mathematics, as well as science for a number of years.

Brad McLennan is a lecturer in literacy education at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia, and was a classroom teacher at the time of writing the chapter in this book. With 20 years teaching experience, he realizes that acknowledging student success breeds further success. Together with his teaching partner of 11 years, Karen Peel, he won a Queensland NEiTA award in 2009 for innovative practice. While a middle years teacher, he developed and implemented a teaching framework known as motivational pedagogy to motivate learners and lead them toward intrinsic self-directed competence. The approach fosters resilience, pride, belonging, unity, and self-esteem among students.

Warren Midgley is a lecturer in curriculum and pedagogy in the Faculty of Education at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. His research interests include second language acquisition and use, cultural and linguistic adjustment in cross-cultural contexts, and the methodology and ethics of cross-cultural research. He is co-editor of and contributor to the research books *Beyond binaries in education research* (New York: Routledge, 2011) and *Sustaining synergies: Collaborative research and researching collaboration* (Teneriffe, Qld, Post Pressed, 2010). He also contributed to the book *Troubling terrains: Tactics for traversing and transforming contemporary educational research* (Teneriffe, Qld, Post Pressed, 2008).

Karen Noble is associate dean (Teaching and Learning) and Program Coordinator (Early Childhood) in the Faculty of Education at University of Southern Queensland, Australia. She has a strong leadership and management role, but maintains her teaching profile in the area of early childhood education, play and pedagogy, professional practice, and contemporary issues in early childhood. Her research interests include early childhood education, workforce capacity building, pedagogy and learning in higher education, learner agency, and parent participation in education. She has

been invited to present a number of public addresses—locally, nationally, and internationally.

Lindsay Parry is professor of education and the Dean/Head of School of Education at James Cook University, Queensland, Australia. He has held senior academic management positions in New Zealand and Australia. His current research interests include educational policymaking, curriculum development and reform, and values-based curriculum leadership. He has published extensively on curriculum reform and development in the U.S.A. and the UK.

Cec Pedersen is a senior lecturer (Management and Organisational Behaviour) in the Faculty of Business at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. Previously he had been the Queensland Administrator for the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Training Program. Prior to his role as administrator, he had spent over 14 years in general management and consulting positions in small- and medium-sized organizations. His current research and educational interests are leadership in tertiary education, human resource development, and Eastern business education.

Karen Peel is a lecturer in Literacy Education at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia, and was a classroom teacher at the time of writing the chapter in this book. With 25 years teaching experience in middle years schooling, she remains at the forefront of modern teaching techniques and technologies. She is committed to sharing her practical knowledge with others. With her teaching partner Brad McLennan, she sought to inspire middle years students to be productive citizens and lifelong learners. With Brad, she received a Queensland NEITA award for innovative practice in 2009. She aims to impart her knowledge and love of teaching to preservice teachers.

Petrea Redmond is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the Toowoomba Campus of the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. Prior to coming to USQ, she was a Head of Department in Business, ICT, and Technology. She also worked as an Education Advisor in learning technology, working with students, staff, and principals from preschool through to year 12. Her current teaching and research interests include teaching and learning in the middle and senior years, ICT integration, authentic learning, higher order thinking, and blended and online learning.

Richard Scagliarini began his career in education as a high school teacher in Victoria, Australia. He has been teaching in international schools for 15 years, where he developed an interest in the development and implementation of middle school curriculum reform. His doctoral studies

with the University of Southern Queensland, Australia, focused on the process and dynamics of reforming the middle years curriculum in the international school context. His thesis has been published as *Reforming the middle years curriculum: A new paradigm for middle schooling*.

Tina van Eyk owns a learning design business and works with diverse clients across Australia. Her work combines her extensive knowledge and experience of human resource management, information technology, and education. Throughout her career, she has designed interactive learning resources for clients in both tertiary and vocational education and training sectors, as well as for clients working in the photographic, banking, superannuation, workers' compensation, agricultural, and veterinary industries. She loves the flexibility which online technologies offer and looks forward to the designing, developing, and researching of best practice learning environments in the future.

Henriette van Rensburg is a lecturer in Pedagogy and Curriculum (Blended Learning focus) and Postgraduate Program Coordinator in the Faculty of Education at the Toowoomba Campus of the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. Her research interests include linguistics, technology education, and postgraduate education. She has published research about Afrikaans speakers in Australia, and the postgraduate and higher degrees journey. Her PhD research was in the specific field of computer-aided education for milieu-deprived learners in mathematics in the senior primary phase.

Robert D. White is a doctoral candidate at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia, where he is writing a thesis about the determinants of propensity to lifelong learning. His background includes the banking and horticulture industries. He has also taught accounting and business studies to international students for the Open Access College at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. He has written and reviewed extensively for international journals and conferences, receiving an award for outstanding reviewing from the editorial committee of the 5th International Conference on Lifelong Learning in 2008.

Joe Peng Zhou is a lecturer in the Faculty of Business at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ), Australia. Before coming to Australia in 1998, he was a business lecturer with a Chinese regional university. After completing his doctoral thesis in 2002, he was employed to coordinate a Mandarin MBA program which the USQ jointly operated with its Chinese partners. His current research interests are in cross-cultural issues in business education, the international marketing of higher education services, and Chinese consumer behavior.